

BEYOND POLYCHROMY: JOHN GIBSON, THE ROMAN SCHOOL OF SCULPTURE,
AND THE MODERN CLASSICAL BODY

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a study of the life and career of the British sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866), whose Roman studio near the Piazza del Popolo was a frequently visited site for Grand Tourists during the nineteenth century. I argue that, for Gibson, classicism was modern, and thus he developed new methods for creating and disseminating the modern classical body in nineteenth-century sculpture. Gibson is considered by scholars to be the first nineteenth-century British artist to reintroduce polychromy in marble sculpture, as exemplified by his best-known work, the so-called *Tinted Venus*, 1851-53, which was displayed in London at the International Exhibition of 1862. Because this tinted statue challenged sculpture's purity of form, the subsequently negative historiography of this work has obfuscated Gibson's numerous other accomplishments in the history of nineteenth-century art. In this dissertation I discuss many of his other free-standing marble statues of modern classical subjects, such as *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, ca. 1830, a popular work commissioned in marble nine times for different patrons, and *The Hunter and His Dog*, 1840-41, a statue considered by his contemporaries to be his masterpiece for its balance of idealism with a close study of nature. I also examine a selection of his portrait busts and monumental statues, bas-reliefs, drawings, and work in other media, such as porcelain statuettes and engravings, for a broader perspective of his exploration of the modern classical body. Rather than ignore his polychrome sculptures, however, I offer new readings of them to show how they intersected with these other important aspects of his career.

Although I focus on one artist and use published and unpublished archival sources to discuss Gibson and his work, my methodology is pluralistic. I engage biography with nineteenth-century exhibition history and critical art reviews, and I link patronage and art production to gender studies and queer theory. I also engage with sculpture in its international context, as Gibson himself would have been exposed to it in the

cosmopolitan art center that was Rome. Thus, the work of Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen, the two leading sculptors in the Roman school, are components of this dissertation, as are the works of native British sculptors such as John Flaxman and Joseph Nollekens to demonstrate what Gibson learned from his early teachers and how he evolved to craft his own version of the modern classic in Rome. I contextualize his work with that of his contemporaries in Rome, such as the British sculptor Richard James Wyatt, the Dutch sculptor Mathieu Kessels, and the Italian sculptor Adamo Tadolini, for a better assessment of Gibson's sculptural practices. I also discuss his patronage by aristocrats like Queen Victoria and Czar Alexander II, politicians such as Sir Robert Peel, and bourgeois industrialists such as the Liverpool manufacturer Richard Vaughan Yates, as well as the global dissemination of his work during his lifetime, which was exhibited internationally throughout Europe, Russia, Australia, North America, and India.

In the introductory chapter, I establish my argument, that through a reexamination of Gibson's life and career beyond his experiments with polychrome sculpture, one can better assess his importance to the history of sculpture itself by reconsidering how he redefined the modern classical body. The second chapter is a biographical overview that demonstrates how Gibson's roots in the British school of art influenced his ideas about classicism as a form of modernity. Chapter three considers Gibson's studio practice, from the close examination of his account books to his influence on his most famous pupil, the American sculptor Harriet Hosmer. Chapter four focuses on the homoerotic male body in Gibson's oeuvre. An advocate of the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Gibson created heroic and ephobic male nudes, such as *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, 1819-25, a work that suggests issues as diverse as homosocialism and queer subjectivity. Chapter five discusses Gibson's interest in reproductive media and how, in shifting his role from a hands-on sculptor to a designer, he explored reproductive technologies in cameo production, ceramics, and printmaking to disseminate images of the modern classical body to the rising bourgeoisie. The final chapter explores Gibson's legacy, including his influence on New Sculptors such as Hamo Thornycroft. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that through a reexamination of the life and work of Gibson, one can begin to move past the pejorative sensibilities of Neoclassicism itself as merely historicist and reconsider classicism as a form of modern art in the nineteenth century.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction: John Gibson, Beyond Polychromy	1
Chapter 2. From Wales to Rome: Recontextualizing Gibson's Life and Career.....	34
Chapter 3. From Modeling to Tinting: Gibson's Studio Practice	88
Chapter 4. Gibson as Winckelmannian Aesthete: The Homoerotic Classical Body.....	145
Chapter 5. Gibson as Designer: Nineteenth-Century Reproductive Media	189
Chapter 6. Conclusion: Gibson's Legacy	223
Bibliography	233
Illustrations	256

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1.1John Gibson, *Tinted Venus*, 1851-53, marble with wax pigments, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 1.2J. Gibson, *The Hunter and His Dog*, modeled 1840-41, this version 1847, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.
- Fig. 1.3Matthew Cotes Wyatt, *Bashaw*, 1831-34, mixed media, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 1.4Richard James Wyatt, *Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses*, 1844, marble, Royal Collection, London.
- Fig. 1.5John Quincy Adams Ward, *Indian Hunter*, 1860, bronze, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 1.6Hamo Thornycroft, *Artemis*, 1880, plaster and wax, Tate Britain, London.
- Fig. 1.7Unknown, after J. Gibson, *The Hunter and His Dog*, date unknown, gilt bronze, Private Collection.
- Fig. 1.8David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, *John Gibson*, 1844, calotype, George Eastman House, Rochester.
- Fig. 1.9J. Gibson, *Bust of Anna Jameson*, 1862, marble, National Portrait Gallery, London, on long term loan to Bodelwyddan Castle, Rhyl, Wales.
- Fig. 1.10H. Thornycroft, *The Mower*, 1880, bronze, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 1.11Frederic Leighton, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, bronze, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 2.1J. Gibson, *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer*, ca. 1805-10, terracotta, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 2.2Marcantonio Raimondi, after Raphael, *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer*, ca. 1500-34, engraving.

- Fig. 2.3J. Gibson, *Half-Length Anatomical Study of a Man, Drawn from a Dissected Corpse*, ca. 1810-15, black chalk and graphite, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 2.4J. Gibson, *Monument to Emily Robinson*, 1829-30, marble, St. James Oratory, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 2.5J. Gibson, *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*, 1810-11, pen and ink and wash over graphite, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 2.6Henry Fuseli, *Thor Battering the Midgard Serpent*, 1790, oil on canvas, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 2.7J. Gibson, *Male Nude Falling* (Study for *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*), 1810-11, pen and ink, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 2.8J. Gibson, *A Falling Angel* (Study for *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*), 1810-11, pen and ink, British Museum, London.
- Fig. 2.9J. Gibson, *A Bacchante Diverting the Attention of a Tiger, with Her Cymbals*, 1813, terracotta, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.
- Fig. 2.10J. Gibson, *Medallion of William Roscoe, Esq.*, 1813, plaster, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 2.11J. Gibson, *Bust of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, 1814, bronze, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- Fig. 2.12J. Gibson, *Study after the Theseus/Dionysus Figure from the Elgin Marbles*, undated, probably 1817, pencil and charcoal, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 2.13J. Gibson, *Bust of John Walter Watson Taylor*, 1816, marble, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 2.14J. Gibson, *Bust of George Watson Taylor*, 1816-19, marble, Osuna Art Gallery, Bethesda, MD.
- Fig. 2.15J. Gibson, *Bust of Mrs. Anne Watson Taylor*, 1816-19, marble, Private Collection.
- Fig. 2.16J. Gibson, *Bust of William Roscoe*, 1817-19, marble, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.
- Fig. 2.17Antonio Canova, *Hebe*, 1816-17, marble with bronze, Pinacoteca Civica di Forlì, Italy.

- Fig. 2.18Francis Chantrey, *Monument to Be Placed in Litchfield Cathedral in Memory of Two Children (The Sleeping Robinson Children)*, 1817-19, marble, Litchfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, England.
- Fig. 2.19J. Gibson, *Monument to Richard James Wyatt*, 1850-51, marble, Protestant Cemetery, Rome.
- Fig. 2.20J. Gibson, *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, modeled 1818-19, this version ca. 1830, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 2.21J. Gibson, *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, modeled 1821-22, this version 1837-40, marble, Palazzo Corsini, Rome.
- Fig. 2.22J. Gibson, *Nymph Untying Her Sandal*, 1826-30, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.
- Fig. 2.23J. Gibson, *Venus and Cupid*, 1831-33, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.
- Fig. 2.24J. Gibson, *Narcissus*, modeled 1829, this version 1836-38, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 2.25J. Gibson, *Queen Victoria*, 1844-47, marble (original tinting removed), Royal Collection, London.
- Fig. 2.26J. Gibson, *Queen Victoria Between Justice and Clemency*, 1851-56, marble, Prince's Chamber, Westminster Palace, Houses of Parliament, London.
- Fig. 3.1Carlo Lasinio, Plate VI: "A demonstration of methods for making plaster molds for clay and marble sculptures," engraving, from *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura* (1802) by Francesco Carradori.
- Fig. 3.2C. Lasinio, Plate VIII: "Rules for locating and transferring the measurements of any sculpture," engraving, from *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura* (1802) by F. Carradori.
- Fig. 3.3J. Gibson, *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, 1818-19, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

- Fig. 3.4 Francesco Chiarottini, *Interior of Canova's Studio in Rome*, ca. 1787, watercolor, Museo Civico, Udine, Italy.
- Fig. 3.5 Ditlev Martin, *Pope Leo XII Visiting Thorvaldsen's Studio near the Piazza Barberini, Rome, on Saint Luke's Day, 18 October 1826*, 1830, oil on canvas, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- Fig. 3.6 Unknown, *Hosmer and Her Men*, 1861, albumen print, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- Fig. 3.7 Unknown, *Hosmer with Her Sculpture of Thomas Hart Benton*, ca. 1854, albumen print, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- Fig. 3.8 J. Gibson, *Plan of the Studio Grande*, pen and ink over pencil, undated, probably mid- to late 1850s, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 3.9 J. Gibson, *Sir Robert Peel*, 1851-53, marble, Westminster Abbey, London.
- Fig. 3.10 J. Gibson, *William Huskisson*, modeled 1831, this version 1846, bronze, Duke's Terrace, Liverpool.
- Fig. 3.11 "The Prince of Wales at Miss Hosmer's Studio," from *Harper's Weekly*, 7 May 1859.
- Fig. 3.12 Felice Bainsi, *Saint Scholastica*, 1836, marble with bronze, Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Rome.
- Fig. 3.13 Benjamin Gibson, *Bust of John Gibson*, 1836-38, marble, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.
- Fig. 3.14 B. Gibson, *The Shepherd Boy and Dog*, 1840-41, marble, location unknown, photograph: Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.
- Fig. 3.15 Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Shepherd Boy*, modeled 1817, this version 1822-25, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- Fig. 3.16 B. Gibson, after J. Gibson, *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 3.17 B. Gibson (attrib. J. Gibson), *The Three Graces with Cupid*, probably 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

- Fig. 3.18B. Thorvaldsen, *Cupid and the Graces*, 1817-18, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- Fig. 3.19Harriet Hosmer, *Oenone*, 1854-55, marble, Kemper Art Museum, Washington University, St. Louis.
- Fig. 3.20H. Hosmer, *The Sleeping Faun*, 1864-66, marble, Cleveland Museum of Art.
- Fig. 3.21H. Hosmer, *Zenobia*, 1857-59, marble, Huntington Library, San Marino.
- Fig. 3.22J. Gibson, *Pandora*, 1856-59, marble with traces of wax-based tinting, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, England.
- Fig. 3.23J. Gibson, *Love Tormenting the Soul*, modeled ca. 1835, this version early 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.
- Fig. 3.24Unknown, Installation view of Owen Jones's temple with J. Gibson's polychrome sculptures at the International Exhibition of 1862, photograph: Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.
- Fig. 3.25J. Gibson, detail of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 2.21) showing gilt.
- Fig. 3.26Charles Cordier, *The Jewish Woman of Algiers*, 1862, marble and mixed media, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 3.27Carlo Marochetti, with William H. Millais, *Princess Gouramma of Coorg*, 1855, marble with watercolor and gilt, Royal Collection, London.
- Fig. 3.28Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, Frontispiece to *Le Jupiter olympien, ou, l'art de la sculpture antique considéré sous un nouveau point de vue* (1814), hand-colored engraving.
- Fig. 3.29J. Gibson, *Venus Verticordia*, late 1830s, marble, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.
- Fig. 3.30“The Great Exhibition,” from *Punch*, 25 October 1862.
- Fig. 3.31Owen Jones, Side elevation of temple structure for J. Gibson's sculptures at International Exhibition of 1862, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 3.32O. Jones, Rear elevation of temple structure for H. Hosmer's *Zenobia* at International Exhibition of 1862, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

- Fig. 4.1*Apollo Belvedere*, Roman copy after 3rd century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.
- Fig. 4.2Anne-Louis Girodet, *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
- Fig. 4.3J. Gibson, *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, 1819-25, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.4William Henry Hunt, *The Staircase in the Painted Hall, Chatsworth* (detail), 1827, watercolor, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.5Attrib. Scopas, *Ludovisi Mars*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Museo Romano Nazionale, Rome.
- Fig. 4.6B. Thorvaldsen, *Mars and Cupid*, ca. 1810, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- Fig. 4.7A. Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1802-06, marble, Duke of Wellington Collection, Apsley House, London.
- Fig. 4.8A. Canova, *Venus and Mars*, 1816-22, marble, Royal Collection, London.
- Fig. 4.9Brygos Painter, *Man and Youth Initiating Intercrural Relations*, 5th century BCE, red-figure kylix, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
- Fig. 4.10Count St. Antonio, *The 6th Duke of Devonshire and Grand Duke Nicholas*, 1817, pen and ink, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.11A. Canova, *Endymion*, 1819-22, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.12Adamo Tadolini, *Ganymede with the Eagle of Jove*, 1822-23, marble with bronze, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.13Filippo Albacini, *Wounded Achilles*, 1823-25, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.
- Fig. 4.14Mathieu Kessels, *Discobolus*, 1823-28, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.

- Fig. 4.15J. Gibson, Sketch for *Love Tormenting the Soul*, left view, undated, probably ca. 1835, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 4.16J. Gibson, Sketch for *Love Tormenting the Soul*, right view, undated, probably ca. 1835, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 4.17After Praxiteles, *Il Genio del Vaticano (Eros of Centocelle)*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.
- Fig. 4.18After Praxiteles, *Borghese Genius*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
- Fig. 4.19J. Gibson, *Bacchus*, 1856-60, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London, on long term loan to Bodelwyddan Castle, Rhyl, Wales.
- Fig. 4.20A. Canova, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1804-06, marble, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 4.21Attrib. Praxiteles, *Apollo Sauroktonos*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.
- Fig. 4.22Richard Westmacott, *Jupiter and Ganymede*, 1812, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 4.23B. Thorvaldsen, *Ganymede with Jupiter's Eagle*, 1817, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- Fig. 4.24J. Gibson, *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe in the Presence of Celestial Love*, ca. 1840, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 4.25J. Gibson, Preparatory sketch for *Psyche Receiving Nectar*, ca. 1840, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 5.1J. Gibson, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, modeled ca. 1830, this version ca. 1834-37, marble, Private Collection.
- Fig. 5.2J. Gibson, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, modeled ca. 1830, this version ca. 1836, marble, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

- Fig. 5.3J. Gibson, *Study for Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, undated, probably ca. 1830, pen and wash, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 5.4J. Gibson, *Sketch of Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* showing flaw in statue, from letter to Henry Farnum, 9 January 1850, ink on paper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Fig. 5.5J. Gibson, *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun*, 1847-48, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 5.6*Narcissus*, modeled by Edward Bowring Stephens after design by J. Gibson, manufactured by Copeland and Garrett, 1846, Parian ware porcelain, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Fig. 5.7*Cupid Pursuing Psyche*, cameo by Tommaso Saulini after design by J. Gibson, after 1844, onyx cameo with diamond mount, Private Collection.
- Fig. 5.8*Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, cameo by T. Saulini after design by J. Gibson, after 1850, shell cameo, British Museum, London.
- Fig. 5.9*The Toilet of Nausicaa*, mount by Castellani and cameo by T. Saulini, after designs attributed to J. Gibson, date unknown, gold with shell cameo, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.
- Fig. 5.10*Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, from *Gibson's Designs* (London: Hogarth, 1851), engraved by Giovanni Wenzel and Lodovico Prosseda after design by J. Gibson, engraving, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT.
- Fig. 5.11Title Page to *The Story of Psyche* by Elizabeth Strutt with designs by J. Gibson (London, n.d.), Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- Fig. 5.12*Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, from *Engravings from Original Compositions ... by John Gibson* (London: Colnaghi, 1861), engraved by Oswald Ufer, after design by J. Gibson, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.
- Fig. 6.1William Theed the Younger, *Narcissus*, 1845, marble, Royal Collection, London.

- Fig. 6.2Adolf von Hildebrand, *Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, 1871-73, marble, National Gallery, State Museum of Berlin.
- Fig. 6.3Edward Onslow Ford, *The Singer*, exhibited 1889, bronze and mixed media, Tate Britain, London.
- Fig. 6.4Alfred Gilbert, *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, 1895, bronze and mixed media, Private Collection.
- Fig. 6.5Albert Moore, *A Venus*, 1869, oil on canvas, York City Art Gallery, England.
- Fig. 6.6Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Venus Verticordia*, 1863-68, oil on canvas, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, England.
- Fig. 6.7August Kiss, *The Amazon*, modeled 1834, cast 1842, bronze, Altes Museum, Berlin.
- Fig. 6.8C. Marochetti, *Richard, Coeur de Lion*, modeled ca. 1850, cast 1856, bronze, Westminster Palace, Houses of Parliament, London.
- Fig. 6.9James Pradier, *Phryne*, 1845, marble, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble, France.
- Fig. 6.10H. Thornycroft, *Teucer*, 1881, bronze, Tate Britain, London.

Chapter 1. Introduction: John Gibson, Beyond Polychromy

During his lifetime, the British sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866) was recognized by his contemporaries as one of the most important sculptors of their day. Born in Wales and raised in Liverpool, he made his way to Rome to study with Antonio Canova and ultimately established his own successful studio, remaining in Rome the rest of life. Those who know Gibson today are aware of him because he is considered to be the first nineteenth-century British sculptor to reintroduce polychromy in sculpture, best exemplified in what is considered to be his most famous work, the so-called *Tinted Venus*, 1851-53 (fig. 1.1). Commissioned by the Liverpool merchant Robert Preston and his wife Eleanor, the statue is now in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.¹ The statue shows a nude Venus modestly holding a cloak to cover her lower body, and in her left hand she proffers the golden apple awarded to her by the Trojan prince Paris. She stands in contrapposto and emulates fourth-century B.C.E. Greek statues, such as the *Aphrodite of Knidos* by Praxiteles. Gibson's *Venus* wears her hair up and tied in a hair net, which conveys a sense of maturity. As such, she appears more modern than ancient, but she differs from other nineteenth-century representations of Venus as a sensual goddess or nubile nymph, traits one usually associates with contemporaneous representations of Venus in French paintings by Alexandre Cabanel and sculptures by James Pradier. Most importantly for Gibson, her hair, hair net, eyes, lips, the edges of her cloak, and the turtle at her feet are colored using wax-based pigments.

Gibson's decision to tint his *Venus* was based on his awareness that the Greeks and Romans painted their statues. As such, he was resurrecting an ancient practice for a modern audience. However, his decision to tint portions of the statue, rather than paint its entire surface, demonstrates an attempt at a modern interpretation of an ancient practice, rather than a determination for archaeological accuracy. Gibson sought to integrate within the modern decorative interior a tinted statue that better harmonized

¹ There are two extant versions of the *Tinted Venus*. The first for the Prestons appears today as a result of conservation work conducted by the Walker Art Gallery. A replica was commissioned by the Marquis of Sligo in the late 1850s and currently is in the Resnick Collection in Beverly Hills, but it is unknown if this statue's tinting is restored. Both were based on Gibson's earlier untinted statue of *Venus Verticordia*, commissioned by Joseph Neeld and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839. This statue is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

with its surroundings. The *Venus* was neither his first nor his last experiment with tinting sculpture.² But it was this polychrome statue that received great attention in his day because he proudly exhibited it in his studio for seven years and thereafter displayed it at the 1862 International Exhibition in London with two other polychrome statues in a colored temple designed by Owen Jones. Indeed, Jones and others throughout Europe were already known for their interest in ancient polychrome architecture and sculpture, so Gibson's experiment was not an aesthetic anomaly, but part of the artistic milieu of the time.³ Furthermore, this transnational interest in polychromy demonstrates that Gibson was not the first to reintroduce it, although his contribution in tinting and harmonizing with the interior was unique and will be addressed in this dissertation. The response by viewers and the press to the *Tinted Venus* was mixed, with both positive and negative criticism, but by and large his polychrome goddess of love was rejected.⁴ Over the subsequent decades, with the onset in Britain of New Sculpture and its preference for bronze over marble, followed by the rise of abstract art with its emphasis on purity of form, Gibson's *Venus* was eventually seen to exemplify Victorian ostentation, and his reputation quickly declined as a result.⁵

In contrast to the *Tinted Venus*, Gibson's statue of *The Hunter and His Dog*, or *The Greek Hunter*, modeled in 1840-41 (fig. 1.2), was cited consistently in his own lifetime and after his death as the masterpiece of his career, a work which demonstrated the highest achievement in sculpture because of its successful amalgamation of idealism based on classical precedents and a close observation of natural form. Today, few are even aware of this work's existence. The statue shows a life-sized nude youth bending forward to restrain his dog by the collar. Gibson claimed he frequently was inspired to model figures after witnessing everyday events in the streets of Rome, and the *Hunter* was no exception. He wrote in his memoirs that he modeled the work after he saw "a big boy holding a dog by the collar at the moment the animal was about to fly at an object."⁶ In modeling the figure, he worked from "a very fine

² Gibson tinted four classical subjects (Venus, Pandora, Hebe, and Cupid) and two portrait statues (Queen Victoria and Mrs. Henry Murray, later the Countess of Beauchamp).

³ These international artists and architects included Leo von Klenze, Charles Simart, Charles Cordier, and Carlo Marochetti, whose contributions to polychrome sculpture will be discussed in chapter three on Gibson's studio practice.

⁴ These reviews will be discussed in the chapter on Gibson's studio practice.

⁵ Literature about New Sculpture and its modernity is discussed below.

⁶ Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 79.

model in the prime of his youth” with “proportions correct.”⁷ Gibson also claimed he went frequently at this time to contemplate the casts of the Elgin Marbles at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. He does not say which figure inspired him, but, as I argue in the next chapter, there are strong similarities between the head and upper body of the *Hunter* and the Theseus/Dionysus figure from the east pediment group.

Gibson’s *Hunter* was a “modern classic,” a statue crafted by a living sculptor that revealed a close study of natural forms, while its sources of inspiration were masterworks from ancient Greece and Rome. Throughout the nineteenth century and into art historiography today, the “modern classic” is a term first associated with the work of Canova, his “revolutionary achievement [being] that by his own work he proclaimed that the sculptor’s highest aim must be to create ‘modern classics,’ i.e., sculpture that demanded to be treated on a basis of equality with the ancient classics such as the *Apollo Belvedere* or the *Laocoön*.”⁸ Anecdotes suggest that some connoisseurs of Canova’s day mistakenly believed his statues were in fact ancient, but overall most viewers both then and now could and can identify the works of Canova and his followers as appearing more modern than ancient. They frequently have a more lustrous polish to them that Greco-Roman art never had, and their proportions reveal visions of beauty appropriate to Europeans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not fifth-century B.C.E. Athens.

In addition to its status as a modern classic, Gibson’s *Hunter* also was appreciated by Victorian audiences because it had a narrative framework showing action frozen in time. British art took pride in its literary sources, generating in the nineteenth-century less a desire for large-scale history paintings and more an interest in small historical genre scenes that had as their subjects poems, novels, and plays by literary greats such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope.⁹ Thus, a statue with a story appealed to the Victorians, as did the dog. Indeed, the image of the dog about to chase its prey was an experience Victorians, particularly of the middle and upper classes, could understand and appreciate, both as hunters and animal lovers.

⁷ Thomas Matthews, ed., *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: W. Heinemann, 1911), 99; Eastlake, 89.

⁸ H. W. Janson, “German Neoclassic Sculpture in International Perspective,” *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 33, no. 3 (October 1972), 7.

⁹ For more on British history painting and narrativity, see Peter Cannon-Brookes, ed., *The Painted Word. British History Painting: 1750-1830* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1991); and Raymond Lister, *Victorian Narrative Paintings* (London: Museum Press, 1966).

Animal painting was a respected genre form in British art, as seen in the popularity of works by Edwin Landseer in particular.¹⁰ Sculptures of dogs by Joseph Gott and Matthew Cotes Wyatt were equally popular. The Duke of Devonshire commissioned Gott to make statues of his dogs Bony and Spot, and Wyatt's marble-and-bronze *Bashaw*, 1831-34 (fig. 1.3), was appreciated for its attempt at merging naturalism with allegory in decorative form, although it since has been branded by H. W. Janson as "Victorian pop art."¹¹ It was reported at the time that the dog in Gibson's statue was a Molossus, an extinct Greco-Roman hunting dog.¹² Ancient examples of this breed could be seen in marble at the Vatican Museums and the British Museum, but its modern-day descendant was the well-known English Mastiff. However, a closer examination of the dog in the statue shows that it clearly is a hound, more than likely an Italian greyhound.¹³ This would have been a more logical choice for the dog, as greyhounds long had been associated with aristocrats and hunting, and they appear regularly in English, Italian, and Dutch portraits of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Prince Albert's favorite dogs were greyhounds and had been painted by Landseer, and Gibson's Roman colleague Richard James Wyatt (a distant cousin of Matthew Cotes Wyatt) had sculpted at this time a statue of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, with her husband's faithful greyhound at her side (fig. 1.4). Thus the presence of a greyhound in Gibson's statue would have greatly appealed to contemporaneous British audiences.

The first marble version of Gibson's *Hunter* (now untraced) was sculpted from 1842-43 and commissioned by Henry and Margaret Sandbach (the granddaughter of William Roscoe, Gibson's first major patron in Liverpool). Their version was exhibited in London at the Royal Academy in 1844 and in

¹⁰ Landseer was patronized by the monarchy and aristocracy, and his animal paintings were regularly made into prints and collected by the public both within Britain and abroad. In recognition of his animal paintings at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, Landseer received as many votes as J.-A.-D. Ingres and was the only British artist to win the Grand Medal of Honor. Théophile Gautier wrote about British genre paintings that they almost always included a dog. Gautier, *Les Beaux-arts en Europe. 1855* (Paris, 1855), 1:72. See also Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 103-13.

¹¹ James Lees-Milne, *The Bachelor Duke: A Life of William Spencer Cavendish 6th Duke of Devonshire 1790-1858* (London: John Murray, 1991), 137; H. W. Janson, *19th-Century Sculpture* (New York: Abrams, 1985), 76. For more on dogs in art, see Stephen Feeke, *Hounds in Leash: The Dog in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Sculpture* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2000); and Edgar Peters Bowron, ed., *Best in Show: The Dog in Art from the Renaissance to Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹² "Exposition Universelle 1855. French Criticism on British Sculpture," *The Art Journal* (December 1855), 310. This essay was a translation of reviews from French journals about British sculpture at the 1855 fair, the identification of Gibson's Molossian dog coming from an anonymous review in the *Moniteur*.

¹³ My thanks to Stacey Van Hoy for her assistance in identifying different possible dog breeds.

Manchester at the Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. A second marble version was sculpted in 1847 for the Earl of Yarborough and is now in the collection of the Usher Gallery in Lincoln, England. This version was exhibited in London at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where it was awarded a Council Medal, the top prize for sculpture, but Gibson turned it down since he was on the fine art jury. This same replica also was exhibited in Paris at the Exposition Universelle of 1855. In addition, during the mid-1850s, a plaster version was placed on permanent display in the hall of modern sculpture at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park. This statue, then, became Gibson's most publicly exhibited work during his life.¹⁴ Its ongoing popularity inspired other artists such as the American John Quincy Adams Ward, whose *Indian Hunter*, 1860 (fig. 1.5), exoticized Gibson's work by transforming the youth into a Native American, but maintaining his classical form.¹⁵ Although Hamo Thornycroft's marble statue of *Artemis*, 1882, does not seem directly related, the model for this work from 1880 (fig. 1.6) shows the goddess of the hunt bent over and holding back a dog in a position very similar to Gibson's *Hunter*. The noted differences here are that Thornycroft's figure is female and there are two dogs instead of one. In addition to these works, an indeterminate number of reduced-sized gilt bronzes were issued after Gibson's death (fig. 1.7), allowing the work to join the market for bronze statuettes that was part of New Sculpture's focus on the domestic interior.

This excursus about *The Hunter and His Dog* suggests, then, how the life and subsequent historiography of the *Tinted Venus* has obfuscated the fact that Gibson was considered by his peers to be one of the most important and well-respected sculptors of the nineteenth century. This is certainly true

¹⁴ A third version in marble was sculpted in 1862-63 for Joshua Frey Josephson, a judge in Australia, and is now in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. A fourth version was sculpted in 1864-65 for John Leigh Clare of Toxteth Old Hall, Liverpool. This replica was sold by Clare on 28 March 1868 at a Christie's auction of his art collection, where it was noted as being "the last finished work by the hand of the great sculptor." *Catalogue of the Highly Important Collection of Water-colour Drawings, the Property of John Leigh Clare, Esq., Toxteth Old Hall, Liverpool...* (London: Christie, Manson & Woods, 1868), n.p. Although this last (now untraced) version was noted as being by Gibson's hand, this was more than likely a marketing strategy on the part of Christie's to uphold the image of the hand of the artist at work, since Gibson had died two years earlier. As with other replicas, this version most likely was the product of Gibson's studio, with the sculptor himself involved only in initial modeling and the final stages of marble carving and/or polishing. Gibson's role in the making of sculpture is discussed in chapter three on his studio practice. Gibson also kept in his studio a plaster version of the statue that is now in the collection of the Royal Academy.

¹⁵ The earliest published suggestion that Ward's statue was inspired by Gibson's masterpiece, with Ward's seen as a poor imitation of it, was made in 1872 after a bronze version of Ward's Indian was installed in Central Park. "The Indian Hunter in Central Park," *Fine Arts* 1, no. 8 (October 1873), 130-32. My thanks to Thayer Tolles and Carol Clark for bringing this article to my attention.

within his native Britain, where his patrons included aristocrats like Queen Victoria and the Duke of Devonshire, politicians such as Sir Robert Peel, and bourgeois merchants and industrialists such as the Liverpool manufacturer Richard Vaughan Yates. But Gibson's reputation also reached around the globe. His work was seen internationally, from Russia and Australia to North America and India.¹⁶ In addition to being a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, he was elected to no less than eight international art academies, including those in Berlin, Bologna, Munich, New York, Rome, and St. Petersburg. King Ludwig I commissioned his portrait statue in classical dress for an exterior niche of the Glyptothek (destroyed during World War II), and he appeared as a fictional character in *The Marble Faun* (1860) by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

This dissertation is the first monographic study of Gibson's life and career. It reconsiders his oeuvre beyond the *Tinted Venus* and other polychrome figures for which he is now best known and thus often disparaged. Although I look more closely at his free-standing marble statues of classical subjects, I also consider his portrait statues, reliefs, drawings, and his work in other media. This dissertation therefore examines heretofore understudied aspects of his oeuvre: a recontextualization of his life and training; a close study of his studio practice; an exploration of homoeroticism in his male figures based on his understanding of the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann; and an examination of his interest in other forms of reproductive media, specifically porcelain statuettes, jewelry, and printmaking. My discussion of these topics ultimately shifts the focus of the scholarship on Gibson from polychromy to his numerous other contributions in the history of nineteenth-century sculpture. Rather than ignore his polychrome sculptures, however, I offer new readings of them to show how they intersected with these other equally important aspects of his career.

Although I focus on one artist and use published and unpublished archival sources to discuss Gibson's work, my methodology is pluralistic. I engage biography with nineteenth-century exhibition history and critical art reviews, and I link patronage and art production to gender studies and queer theory. I also engage with sculpture in its international context as Gibson himself would have been exposed to it in the cosmopolitan art center that was Rome. Thus, the sculpture of Antonio Canova and

¹⁶ Gibson's international patrons included: Czar Alexander II (Russia); Judge Joshua Frey Josephson (Australia); William Appleton and James Lenox (United States); the Uniacke family (Canada); and the zamindar Dwarkanath Tagore and the maharajah Duleep Singh (India).

Bertel Thorvaldsen, the two leading sculptors in Rome at the time of Gibson's arrival in 1817, are components of this dissertation, as are the works of native British sculptors such as John Flaxman and Joseph Nollekens, to demonstrate what Gibson learned from his early teachers and how he evolved to craft his own work in Rome. I also draw analogies to his other contemporaries in Rome, such as the aforementioned British sculptor R. J. Wyatt, the Dutch sculptor Mathieu Kessels, and the Italian sculptor Adamo Tadolini, for a better assessment of Gibson's sculptural practices.

Indeed, it is important to recognize that the Roman school of sculpture was an international environment in which artists from different nations regularly visited one another's studio to provide constructive criticism and to inspire one another with new interpretations of subjects.¹⁷ Gibson himself found this to be one of the advantages of living and working in Rome, a city he called "the very university of art, where it is the one thing talked about and thought about."¹⁸ Sculptors in Rome also regularly interacted with one another in the Caffè Greco near the Spanish Stairs. But this camaraderie was not limited to sculptors. Gibson socialized and interacted with international painters as well, such as Charles Eastlake and Joseph Severn from England, the Nazarene Peter von Cornelius from Düsseldorf, and the Italian history painter Vincenzo Camuccini. Language barriers did exist. For instance, Gibson was fluent in Italian and had a basic understanding of German, but he did not speak French. Nevertheless, there is evidence that he was aware of the activities of the students at the French Academy in the Villa Medici, and arguably they with his work as well.

From this perspective, the city of Rome can be seen as a microcosm to understand not only Gibson's oeuvre but his experiences through interactions with international painters and sculptors there. His nationalistic focus may have been London and the Royal Academy, but he repeatedly emphasized the benefits of working in the international community of Rome. The city also enabled Gibson never to lose sight of ancient Greece as the model of perfection for figurative sculpture. However, he strove to reinvent it for a modern audience. In combining ancient models with a close study of nature, lessons he learned from Canova and from the writings of Joshua Reynolds, Henry Fuseli, Flaxman, and others at the Royal Academy, he created his version of the modern classical body.

¹⁷ Eastlake, 50-51; Matthews, 221.

¹⁸ Eastlake, 58; Matthews, 55-56.

In art historiography over the past fifteen years, some scholars have argued for the modernity of nineteenth-century sculpture by pushing backwards its line of demarcation from the abstraction of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth to the fin-de-siècle New Sculptors. David Getsy, for instance, has cited Auguste Rodin as the starting point of influence on British sculptors such as Alfred Gilbert and Edward Onslow Ford, and thus points to their work as the genesis of modernity in British sculpture.¹⁹ In doing so, he extends further the arguments first posited by Susan Beattie and others such as H. W. Janson, which I discuss in more detail below, who saw the mid-nineteenth-century proliferation of classical subjects in marble as merely derivative. Hence, Gibson and his followers have been seen as the school that New Sculpture consciously rejected in the march toward modernity.

Alex Potts, however, has argued for the modernity of Neoclassicism by demonstrating how figurative works by Canova were different from those of the past in that he gave his figures a theatrical consciousness in their poses.²⁰ This innovation was underscored by an inherent sensuality that, according to Potts, enticed yet ultimately frustrated the (presumably male) viewer. Canova's *Venus Italica*, for instance, is "caught in an instant of frozen attentiveness," aware of being seen and responding to it by covering herself and looking away.²¹ Raised on a pedestal, her head turned away from the viewer, Venus forces the viewer/voyeur to circumambulate her and try to meet her gaze, but the only things he can admire are the fleeting glimpses of the varied textural surfaces that must serve as substitute frisson. Potts argues that what makes Canova's statues modern was that, when encountering them, one was "acutely aware of the impact it had as sensual phenomenon—both through its physical qualities as marble object and through the physicality of the naked human presence it evoked."²²

Gibson's works arguably fall in line with this practice as well. As Canova's student, he was aware of a marble statue's power and capacity to occupy human space, and thus to interact with viewers. *The Hunter and His Dog* not only drew its inspiration from a real-life event that Victorians could understand and appreciate (holding back a jolting dog), but the fierce determination on the face of the hunter and his

¹⁹ David Getsy, *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c. 1880-1930* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004).

²⁰ Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 38-59.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²² *Ibid.*, 54. Potts extends his argument to the modern classics of Thorvaldsen, although he sees these as less theatrical and more introspective, but still sensual in nature.

dog could entrance viewers into wondering if they themselves were the target of aggression or if there was something behind them toward which the dog was darting. The developed musculature of the nude youth would have appealed to viewers, male or female, for either its virtuous masculinity or virile sensuality. Thus, Gibson's *Hunter* could be seen as an example of Potts's perspective on the modern classic, in that the statue and the viewer engage in a spatial, temporal, and sexual dialogue. This was especially true in Gibson's early work, which was inspired by a Winckelmannian aesthetic underscored by sensuality, which I argue more fully in chapter four on Gibson's homoerotic subjects.

Although I agree with some of Potts's ideas about this interactive approach in the modern classical body, I am less supportive of his attempt to use this sensibility as a reason to redraw the boundary lines of modernity back to Neoclassicism. Instead, I see the "modern classic" as meaning "from Gibson's own time," in the same way the term was applied in the nineteenth century to Canova. In so doing, I am following the historically-restrictive pattern of scholars such as Malcolm Baker, who, in his studies of eighteenth-century sculpture in Britain, sees "modern" as part of the socio-political and artistic developments of the artists' own day and not a direct precursor for twentieth-century art as Potts does. More specifically, Baker focuses on the importance and intersection of "making and viewing" sculpture in the eighteenth century.²³ Throughout this dissertation, I similarly engage with these concepts: how Gibson designed and sculpted specific subjects; how he disseminated and displayed these works; and how audiences received and reviewed them. I explore traditional examples of these ideas, such as with his most frequently reproduced statue *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, but I also consider how Gibson's designs in other media allowed him to disseminate classicism using modern technologies. With his artistic training based on the long-standing academic principle of *disegno*, I argue in chapter five that Gibson's interest in reproductive media, such as statuettes and prints, allowed him to exploit the tradition of *disegno* with new technologies so as to help educate and spread classical aesthetics to the masses.

For Gibson, then, classicism was modern. He did not so much reject aspects of modern art or living, but rather adapted classicism for modern audiences. In Elizabeth Prettejohn's recent text *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture*, she argues for a reconsideration of classicism as a key component of modernism, asserting that "the modern study of ancient art and the making of modern art are inextricably

²³ Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London: V&A Publications; Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000), 20.

intertwined.”²⁴ She points to a number of canonical modern artists who referenced classical forms in their subjects, but more importantly she points to art historical discourse from Winckelmann to Clement Greenberg as modern interpretations of classicism and ancient art. In practice and in speech Gibson can be counted among these artists, art historians, and critics. As Prettejohn argues, these individuals knew classicism only as it could be understood filtered through a modern eye. As I will discuss in this dissertation, Gibson was readily familiar with Winckelmann’s writings on classicism, but he also read Gottfried Lessing, Reynolds, Fuseli, Jones, and a number of other scholars, all of whom helped frame his modern appreciation for and understanding of Greco-Roman culture.

Because I am addressing Gibson’s “modern classicism” in terms of nineteenth-century practices and aesthetics, a clear understanding of “Neoclassicism” is essential.²⁵ The publication in 1968 of Hugh Honour’s culturally sweeping survey *Neo-Classicism* was noteworthy for its interdisciplinary examination.²⁶ However, the text inevitably led to art historians and critics treating equally as a single style all of the different classical manifestations and interpretations that took place from the late eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century. The anti-classicism stance of modernism reinforced this neutralizing perspective. In contrast to this was the reception of Honour’s book *Romanticism*, which successfully nuanced the different ways the Romantic *Zeitgeist* could be identified in the arts, such as the Gothic revival, patriotism, nature, and so on.²⁷ Seen as themes, rather than a single style, Romanticism is still presented this way in survey texts of nineteenth-century art, to the detriment of Neoclassicism, which arguably is presented as less modern, if not in fact anti-modern.²⁸ Like Romanticism, Neoclassicism must be nuanced and understood not as a single defining style but as a

²⁴ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture: Greek Sculpture and Modern Art from Winckelmann to Picasso* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 1.

²⁵ Other art historians whose recent scholarship similarly has tackled the problem of defining Neoclassicism include Vicky Coltman and Matthew Craske. Coltman reconsiders the role of classicism in British education and colonialism as the impetus for the creation of a classical past in the late eighteenth century. *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 6-16. Craske decries terms such as Rococo and Neoclassical as “anachronistic or powerfully associated with a mass of ‘modern’ inflections of meaning,” and focuses instead on analyzing “the fundamental historical causes of change” in his survey of art in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. *Art in Europe 1700-1830: A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

²⁶ Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1981).

²⁷ Hugh Honour, *Romanticism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

²⁸ See, for instance, the approximately 80 pages of text in three chapters on Neoclassicism versus the approximately 140 pages of text in six chapters on Romanticism in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Prentice Hall; Pearson, 2012), 44-265.

Zeitgeist of its own with a variety of themes, such as Hellenism/Romanism, patriotism, primitivism, and so on. Robert Rosenblum's *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* argued for this varied interpretation of Neoclassicism, but his study focused on painting and architecture.²⁹ Heretofore left out of a nuanced study of Neoclassicism has been sculpture, a startling realization since Greco-Roman sculpture was the actual basis for the development of Neoclassicism itself. As a result the majority of art historians and critics still typically consider all marble sculptures produced from about 1780 to 1860 to be broadly defined as "Neoclassical," regardless of their actual subjects, themes, or artistic intents.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to attempt to define these different themes. However, in light of this distinction, it is important to consider how Gibson's "modern classics" produced in Rome compared to those marble sculptures produced in his native Britain. There is no doubt that Gibson pointed to the ancient Greeks for their excellence in art, and that he encouraged his followers to look to the Greeks as the apex of sculptural achievement. Nevertheless, following the lessons of contemporaries such as Canova, Reynolds, Flaxman, Fuseli, and Nollekens, Gibson practiced and encouraged imitation, not slavish copying, in creating the modern classical body, and like his peers he lauded sculptural groups like the Parthenon marbles as the perfect blend of idealism with a close study of nature.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Neoclassicism was referred to as the "true style," a term that applied not just to sculpture but to painting, architecture, and the decorative arts.³⁰ The "true style" implied a new art form that had its origins in simple, yet idealistic, works from ancient Greece. Early British sculptors who traveled to Rome, including Nollekens and Flaxman, studied the "true style" in the extant sculptures they saw and attempted to bring their recreated large-scale visions of ancient gods and goddesses in sculptural form back to England. However, these works were only received well by the aristocracy, men who had made the Grand Tour and were educated in classic literature and thus had a greater appreciation for the "true style."

During the 1790s and up to the Battle of Waterloo, travel to the European continent was closed to the British because of war with France, and there developed as a result in England an insular, "native" style in sculpture that reflected a democratizing interest in the depiction of contemporary heroes in modern dress

²⁹ Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

³⁰ Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, 14.

and sentimental scenes of death as sleep. The vast number of monuments with exactly these types of subjects, commissioned at this time for St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey from native-born sculptors, demonstrates that public taste in London was driven more by patriotic subjects and less by private commissions of classically-derived gods and goddesses.³¹ Sculpture historian Alison Yarrington has gone so far as to call this public mode of sculpture production "a form of romantic Hellenism," but there was very little about these works that was truly Hellenic, except perhaps for the use of marble.³² The eventual leader of this "native style" was Francis Chantrey, who dominated the London sculpture scene from about 1810 through his death in 1841. Potts has dubbed him Britain's "national sculptor" of the post-Napoleonic period, and there is truth to the fact that he made a career for himself consciously eschewing classical subjects in favor of works that reflected more his support of a "native style" within British sculpture.³³

Because the term Neoclassicism obfuscates this distinction in styles between sculptors who followed the "true style" and those who worked in a "native style," I intentionally avoid using the term Neoclassicism in this dissertation when speaking about Gibson and his work. Indeed, this appellation was not in use until late in the nineteenth century and provided critics with pejorative reasons as to why marble gods and goddesses based on the classical past were anti-modernist. Instead, I refer to Gibson and his followers as adherents of the "true style," practitioners of imitation after the Greeks to create modern classics. In contrast, I discuss sculptors such as Chantrey and his followers as part of the "native style" tradition, which preferred nationalistic and sentimental subjects without a reliance on classical art for inspiration. This is not to say that Gibson was exclusively a "true style" sculptor and that he refused to

³¹ This project will be discussed in chapter two on Gibson's life and career. For more, see Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 257-76.

³² Alison Yarrington, "Art in the Dark: Viewing and Exhibiting Sculpture at Somerset House," in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 186-87.

³³ Alex Potts, "Chantrey as the National Sculptor of Early Nineteenth-Century England," *Oxford Art Journal* 4, no. 2 (November 1981), 17-27. Yarrington has argued that Chantrey was not anti-classical, but her argument based on Chantrey's admiration of Canova as a sculptor is weak, and it does not outweigh the greater evidence of Chantrey's refusal to sculpt classical subjects. "Anglo-Italian Attitudes: Chantrey and Canova," in *The Lustrous Trade: Material Culture and the History of Sculpture in England and Italy, c. 1700 to c. 1860*, ed. Cinzia Maria Sicca and Alison Yarrington (London; New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 132-55. For more on the rise of the nascent British school of sculpture, see Matthew Craske, "Reviving the 'School of Phidias': The Invention of a National 'School of Sculpture' in Britain (1780-1830)," *Visual Culture in Britain* 7, no. 2 (2006), 25-45.

make heroic or sentimental works of art. He was, in truth, an artist who made a living as a sculptor, and so he crafted numerous portrait busts for financial reasons throughout his career, and he made monumental statues of men, although he did insist on depicting them in classical dress, for which he was at times sharply criticized.³⁴ Ultimately, in following the “true style” path, Gibson imitated the idealism and the close study of nature in the spirit of ancient Greek culture, but adapted his work to contemporaneous aesthetic theories and technologies to create modern classics.

Historiography

For a sculptor little known today, Gibson was surprisingly well-documented in his own day, and frequently cited as the third of the three great sculptors based in Rome, after Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen. Already in the 1820s at the outset of his professional career, stories and letters appeared in newspapers and journals about his life, training, patrons, and exhibited works. Gibson was recognized as a rising talent early on and his first patrons eagerly encouraged his career. An early report about him appeared in the *Kaleidoscope* two years after his September 1817 departure for Rome. Its author, T. P., whose identity is unknown, discussed Gibson’s youthful successes in Liverpool and claimed to have helped him early on with one of his clay models.³⁵ The same article also reported on his recent commission from the Duke of Devonshire, which became the statue *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, 1819-25 (fig. 4.3). Two years later, *London Magazine* reported on Gibson’s growing popularity in Rome and discussed his recent commission for Sir George Beaumont for the statue *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, 1822-27 (fig. 2.21). The author went on to note that Canova himself greatly praised Gibson’s work:

³⁴ On his 1851-53 commission for a statue of Prime Minister Peel for Westminster Abbey, in which he sculpted him dressed as a Roman orator, one critic wrote: “Neither can we approve of the propriety of draping such a man as Peel—the very ideal of an eminently practical and matter-of-fact age—in the conventional flowing robes of the Roman forum. It adds to the unrealness of the whole production.” “Gibson’s Statue of Sir Robert Peel, in Westminster Abbey,” *Illustrated London News*, 1 October 1853, 278. This argument as to whether great British military and political heroes should be depicted in ancient or modern dress had been ongoing since the beginning of the century with the monuments at St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, but the ever increasing dominance of the middle classes, less trained in classical aesthetics, put Gibson’s “classical” and “modern” subjects under heavy scrutiny, and ultimately resulted in the collapse of ancient prototypes for modern monumental figures.

³⁵ T. P., “Biographical Notices. Mr. John Gibson, of Liverpool,” *Kaleidoscope* 2, no. 64 (12 October 1819), 55.

“Canova has been warm in his commendation of this performance, in consequence of which, the artist’s *studio* is become a lounge for all the fashionables at Rome.”³⁶

Even before these reports, Gibson’s work had received mention for his bust of Mrs. Watson Taylor (fig. 2.15) at the 1819 Royal Academy exhibition, the anonymous critic writing: “If 1205, *Bust of Mrs W Taylor*, is correspondently delicate in the original, it is lucky for bachelors’ hearts that she is wedded.”³⁷ Hereafter Gibson’s name began to appear consistently not only as an important sculptor living abroad, but also as a fellow Briton with an active studio open to Grand Tourists. Reports of his major commissions and reviews of his regular Royal Academy submissions were recorded in journals and newspapers such as *The Athenaeum*, *Literary Gazette*, and *The Times*, and later important illustrated periodicals such as *The Art-Union* (later *The Art Journal*) and the *Illustrated London News*.³⁸

Based in Rome, Gibson inevitably was compared to the other great masters of the Roman school of sculpture, Canova and Thorvaldsen. What all three shared was that they were not native to Rome, but had adopted that city’s ancient culture and were masters at their artistic trade.³⁹ Canova died in 1822, followed by Thorvaldsen in 1844. Thereafter, Gibson came to be seen as the last of the three great surviving sculptors in Rome. Perhaps not surprisingly for a nation seeking advancement in the international art of sculpture, Gibson was often touted in the British press as equaling or even surpassing these men in skill and talent. *Arnold’s Magazine* in 1834 published a laudatory essay about Canova and Gibson, boldly connecting their work: “The beauty of execution, and the exquisite surface so conspicuous in Canova’s work, are to be traced in the delightful productions of Gibson, which, in emulating the pure spirit of Grecian Art, bear an impress of individual feeling and national character.”⁴⁰

³⁶ “Literary and Scientific Intelligence; &c.,” *London Magazine* 6, no. 33 (September 1822), 288.

³⁷ “Fine Art. Royal Academy Exhibition. [Concluded.] The Sculpture,” *The Examiner* 603 (18 July 1819), 461.

³⁸ Some of the earliest articles about Gibson to appear in these journals and newspapers were as follows: “Monument to Mr. Canning,” *Athenaeum* 21 (4 April 1828), 330-31; “British Artists at Rome,” *Literary Gazette* 286 (13 July 1822), 441-42; “The Papal States,” *Times*, 9 July 1846, 3; “Foreign Art,” *The Art-Union* (15 March 1839), 23; “The Exhibition of the Royal Academy,” *Illustrated London News*, 11 May 1844, 305-06.

³⁹ Canova, Venetian by birth, moved to Rome in the mid-1780s and soon established international fame. He ran one of the most prolific studios in Rome that continued to generate work in his name long after his death. Thorvaldsen was from Copenhagen but spent forty years working in Rome. Almost immediately after his arrival there in 1797, his studio practice rivaled that of Canova, only superseding it after the Italian’s death.

⁴⁰ “A Word about Canova and Gibson,” *Arnold’s Magazine of the Fine Arts* 3, no. 5 (March 1834), 422.

In 1840 the travel writer Samuel Laing published an essay about Rome and wrote that Gibson had surpassed Thorvaldsen in his artistry:

Our countryman, Gibson, is one of the most distinguished sculptors of the present day at Rome. His statues are remarkable for their classic elegance; indeed I should say that no modern artist, with the single exception of Thorvaldsen, and he only in bas-relief, has caught so much of the true classic style and spirit as Gibson.⁴¹

Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's 1845 dedication of his novel *Zanoni* to Gibson made a point of noting how he had in fact improved upon Canova, whom public taste in Britain increasingly saw as too sensual and artificial: "The pupil of Canova, you have inherited his excellences, while you have shunned his errors:—yours his delicacy, not his affectation."⁴² This acknowledgment continued after Gibson's death with the writings of Henry Weekes, fourth Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, who apotheosized Gibson's accomplishments in one of his lectures:

His works are of a purer kind than even those of the *atelier* in which he was bred; they possess all the finish of Canova with far less of the affectation and other vices of that great man; nor were they so unpleasantly rigid as are sometimes those of Thorvaldsen: in short, they were more purely Greek.⁴³

Thus, Gibson was perceived by the mid- to late nineteenth century as having discovered a middle path of classicism that was closer to that of the actual Greeks and situated between the affectation of Canova and the rigidity of Thorvaldsen. This comparative perception of Gibson continued far into twentieth-century scholarship as well. In the 1950s, Jürgen B. Hartmann perpetuated this same idea of Gibson as situated between these two masters.⁴⁴ Hartmann's unique contribution was the inclusion of a number of images of works by all three men to properly illustrate how they were similar and different in their representation of the same subjects. Unfortunately, positioning Gibson as the amalgamation of Canova and Thorvaldsen, and thus unoriginal in the modernist sense, did little to enhance his contribution to sculpture history and arguably diminished the reputation of his work as derivative and historicist.

⁴¹ [Samuel Laing], "Letters from the Continent," *Monthly Chronicle* 6 (December 1840), 516.

⁴² Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, "Dedicatory Epistle. To John Gibson, Sculptor," *Zanoni*, 2nd ed. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1845), iv.

⁴³ Henry Weekes, R.A., *Lectures on Art, Delivered at the Royal Academy, London* (London: Bickers and Son, 1880), 156-57. Weekes was not completely impartial, however. Although he found Gibson's classicism to be among the best representations for its revival, he expressed dismay that he remained unyielding in his belief that only classicism was the appropriate mode in which a sculptor should work. As a result, Weekes believed that his lack of interest in originality meant he could never be said to represent the national (i.e. British) school of sculpture. Weekes also saw Gibson's experiments in polychromy as an eccentric deviation that he never would have pursued had he not been so transfixed by Greco-Roman art.

⁴⁴ Jürgen B. Hartmann, "Canova, Thorvaldsen and Gibson," *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History, Literature and the Arts* 6 (1955), 205-35 + plates.

By the 1840s, when Gibson was in his fifties, he was recognized as the greatest sculptor working in Rome and became an international celebrity in the world of art. As his fame increased, more detailed biographical sketches began to appear, although these were often filled with errors about his early life and career.⁴⁵ Gibson began writing his memoirs with the intention of publishing an autobiography, but this did not appear until after his death in an edition by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, which is discussed below. His death in 1866 led to an outpouring of obituaries in journals and newspapers.⁴⁶ The *Illustrated London News* accompanied its obituary with wood engravings of his funeral and other aspects of his life.⁴⁷

Curiously, though, with all this biographical information, some basic facts are still missing, such as his actual birth date. Furthermore, because Gibson did not start writing his memoirs until after living in Rome for more than thirty years, one should not assume that his memories of his early years are always accurate. They even may be exaggerated: certainly the tone of his memoirs shows that he had no hesitation in boasting about his achievements. In some ways, Gibson's recounting of his own life as an artist epitomizes the myth of the Romantic hero.⁴⁸ As Eastlake tells it, he was born into humble beginnings, was largely self-taught early on, and became the most talked-about sculptor in the world; he forged new ideas with his art, such as reviving polychrome sculpture, while at the same time vociferously railing against those who experimented with sculpture, taking it away from its classical roots.

Among the biographical sources on Gibson, texts by Anna Jameson, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, and Thomas Matthews are the most authoritative and detailed, although none can be called an actual biography in the traditional sense, as all were based on first-person accounts written by Gibson or taken from interviews with him. It is somewhat surprising that even since the publication of these three sources, the last in 1911, no one has written an analytical biography. Specialized art reference sources like Rupert Gunnis's *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851* and the new *Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in*

⁴⁵ See, for instance, "The Career of Gibson, the Sculptor," *Critic* 6, no. 148 (30 October 1847), 286.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, "Fine Arts. The Late John Gibson," *The Albion* 44, no. 8 (24 February 1866), 93; H. W., "John Gibson, R.A.," *The Art Journal* (April 1866), 113-15; "Obituary," *Journal of the Society of Arts* 14, no. 691 (16 February 1866), 229; and "The Late Mr. Gibson," *Times*, 2 February 1866, 7.

⁴⁷ "The Funeral of John Gibson, R.A.," *Illustrated London News*, 10 February 1866, 136-37; "John Gibson, R.A.," *Illustrated London News*, 17 February 1866, 159-61.

⁴⁸ For more on the artist as a Romantic hero, see Honour, *Romanticism*, 245-75.

Britain 1660-1851 have proven helpful for updating information on the location of Gibson's works, but their essays make no original contributions to his life and career.⁴⁹

The first of these three authoritative sources was an essay written by Anna Jameson (1794-1860), part of her series on contemporary artists, published in *The Art Journal* in 1849.⁵⁰ Jameson was well-known in her day as an art writer, with texts on art collections in London and the lives of Italian Renaissance painters.⁵¹ Born Anna Murphy, she was the daughter of an Irish painter of miniatures, and the estranged wife of a judge named Robert Jameson.⁵² She first traveled to the European continent in 1821, and it was during this first of many visits that she met Gibson in Rome. Some correspondence between them survives, so we know that they considered each other at least social acquaintances.⁵³ Photography historian Sara Stevenson claims that Gibson "greatly admired" the mid-1840s portrait of Jameson taken by the Scottish photographers David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, a copy of which "he framed and hung on the wall of his studio in Rome."⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that Hill and Adamson also took the earliest known photographs of Gibson during his first trip to Scotland in mid-September 1844 (fig. 1.8). Gibson counted Jameson among his friends who supported his experiments in polychrome sculpture, and in the 1850s he invited her, along with the Eastlakes and others, to see his tinted portrait statue of the Countess of Beauchamp.⁵⁵ It was during Jameson's later visits to Rome that she interviewed Gibson. After she died he made a portrait bust of her (fig. 1.9).

It stands to reason that Jameson would have the most correct information about Gibson's life because the information came directly from him. However, by the second paragraph of her article, there is an error when she states he was born in 1791, which suggests that, as with most published

⁴⁹ Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, rev. ed. (London: Abbey Library, [1964]), 171-73; Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M. G. Sullivan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 521-29. It is worth noting that in the latter text some of the location information for Gibson's works is incorrect.

⁵⁰ Anna Jameson, "John Gibson," *The Art Journal* (May 1849), 139-41.

⁵¹ See, for instance, Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and Near London* (London: Murray, 1842); and Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters, and of the Progress of Painting in Italy: From Cimabue to Bassano* (London: John Murray, 1845).

⁵² Judith Johnston, "Jameson, Anna Brownell (1794-1860)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press), online edition, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/14631> (accessed 17 June 2011).

⁵³ See, for instance, Anna Jameson to John Gibson, 31 August [1857], G1/1/207, John Gibson, RA, Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (hereafter cited as Gibson Papers).

⁵⁴ Sara Stevenson, *Facing the Light: The Photography of Hill & Adamson* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 2002), 84.

⁵⁵ Eastlake, 220; Matthews, 197-98.

biographies, further research is necessary. Because Jameson's article came out during Gibson's lifetime, there are no references to the final years of his productive career, although it does include his first commissions for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in the 1840s. Thus, for instance, the *Tinted Venus* is absent from her account. Jameson used the second half of the essay to detail in narrative form his most popular works and commissions, identifying their current locations and providing general stories about the creation of many of them. This catalogue of works was transformed by Eastlake into a list, which was subsequently updated by Matthews.⁵⁶

Eastlake's sources for her book on Gibson were varied and included her own personal memories. She was born Elizabeth Rigby (1809-1893), the daughter of a successful and well-connected physician in Norfolk, and from an early age travelled extensively.⁵⁷ She wrote short stories, but today is best known for her travel writings and translations in the history of art.⁵⁸ She married Charles Lock Eastlake in 1849. The following year, he was knighted and elected President of the Royal Academy, and in 1855 he was named Director of the National Gallery. The Eastlakes arguably were the art-world leaders of 1850s London.⁵⁹ With her husband, Eastlake made numerous trips to Italy, and while it is unknown when exactly she met Gibson (and presumably even could have met him before her marriage), her husband's friendship with the sculptor dated back to their days in Rome together after the Napoleonic Wars and had continued through the decades. Professional and personal correspondence among them survives, and Gibson was a regular guest at their home on his trips to London in later years.

It is interesting that Eastlake begins her account by citing Gibson's genius. She acknowledges the term is overused when applied to figures in the arts and sciences, but she feels justified in using it to refer to Gibson because "genius resides more in the qualities of the mind, than in the powers of the brain."⁶⁰ She goes on to discuss these qualities. One was his childlike demeanor: "Gibson ... remained a child,

⁵⁶ Eastlake also probably based her list on a similar one published in *Engravings from Original Compositions Executed in Marble at Rome by John Gibson, R.A.* (London: P & D. Colnaghi, Scott & Co., 1861). Gibson dedicated this book to her husband.

⁵⁷ Rosemary Mitchell, "Eastlake, Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake (1809–1893)," in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/8415> (accessed 17 June 2011).

⁵⁸ See, for instance, Elizabeth Rigby, *A Residence on the Shores of the Baltic* (London: John Murray, 1841), and her translation of Gustav Friedrich Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures* (London: Murray, 1854).

⁵⁹ For more on the Eastlakes and their role in London art circles in the 1850s, see Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London: National Gallery Company, 2011).

⁶⁰ Eastlake, 2.

never exchanging his guileless simplicity for a maturer, but less pure wisdom.”⁶¹ She also cites as two more of his qualities his freedom from jealousy of his fellow man and his inability to get angry. Surprisingly, she writes more than two pages about his disregard for financial matters in an effort to disavow accusations that he was “fond of money.”⁶² Most interesting in the cataloging of Gibson’s genius, however, is his sense of morality. Eastlake points out that this was especially true, considering his choice to live in Rome, “in a moral atmosphere the most opposite to that within his own breast.”⁶³ Eastlake’s insistence on his morality and other qualities suggests that Gibson himself, perhaps even more so than his “true style” art, was an *exemplum virtutis*, defined by Rosenblum as “the work of art that was intended to teach a lesson in virtue.”⁶⁴

For Eastlake, these traits combined to make Gibson an artistic genius in the world of classical sculpture. She attributes the origins of his genius to his childhood, specifically “his honest, lowly birth, and early home training—fortunate in the very disadvantages, so called, of poverty and position, which, rightly used, are the surest roads to distinction and success.”⁶⁵ When one considers Eastlake’s own privileged upbringing and her own literary successes, it is somewhat ironic that she would perceive genius as necessarily originating in abject poverty. This clearly is a Romanticizing of Gibson’s roots. But she herself questions, “What inclined an obscure lad ... to the love of art which culminated in a devotion to the abstract forms of Ideal Beauty—what affinity there was between a poor Welsh boy ... and that ancient Greek mind ... is a question which it is fruitless to ask.”⁶⁶ Eastlake is suggesting that Gibson’s impoverished childhood and the absence of cultural influences in his early life acted as a *tabula rasa*, allowing him to discover classicism and thus reinvent it for a modern audience. The idea of the *tabula rasa* in the context of Neoclassicism, also discussed by Rosenblum, suggests the ongoing search for the “most rudimentary building forms” that acted as the empty slate from which classicists could build

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Ibid., 6. This issue is discussed more with regard to his account books in chapter three.

⁶³ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁴ Rosenblum, *Transformations*, 56.

⁶⁵ Eastlake, 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5-6.

something new.⁶⁷ From Eastlake's perspective then, the *tabula rasa* of his childhood and the *exemplum virtutis* of his life made Gibson a genius in the creating of the modern classical body in stone.

Along with her personal memories, Eastlake provides additional sources for her account. She tells the reader that it had been Gibson's intent to publish an autobiography, and that his written texts are her source. This project began informally in 1839 with an exchange of letters between Gibson and the poet Margaret Sandbach, his patron for the first version of *The Hunter and His Dog*, among other works.⁶⁸ In 1851, during an extended visit to north Wales, Sandbach began a draft of a biography based on their letters and her interviews with him. This ended abruptly when Gibson was called back to Italy because his brother Benjamin had died there unexpectedly. Sandbach herself died the following year, and the biography was left incomplete.⁶⁹ Eastlake was a friend of the Sandbachs and presumably was given access to these papers by the family. Eastlake also tells the reader that Gibson apparently continued working on an autobiography during the 1850s in Rome at the encouragement of Robert Hay, a former private secretary to the Duke of Wellington. He would dictate memories to his protégé Harriet Hosmer and recite them to Hay for comment. These particular texts presumably came to Eastlake through Hosmer who, along with other close friends, provided Eastlake with additional information about his life in Rome.

Publishing the second book-length biography of Gibson, Thomas Matthews did not know Gibson, but he did consult the Gibson-Sandbach correspondence. In addition, he drew on the personal memories of Thomas Henry Thomas, a Welsh-born artist and founder of the National Museum of Wales, who knew Gibson toward the end of his life.⁷⁰ Matthews's biography in many ways replicates Eastlake's work, his

⁶⁷ Rosenblum, *Transformations*, 146. Rosenblum defines the *tabula rasa* in the context of architecture, but he utilizes the term earlier in his book with regard to history paintings by Jacques-Louis David and others.

⁶⁸ Virginia H. Blain, "Sandbach, Margaret (1812–1852)," in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/61566> (accessed 17 June 2011).

⁶⁹ Their letters and other related manuscripts are located at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, which to date I have been unable to review in person. Margaret and Henry Robertson Sandbach, as well as their son, commissioned a number of bas-reliefs and statues from Gibson. The Sandbach's Gothic Revival estate Hafodunos Hall was built by George Gilbert Scott in the 1860s, after Margaret's death, and Gibson's works were incorporated into the architectural design. Some of these works later were sold to museum collections, but the bas-reliefs incorporated into the walls were destroyed in a fire in 2005. For more information see Mark Baker, *Hafodunos Hall, Llangernyw: Triumph of the Martyr* (Mark Baker, 2005).

⁷⁰ National Museum of Wales, "The Unique Prints and Drawings of T. H. Thomas," <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/cy/2035/> (accessed 3 July 2011).

unique contribution being an appendix which attempted to clarify the accuracy of Gibson's birth location in north Wales from primary sources.⁷¹

Until recently, little was known about Matthews himself.⁷² Born into a large Welsh family, Thomas Matthews (1874-1916) was the son of a schoolmaster. He received his M.A. degree in 1908 from the University College of Wales, Cardiff, and worked as a teacher of Welsh language and literature in various schools throughout southern Wales. Driven by an interest in the preservation of a Welsh cultural identity, Matthews published a number of related books and articles such as research guides to Welsh historical documents in continental libraries.⁷³ He traveled to the continent frequently, visiting Rome at least once; this may in part have inspired him to write about Gibson, and subsequently to publish a series of articles about the Welsh painter Penry Williams, Gibson's close friend and the executor of his estate.⁷⁴ Matthews's main interest in Gibson, then, was based on his interest in the promotion of Welsh culture. His untimely death in 1916 cut short any further work on Gibson.

In general, all three biographies by Jameson, Eastlake, and Matthews convey the same important facts of Gibson's life. All of them discuss events like his early training as an apprentice in Liverpool, his initial work with the sculptor Canova, and his patronage by the Duke of Devonshire and others. But each also details information the others exclude. For example, Jameson comments on the dedication Bulwer-Lytton had written to Gibson prefacing his novel *Zanoni*, noting that it was an "homage of one man of genius to another—of the poet to the artist."⁷⁵ Considering the popularity of the author of *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), Jameson purposely was highlighting Gibson's role as an acknowledged artistic leader by his peers.

Eastlake, in turn, is the only author to write about both of Gibson's brothers. It is doubtful she ever met them, but, given their friendship, Gibson may have expressed to her his feelings about his family.

⁷¹ While there are a number of similar events described in both Eastlake's and Matthews's works, discrepancies in their transcriptions of Gibson's words suggests either the quoting of different sources or, more likely, creative license in paraphrasing and "correcting" Gibson on either (or both) authors' parts. In general, however, these discrepancies are relatively minor and do not alter the substance of either author's work. Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to cite pages in both texts where applicable, with the first cited author directly relevant to any quotes.

⁷² Dylan Rees, "Thomas Matthews, M.A. (1874-1916), Llandybïe: Historian, Writer and Art Critic," *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 40 (2004), 129-38.

⁷³ See, for instance, Thomas Matthews, *Welsh Records in Paris* (Carmarthen: W. Spurrell & Son, 1910).

⁷⁴ According to Rees, Matthews wrote twelve articles about Williams that appeared in the Welsh journal *Cymru* 1912-13; Rees, 138, n. 34.

⁷⁵ Jameson, "John Gibson," 141.

Eastlake is also the only author to retell an anecdote that shows Gibson's lack of understanding about contemporaneous British painting. Visiting J. M. W. Turner's gallery with Eliza Huskisson in the 1840s, he commented to the artist that one of his pictures was an excellent beginning. Turner replied that it was complete and about to be sent off to an exhibition the next day. He then directed the sculptor toward the mantelpiece and pointed to two terracotta figurines, telling him, "These are more in your line."⁷⁶

For his part, Matthews also includes a number of anecdotes about Gibson's life that do not appear in either Jameson's or Eastlake's biographies. The most noteworthy of these is the sculptor's participation around the age of twenty with a group of medical students in the exhumation of corpses for dissection.⁷⁷ While all three authors discuss Gibson learning about anatomy, only Matthews publishes Gibson's own words about how he and the other men made a choice one night not to exhume a recently deceased young woman, but instead to steal the corpse of a working-class man instead. Clearly Jameson's and Eastlake's decision to elide this particular fact from Gibson's early life was intentional, as this practice was not only illegal, but it would have offended Victorian middle class propriety. Despite their occasional shortcomings, the three authors present the known facts of Gibson's life and have helped establish what we know about Gibson's career.

In the decades following Gibson's death in January 1866, his name also appeared in the published memoirs of visitors to Rome who had befriended him. James Freeman wrote fondly about his friendship with Gibson and his brother Benjamin, describing their individual traits, talents, and artistic practices.⁷⁸ Samuel Carter Hall, editor and publisher of *The Art Journal*, who published engravings of Gibson's works and articles about him with frequency, reminisced about his fondness for the sculptor, whom he praised for always keeping his studio open for young sculptors to learn from him, and whom he acknowledged

⁷⁶ Eastlake, 107. Eliza Milbanke Huskisson (1777-1856) was married to William Huskisson (1770-1830), a Liverpool-based politician considered to be the first railway fatality when he fell onto the path of an oncoming engine. A. C. Howe, "Huskisson, William (1770-1830)," in Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/14264> (accessed 18 June 2011). Following her husband's death, she commissioned Gibson in 1831 to make a memorial statue of her husband dressed as a Roman orator. Two of these were made in marble. One is being restored and is on display in the National Conservation Centre in Liverpool. The second is installed in the residential area of Pimlico Square in London. A third repetition, intended for outside the Liverpool Customs House, was cast in bronze and is now in the residential area of Duke's Terrace in Liverpool (fig. 3.10).

⁷⁷ Matthews, 16-18.

⁷⁸ James E. Freeman, "Gatherings from an Artist's Portfolio: III. John Gibson," *Appletons' Journal of Literature, Science and Art* 15, no. 355 (8 January 1876), 39-41.

was “an artist of the very foremost type, and greatly esteemed and regarded as a man.”⁷⁹ Frances Power Cobbe delighted in Gibson’s total Hellenism, to the exclusivity of knowledge about Christianity. In preparing his ca. 1850 relief of *Suffer the Little Children to Come unto Me*—his only Christian subject—he commented to Cobbe as they sat on Monte Pincio, “You know I don’t often read the Bible, I have my sculpture to attend to. But I have had to look into it for my bas-relief of the Children coming to Christ, and do you know, I find that Jesus Christ really said a good thing?”⁸⁰

But it was Gibson’s sculpture that had a greater impact on people during his lifetime and afterwards, and the London public was able to appreciate his work for a long time after his death. He had bequeathed to the Royal Academy more than £32,000 and the entire collection of models, casts, and marble works in his studio so that other sculptors could study from him. This bequest helped enable the Royal Academy to defray the rising cost of renovations throughout Burlington House, and on 27 November 1876, more than ten years after the sculptor’s death, it opened the Gibson Gallery.⁸¹ The *Times* wrote an extensive review about the gallery, noting in particular the challenges of restoring some of Gibson’s casts that had suffered damage after being shipped from Rome and stored in cases. The room, measuring 50 x 20 ft., had walls painted Indian red, while the cornice and ceiling were decorated with a frieze of leaf work and fruit painted in pale blue and olive. The plaster and marble statues were displayed on colored marble bases. The *Times* praised Gibson as “the greatest of all their [i.e. Royal Academy’s] sculptor members, if not the first of all modern sculptors,” and believed the gallery would “be universally esteemed as a most interesting and astonishing example of earnest thought and work from one man and that the simple, untaught son of a poor Welsh gardiner [*sic*], who showed a fancy for wood carving.”⁸²

This was not the only place to see Gibson’s sculptures. For more than twenty years prior to the opening of the Gibson Gallery, plaster casts of his statues and reliefs were on display at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park. Indeed, of all the modern sculptors whose works were on display there,

⁷⁹ S. C. Hall, *Retrospect of a Long Life: From 1815 to 1883* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), 2:237.

⁸⁰ Frances Power Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe* (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co.; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1894), 2:357.

⁸¹ Sidney C. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986*, 2nd ed. (London: Robert Royce, 1986), 107. The former space of the Gibson Gallery is now the Library and Archive Reading Room, and Gibson’s works are dispersed in other areas throughout Burlington House and on loan to Bodellwyddan Castle in northern Wales.

⁸² “The Gibson Gallery,” *Times*, 27 November 1876, 6. For a less enthusiastic review, see “The Gibson Bequest,” *The Architect*, 5 August 1876, 77.

Gibson dominated the English school and his exhibited works were surpassed in number only by Canova and Thorvaldsen.⁸³ One guide published more than a decade after his death still noted “the truly beautiful productions of John Gibson, esteemed by some as the first of English sculptors ... all works of the purest and noblest classical ideality.”⁸⁴ The sculptor Hamo Thornycroft made his second visit to the Crystal Palace on 8 June 1871 and, although he noted that it was a “trying place for sculpture[;] it shows up all the faults,” he praised Gibson’s *Hunter and Love Tormenting the Soul* (fig. 3.23) as among “a few modern works [that] look well.”⁸⁵ Thornycroft’s comment may be subjective, as his parents Mary and Thomas Thornycroft had spent time working in Gibson’s studio in Rome and Gibson had helped provide her with commissions from Victoria and Albert to make statues after their children. Nevertheless, the fact that Gibson’s works were seen as “modern” implies not just that they were recently made subjects, but also that, in at least Thornycroft’s mind, they were still seen as being of their time, not retrograde, derivative works typically associated with historicized classical statues today.

Thornycroft’s comment is also noteworthy because of his position as one of the early figures in New Sculpture with his statue of *The Mower*, 1880 (fig. 1.10), and other works. His friend, the art critic Edmund Gosse, was among the first generation of writers to introduce New Sculpture, or as he first called it the “young realistic school,” as a conscious rejection of the classical marble figures perpetuated by Gibson and his followers.⁸⁶ Works by Thornycroft and others were seen to consciously overthrow the cold white marble figures of the past in favor of bronzes with warm patinas that exuded more naturalistic bodily forms. It is noteworthy, however, that these sculptural iterations by Thornycroft and others through the late 1870s all frequently depicted subjects taken from Greco-Roman history and mythology, albeit in bronze.

Art historian Susan Beattie’s 1983 study of the New Sculpture movement was at the time of its publication an important text about what had then become an underappreciated area of nineteenth-

⁸³ For more on the sculpture in the Crystal Palace in its expanded relocation in Sydenham Park, see Anna Jameson, *A Hand-Book to the Courts of Modern Sculpture* (London: Crystal Palace Library; Bradbury & Evans, 1854); and John Kenworthy-Browne, “Plaster Casts for the Crystal Palace, Sydenham,” *Sculpture Journal* 15, no. 2 (2006), 173-99.

⁸⁴ F. K. J. Shenton, *General Guide to the Crystal Palace, and to Its Gardens and Park; Being a Concise Handbook to the Fine Arts Courts and Collections* (London: Crystal Palace Company, Sydenham, 1879), 70.

⁸⁵ Hamo Thornycroft, *Diary, 1870-1882*, Thornycroft Papers, Henry Moore Institute Archive, Leeds, England.

⁸⁶ Mary Stocker, “Edmund Gosse on Sculpture,” *University of Leeds Review* 28 (1985/1986), 285.

century art.⁸⁷ She claimed that it was at the 1877 Royal Academy exhibition with the display of Frederic Leighton's life-sized bronze statue *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (fig. 1.11) that sculpture changed. The high quality of the bronze casting and the naturalistic muscularity of the male nude and snake were seen as a rejection of the long-standing tradition of marble classical figures. In emulating the expressionistic muscularity of Michelangelo and High Renaissance forms, Leighton's statue changed the development of British sculpture into what came to be seen as a modernist trend that emphasized naturalism over idealism. Beattie opened her text with a frank discussion of nineteenth-century classicism as a frigid form of art and demonstrated its height of decadence with Gibson's *Tinted Venus*. In using Gibson's by now infamous statue, Beattie perpetuated myths not only about the *retardataire* nature of classical art but also blamed Gibson himself for its complete failure to evolve in a modernist vein.

Art historians such as H. W. Janson perpetuated this same belief by denigrating Gibson and others in the Roman school as being derivative of accomplishments from the masters of Neoclassicism, i.e. Canova, Thorvaldsen, and Flaxman.⁸⁸ He gave due credit to late eighteenth-century British sculptors such as Thomas Banks and Nollekens for starting the classical revival in sculpture, but his discussion of mid-nineteenth-century British sculpture discounted Gibson in favor of foreign-born sculptors such as Raffaele Monti, who brought to England a dynamic approach to sculpture. Janson also saw New Sculpture as a forward-thinking evolution in British sculpture.

Although these art-historical sources discuss Gibson and his followers in a pejorative way, it is noteworthy that in general very little was published about Gibson at all in the decades following Matthews's edition of his biography in 1911. Hartmann's 1955 essay, comparing Gibson to Canova and Thorvaldsen, discussed above, was in some ways an anomaly in the scholarship, but perhaps it did serve with its illustrations to help rejuvenate interest in Gibson. In preparation for a centenary exhibition of the 1862 International Exhibition, the Victoria and Albert Museum made a public appeal to find the *Tinted Venus*, which by this time was untraced.⁸⁹ Their search was rewarded when the statue was discovered at

⁸⁷ Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

⁸⁸ Janson, *Sculpture*, 162-63. Janson also is dismissive of Victorian sculpture in general.

⁸⁹ "Museum Seeks the Tinted Venus," *Times*, 8 March 1962, 12.

Walcot Hall in Northamptonshire as the property of Peter J. Dearden. His father had purchased the statue in 1916 from its second owner, Thomas Barrett, owner of Pears, the soap manufacturer.⁹⁰

In 1971 Dearden put the statue up for auction with Sotheby's and, according to curatorial files, it was purchased by the Walker Art Gallery for £2400. The sale of the statue inevitably led to a flurry of publications about Gibson and his work. Jeremy Cooper's 1971 article was an overview history of the *Tinted Venus* and was written to coincide with the Sotheby's auction.⁹¹ Cooper followed the biographical sources of Jameson, Eastlake, and Matthews in seeing Gibson as a traditional Winckelmannian classicist, but then expressed great surprise over his polychrome experiments, as this was a radical practice for a supposedly staid classicist. This seems to suggest Cooper's own misunderstanding of Gibson's motivations behind the work and how this practice related to his studio practice and his own academic interests, which I discuss in this dissertation. It also demonstrates Cooper's unfamiliarity with the historiography of ancient polychrome sculpture, which began in the early 1800s, but reached fruition by mid-century in Owen Jones's recreated historical pavilions at the Crystal Palace.

Hans Fletcher published three articles about Gibson in the early 1970s. The first of these was a survey of his life and career, but in a noteworthy twist he argued for Gibson to be seen as a student of Thorvaldsen rather than of Canova.⁹² Having consulted the Gibson Papers at the Royal Academy, Fletcher was the first to publish financial information about some of his commissions, although he misunderstood the nature of sculpture as a reproductive media and the role of traditional studio practice when he condemned Gibson for making replicas of his subjects for clients, an issue I discuss at length in this dissertation. Fletcher's second article was a continuation of his research into the Gibson Papers with a focus on his diploma work *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24), which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1838.⁹³ It is not a coincidence, then, that this statue was the only Gibson work included in the Royal Academy's 1972 exhibition *The Age of Neo-Classicism*, in which Gibson was seen as a follower of Thorvaldsen in

⁹⁰ "Tinted Venus Found at Walcot Hall," *Times*, 9 March 1962, 7; "Sculptor of the Tinted Venus," *Times*, 13 March 1962, 15.

⁹¹ Jeremy Cooper, "John Gibson and His 'Tinted Venus,'" *The Connoisseur* 178 (October 1971), 84-92.

⁹² Hans Fletcher, "John Gibson: An English Pupil of Thorvaldsen," *Apollo* 96, no. 128 (October 1972), 336-40.

⁹³ Hans Fletcher, "John Gibson's *Narcissus*," *The Connoisseur* 196 (September 1977), 60-62.

style.⁹⁴ Fletcher's third article was an account of Gibson's *Bacchus* (fig. 4.19), 1856-60, for Lord Londonderry.⁹⁵ This was Gibson's first attempt in working on the god of wine as a statue. When word reached Londonderry that Gibson intended to tint the statue, Londonderry cancelled the commission, and the finished marble statue remained in Gibson's studio unsold and untinted. In this article Fletcher failed to address the problematics of tinting male figures, an issue I address in chapter four on Gibson's homoerotic subjects.

Other aspects of Gibson's life and work also were published at this time. In 1971, Edward Morris wrote about Gibson's important large-scale drawing *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (fig. 2.5), exhibited at the Liverpool Academy in 1811.⁹⁶ The drawing shows Satan and his minions descending to Hell as described in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Visually, it is based on Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel, with the central figure of Jesus replaced by Satan, an influence I discuss further in this dissertation. This essay was followed two years later by Andrew Wilton's short article about a drawing in the British Museum that he presented as a study for Gibson's *Rebel Angels*.⁹⁷ Wilton argued that Gibson was influenced by Flaxman in his use of cross-hatching in the study, suggesting, perhaps for the first time, that British artists were influential on him in his early career. Finally, Thomas Brumbaugh published in 1973 a previously unknown August 1818 letter written by Gibson to the classicist James Bailey, which Brumbaugh presented as helping to inform scholars more about Gibson's first year in Rome.⁹⁸ Writing as a collector and not an art historian, Brumbaugh repeated much of the biographical and critical information known about Gibson, but the letter shares information about Gibson's early works and includes two rough sketches in Gibson's hand of Thorvaldsen's *Mercury* and Canova's *Cupid and Psyche*.

⁹⁴ *The Age of Neo-Classicism* (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972), 239-40. More recently, Gibson was represented by three works—*Hylas Surprised by the Naiades*, *Narcissus*, and *Pandora*—in Tate Britain's 2008 exhibition *Return of the Gods*, which used dramatic lighting to highlight the ways Neoclassical sculpture was seen and appreciated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Marjorie Trusted, *The Return of the Gods: Neoclassical Sculpture in Britain* (London: Tate, 2008). The catalogue erroneously reproduced an image of the *Tinted Venus* instead of *Pandora*.

⁹⁵ Hans Fletcher, "John Gibson's Polychromy and Lord Londonderry's Bacchus," *The Connoisseur* 187 (September 1974), 2-5.

⁹⁶ Edward Morris, "John Gibson's Satan," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), 397-99.

⁹⁷ Andrew Wilton, "An Early Drawing by John Gibson," *The British Museum Quarterly* 37, no. 3/4 (Autumn 1973), 118-19.

⁹⁸ Thomas B. Brumbaugh, "John Gibson in Rome: An Unpublished Letter," *The Connoisseur* 183 (June 1973), 122-27.

Elisabeth Darby in 1981 published what is still one of the most important essays regarding Gibson's experiments with polychromy.⁹⁹ Taken from her dissertation research on Victoria and Albert as patrons of the arts, her article discusses at length Gibson's relationship to the monarch. She recounts that in 1844 Gibson was commissioned by Albert to make a portrait statue of the queen in classical dress (fig. 2.25), and it was received so well that the royal couple commissioned a replica. This statue was tinted by Gibson, making this his first in-depth foray into polychromy, although this tinting was removed sometime later. Gibson also designed two busts and a monumental group of the queen with two allegorical figures for Parliament's Westminster Palace (fig. 2.26). Gibson planned to tint the allegorical group of Victoria, which would have helped blend the work in with the overall decorative Gothic interior, but this did not happen, either because architect Charles Barry prohibited it or because Gibson's return to Rome prevented him from following up with his plans. Darby also convincingly explored the possibility that Gibson was aware of polychromy from his visits to Munich, which was under the design influence of the architect and artist Leo von Klenze, who recreated ancient Athens in Munich with classically-inspired modern-day polychrome architecture and sculpture.

Benedict Read's 1982 book *Victorian Sculpture* was in some ways a watershed publication, as it attempted for the first time to codify and discuss objectively the development of sculpture during Victoria's reign by focusing on key developments, figures, and monuments, rather than focus on the modernist trajectory of sculpture.¹⁰⁰ Heavily illustrated with black-and-white images, his text provides an overview of the amazing outpouring of public monumental and private sculptures made during this nearly seventy-year period. Although Read focuses on Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and discusses reviews of the time and the statue's afterlife, he also focuses on the deterioration of Gibson's reputation and the destruction of eighteen casts of his work in the 1936 fire at the Crystal Palace. In general, however, Read is more interested in Gibson's London contemporaries, such as John Foley and Joseph Edgar Boehm, and thus positions his text as an exploration of nationalistic sculpture during Victoria's reign.

Other than the Royal Academy, the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool has the largest collection of works by Gibson, many of which were gifts from Gibson's patrons. Gibson's two sculptor brothers, Solomon and

⁹⁹ Elisabeth S. Darby, "John Gibson, Queen Victoria, and the Idea of Sculptural Polychromy," *Art History* 4, no. 1 (March 1981), 37-53. My thanks to Elisabeth Darby for sharing her dissertation research on Gibson with me.

¹⁰⁰ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Benjamin, are also represented in the collection. As a result, all three are discussed in Penelope Curtis's 1989 text *Patronage and Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, which deals with public and private sculpture in Liverpool and the surrounding Lancashire and Merseyside counties.¹⁰¹ Timothy Stevens, the former director of the Walker Art Gallery, wrote an essay for this book on Gibson's *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (fig. 2.20), which was then a recent addition to its collection.¹⁰² This statue was one of Gibson's first works modeled in Rome, and the marble version acquired by the Walker was a later replica commissioned by Lord Prudhoe, later the Duke of Northumberland. A guide to the collection at the Lady Lever Art Gallery includes an equally well-documented essay on *Pandora* (fig. 3.22), one of the polychrome statues Gibson exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition along with his *Venus*.¹⁰³ This statue still retains traces of its original tinting.

There was a renewed interest in polychrome sculpture starting in the 1990s, and Gibson inevitably moved to the forefront as an important figure in the development of this trend. *The Colour of Sculpture, 1840-1910* was an exhibition held at the Van Gogh Museum and the Henry Moore Institute in 1996-97. The *Tinted Venus* was seen as a pivotal work as part of the classical heritage. In the exhibition catalogue, edited by Andreas Blühm, the entry on Gibson's statue noted that the work is "probably the most important polychrome sculpture of the 19th century," because for Gibson it was in the full spirit of the Greeks.¹⁰⁴

Gibson's *Venus* is discussed further in three essays in the catalogue. Blühm's introductory essay on the history of polychromy in the nineteenth century discusses a number of important sculptors who first experimented with polychromy, including Canova, Charles Cordier, and Charles Simart, but he credits Gibson with being the first sculptor to consciously bring the ancient practice to the forefront of classical aesthetics. Wolfgang Drost's essay focuses on the critics and supporters of polychrome sculpture during the century. He discusses the multi-colored temple structure Jones designed for Gibson's *Venus* and accompanying works, and is the first to publish a reproduction of one of the two surviving watercolor designs for the temple. Inscribed along the pediment of the temple in Latin were the following phrases:

¹⁰¹ Penelope Curtis, ed., *Patronage & Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside* (Liverpool: Tate Gallery Liverpool; National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, 1989).

¹⁰² Timothy Stevens, "John Gibson's 'The Sleeping Shepherd Boy,'" in Curtis, *Patronage*, 57-59.

¹⁰³ "Pandora," in *British Sculpture in the Lady Lever Art Gallery*, ed. Andrew Clay et al. (Liverpool: National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, 1999), 35-40.

¹⁰⁴ Andreas Blühm, *The Colour of Sculpture, 1840-1910* (Zwolle, Waanders, 1996), 122.

“Without colour there is neither life, nor health, nor beauty, nor youth”; and “The sweet variety of colours enhances the dark form of things, differentiates what is confused and ornaments everything.”¹⁰⁵ Finally, Alison Yarrington’s essay “Under the Spell of Madame Tussaud: Aspects of ‘High’ and ‘Low’ in 19th-Century Polychromed Sculpture” addresses the complex blending of high and low art with regard to wax sculpture. Yarrington argues that at the Great Exhibition of 1851 polychrome wax statues represented ethnic figures from the colonies and thus served to blur the line between popular waxworks and high art, especially since polychrome sculpture was often criticized for its association with popular culture, in particular with Madame Tussaud’s waxworks museum. Yarrington draws the connection to Gibson’s *Venus* by arguing that his use of wax-based pigments in his tinting, and his subsequent display of the statue as a hybrid low-high art work at the 1862 International Exhibition, led to the inevitable criticism that his tinting debased what was seen as a fine art figure.

This interest in polychrome sculpture has continued; as recently as 2008 the J. Paul Getty Museum held the exhibition and published the catalogue *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present*.¹⁰⁶ Unlike the 1996 exhibition which focused on the nineteenth century, *The Color of Life* attempted to address aspects of polychrome sculpture from antiquity, medieval and Renaissance Europe, up to the present. Gibson’s *Venus* was the only polychrome classical subject included from the nineteenth century.

Over the past fifteen years, art historians interested in social history, studio practice, gender and queer studies, and other related areas have considered Gibson and his work with new levels of understanding. In an essay on sculpture and nudity in Victorian art, Michael Hatt considers Gibson’s *Narcissus* for its androgyny and discusses the debate over the use of a fig leaf in copies of this work.¹⁰⁷ He also relates how polychromy may have made the *Tinted Venus* seem more sexual because it altered the viewer’s perception of sculpture’s purity of form. Martina Droth’s 2004 essay on mid-to late-nineteenth-century changes in sculptural practice uses Gibson’s *Hunter* and Parian miniatures of his

¹⁰⁵ The phrases as written in Latin were: NEC VITA NEC SANITAS NEC PVLCRITVDO NEC SINE COLORE JVVENTVS and FORMAS RERVVM OBSCVRAS ILLVSTRAT CONFVSAS DISTINGVIT OMNES ORNAT COLORVM DIVERSITAS SVAVIS. Wolfgang Drost, “Colour, Sculpture, Mimesis: A 19th-Century Debate,” in Blühm, 65.

¹⁰⁶ Roberta Panzanelli, Eike D. Schmidt, and Kenneth D. S. Lapatin, eds., *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Michael Hatt, “Thoughts and Things: Sculpture and the Victorian Nude,” in *Exposed: The Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2002), 36-49.

Narcissus on display at the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a way to define the changes taking place in sculptural aesthetics at that time and shows how this influenced the development of craft and the New Sculpture movement later in the century.¹⁰⁸ Finally, in a forthcoming essay, Jason Edwards argues why Gibson is modern.¹⁰⁹ He considers ideas such as wax and skin with regard to polychromy, addresses Baudelairean principles of aestheticism often not considered with classicism, and positions Gibson as part of a global art world in which he received commissions from international patrons and displayed his work throughout the world. My dissertation builds on the strengths and challenges the weaknesses of much of the literature discussed here, all in an effort to highlight Gibson's accomplishments not just for his polychrome sculptures, but for a wide-range of aspects of his career which made him one of the most well-respected sculptors of the century.

Dissertation Chapters

In this introduction, I have established my intent, that through a reexamination of Gibson's life and career beyond his experiments with polychrome sculpture, one can better assess his importance to the history of sculpture by considering how polychromy was but one of many areas of interest for this sculptor who sought to redefine the modern classical body. The second chapter of my dissertation provides a biographical overview that focuses on key components of Gibson's life and demonstrates how his roots in the British school of art influenced his ideas about classicism as a form of modernity. One important area that I discuss is Gibson's residency in London before his move to Rome in 1817. It was at this time that the Elgin Marbles were put on permanent display in the British Museum, generating aesthetic debates about their hybridity as both classical and modern. This was also the year in which he first saw the work of Canova, when three pieces were shown in Britain for the first time at the annual Royal Academy summer exhibition. In addition I explore Gibson's journals in which he transcribed excerpts from the writings of Winckelmann and Royal Academicians such as Reynolds and Fuseli, as well as ancient

¹⁰⁸ Martina Droth, "The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics c. 1851-1900," *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 3 (2004), 221-35.

¹⁰⁹ Jason Edwards, "'By Abstraction Springs Forth Ideal Beauty': On John Gibson's Modernity," in *Living with the Royal Academy: Artistic Ideals and Experiences in Britain, 1768-1848*, ed. Sarah Monks et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming 2013).

authors such as Plato and Pausanias, who recorded information about Greek sculptors such as Praxiteles who practiced polychromy.

Chapter three focuses on Gibson's studio practice, providing a more clear understanding of how he operated as an artist intent on creating and disseminating modern classical figures. I examine his extant account books and closely consider the making of a number of specific works from contract to the final marble form. I also discuss a pen-and-ink sketch in his own hand that I discovered in the Royal Academy Archive, which details his show room and is annotated with identified works. Discussing this sketch in relation to nineteenth-century accounts of visitors to his studio, I demonstrate how display and reception were key for Gibson in his marketing of the modern classical body to the ruling classes and the rising bourgeoisie.

Chapter four discusses the image of the male body in Gibson's sculpture. An advocate of the writings of Winckelmann on ancient Greek and Roman art, he followed the art historian's teachings and emphasized the male body as the exemplar of idealized beauty. Gibson focused primarily on ephebic male nudes, subjects that were commissioned by male patrons, a practice that suggests issues as diverse as homosocialism, gender displacement, and queer subjectivity. For example, in his first large-scale commission for the Duke of Devonshire, Gibson contrasted the warrior and the ephebe in the sculpture *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, an innovative pairing that suggests an awareness of same-sex passion in the guise of the pederastic traditions of ancient Athens and Sparta. In another work from the 1830s depicting a nude youthful Cupid as *Love Tormenting the Soul*, Gibson paid homage to the *Apollo Belvedere*, and then heightened the work's homoeroticism by making it the only male subject to which he applied polychrome tinting.

Chapter five focuses on Gibson's interest in reproductive media. As his studio practice grew, he redefined himself, emphasizing his role as a designer rather than as a hands-on sculptor, and in so doing was able to explore the use of new reproductive technologies. Living in an industrial age, Gibson recognized that these technologies gave him the opportunity to disseminate the modern classical body to a wider range of individuals in a variety of media. His reproductive experiments included work produced as porcelain statuettes, shell cameo jewelry, and engravings.

The concluding chapter explores Gibson's legacy. Having reintroduced Gibson and shifted the focus of his career beyond polychromy, I demonstrate how his influence continued to impact other artists. This included not only his pupils Harriet Hosmer, Benjamin Spence, and William Theed the Younger, but also later sculptors such as Edward Onslow Ford and Alfred Gilbert, who I argue drew on Gibson's classicism and polychromy as a way of rethinking ideas about display, craft, and the domestic interior. By reorienting Gibson as a forerunner of these later sculptors, I propose that his place in the history of nineteenth-century British sculpture can be redefined. By drawing on his own world, from scholarship to technology, he reenvisioned the classical body for modern audiences.

Chapter 2. From Wales to Rome: Recontextualizing Gibson's Life and Career

This chapter presents a revised biographical overview of Gibson's life and career, with an emphasis on his connections with the British art world before 1840. I discuss hitherto unknown aspects of his life based on the discovery of new archival information, and I examine ideas about his work in the context of British art, training, criticism, and reception at this time. Previous explorations of Gibson's life have considered his work only as part of a late development of Neoclassicism, which in turn has led to the dismissal by later art historians of his oeuvre as merely derivative. In this chapter I recontextualize an understanding of his life and work, emphasizing in particular how his early education and training in the academic traditions of British art underscored his development of the modern classical body in the "true style."

After introducing Gibson's childhood in Wales, I discuss his early artistic training and exhibition history in Liverpool around 1810, then shift attention to his time in London up to his departure for Rome in September 1817. Until now, scholars have assumed he had spent no more than six months in London, leading many to believe this period had little influence on his life. In fact, Gibson was in London for possibly up to two years before leaving for Rome. While there he worked in the studio of Joseph Nollekens, one of the most famous sculptors of his day. This helps explain how Gibson's interest in classical subjects was balanced by the number of early commissions he received for portrait busts, as it mirrored Nollekens's own long-standing practice. During the period in which Gibson was in London, a number of significant events in the history of sculpture took place, including the opening of the temporary Elgin Marbles room at the British Museum, and Antonio Canova and Francis Chantrey vying for the public's attention with works at the 1817 RA exhibition. After remaining in Rome for nearly a decade, Gibson began to encounter xenophobic criticism that his "true style" sculpture was anathema to the "native style" preferred in London, and this inevitably led to some controversy over his election to the Royal Academy, which I discuss for the first time. Ultimately this chapter reconsiders Gibson's life and work so as to demonstrate that his outpouring of classical subjects conveyed a modern sensibility about sculpture.

Conwy

As discussed in the historiography section of the first chapter, Gibson's life was surprisingly well-documented in his own day, although his biographical legacy has come down to us today based primarily on the writings of Anna Jameson, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, and Thomas Matthews.¹ Based on first-person accounts written by Gibson or taken from interviews with him, these three sources are the most authoritative and detailed, although none can be called an actual biography in the traditional sense. Since the publication of Matthews's edition of his memoirs in 1911, there has been no new biographical research added, so this chapter serves to enhance our knowledge of Gibson's artistic outpouring during a professional career that lasted more than fifty years.

John Gibson was born in either late 1789 or early 1790, but his actual birth date is unknown.² He was baptized on 19 June 1790 in the parish church of Conwy in north Wales, a medieval town on the Irish Sea situated at the mouth of the Conwy River. The parish register records the following: "John son of William Gibson of the parish of Gyffin by Jane Roberts his wife."³ Gyffin is a village just outside the city wall to the south-southwest of Conwy, but this does not necessarily mean that Gibson himself was born in Conwy or Gyffin. Indeed, the confusion over his birthplace began almost immediately after his death in 1866, when different towns in northern Wales claimed his birthplace as their own. Jameson wrote that his father, a landscape gardener, came from Llanidan on the island of Anglesea, Wales, and moved to Conwy in order "to lay the grounds of a gentleman of fortune."⁴ Eastlake noted that Gibson was born in Gyffin and that his parents soon afterwards moved near Conwy Castle.⁵ Matthews attempted to determine the accuracy of his birthplace by consulting archival records. He concluded that Gibson was born in the gatehouse or one of the lodges (long since destroyed) associated with Benarth Hall, an estate on the estuary of the

¹ Anna Jameson, "John Gibson," *The Art Journal* (May 1849), 139-41; Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870); Thomas Matthews, ed., *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: W. Heinemann, 1911).

² My thanks to Hilary Ambrose for her expertise in British genealogy and for assisting me with the discovery of much of this archival information about Gibson's family and early years.

³ Conwy Parish Register, Llandudno Library, Wales. See also Matthews, 250. It is worth noting that Gibson's baptismal record is incorrectly transcribed in the International Genealogical Index. A Mormon Church volunteer transcribed Gibson's surname as William, after his father, based on the false assumption that all Welsh families followed a patronymic system until the Established Church of Wales began using standardized registries in 1813. For more information, see The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, *Wales Genealogy*, https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Wales_Genealogy (accessed 29 April 2011).

⁴ Jameson, "John Gibson," 139.

⁵ Eastlake, 20.

Conwy River to the immediate southeast of the city wall.⁶ There is also a plaque written in Welsh on the minister's house for the Baptist chapelry of Fford-Llas, a Welsh town further inland east-southeast of Conwy, that claims this was where Gibson was born, although this contradicts archival information uncovered by Matthews. These disparate possibilities suggest then that until documented proof is found, Gibson's place and date of birth can only be surmised.

Gibson wrote of his parents: "My father was a poor man, truly honest; my mother was an excellent woman, passionate and strong-minded; she ruled my father always, and continued to govern us all as long as she lived."⁷ Their first language was Welsh, and he notes that speaking English was difficult for them. His father worked as a gardener, probably at Benarth Hall, and his mother's family may have been farmers from Fachleidiog, a village on the river to the south. A survey of the parish registers for Conwy shows a number of Gibsons listed as gardeners, so it stands to reason that William was part of this extended family. Matthews noted that as late as 1911, there were narcissi that bloomed regularly in this area called "William Gibson's flowers."⁸

John was probably their first-born child, but William and Jane had at least two other children. Solomon Gibson was born in 1796/7, and Benjamin Gibson in 1811. The fact that John was twenty years old when his youngest brother was born suggests that there probably were other children born to the Gibsons through the years, although only one has been identified. The parish register for Conwy shows that another son born to William and Jane, also named Solomon Gibson, was baptized on 24 October 1792 and buried five days later, so we know that there was at least one other child in the family.⁹ It is possible that, like this first Solomon, they had additional children who died young and thus would not have been discussed by Gibson or others over time. William Gibson died on 27 January 1831, and Jane

⁶ Matthews, 252.

⁷ Eastlake, 21; Matthews, 2.

⁸ Matthews, 252.

⁹ The reuse of the first name Solomon for the later son was not uncommon due to high infant mortality. It is worth adding that the Gibson Papers at the Royal Academy include correspondence to the sculptor from individuals who shared his surname. Since neither John, Solomon, nor Benjamin had children, these people are believed to be cousins, even when the term Uncle has been used in at least one instance. See, for instance, George Gibson to John Gibson, 17 February 1864, GI/1/134, John Gibson, RA, Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (hereafter cited as Gibson Papers).

Roberts Gibson on 7 May 1835. Both were buried in a family vault in St. James's Cemetery in Liverpool.¹⁰

It is worth considering briefly the relationship John had with his brothers. Because very little of their correspondence to one another survives, it is difficult to assess the degree to which they were close. It is apparent from these few letters, however, that, despite their working-class background, the three boys received at least a basic education and they knew how to write in English, even if Welsh was their first spoken language. Solomon and Benjamin both followed their elder brother in pursuit of a career as a sculptor, but neither had the success John did.¹¹

Solomon worked as an apprentice like John, and exhibited along with him at the Liverpool Academy during the 1810s, then with his younger brother Benjamin during the 1820s.¹² In a history of this institution, author Henry Currie Marillier noted that Solomon's fame rested on a small model of *Mercury* that he had made at the age of sixteen. He sent a copy of this work to Sir Thomas Lawrence, who encouraged his practice with a gift of £10. "The 'Mercury' became well-known to some extent. Lord Colborn bought a bronze copy of it in Holland from a curio dealer, and on his return showed it with pride to John Gibson as *the work of an unknown genius*."¹³ Solomon joined his brother in Rome from 1826 to 1830, then returned to Liverpool to establish himself as a local sculptor.¹⁴ Later he turned to writing, becoming a scholar of classicism and Welsh literature. Eastlake wrote of Solomon that "there was an absence of purpose in the direction of his studies, and he passed through life, a strange and useless, though not a commonplace man, chiefly dependant on the bounty of the object of these memoirs [i.e.

¹⁰ Benjamin Gibson to John Gibson, 8 February 1831 and 8 May 1835, GI/1/126 and /127, Gibson Papers.

¹¹ Eric Forster and Emma Hardy have identified 31 sculptures each for Solomon and for Benjamin. See their respective biographical entries in Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M. G. Sullivan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 520-21, 530-31.

¹² Solomon exhibited at the Liverpool Academy in the years 1812-14, 1822, 1824, and 1830. Edward Morris and Emma Roberts, *The Liverpool Academy and Other Exhibitions of Contemporary Art in Liverpool 1774-1867: A History and Index of Artists and Works Exhibited* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, 1998), 254-55.

¹³ H. C. Marillier, *The Liverpool School of Painters: An Account of the Liverpool Academy, from 1810 to 1867, with Memoirs of the Principal Artists* (London: John Murray, 1904), 127 (Marillier's italics). Gibson confirmed for Colborn that it was by his brother and also noted how well it was received by the actor John Kemble ca. 1815, at which time Gibson was modeling his bust of Kemble as a commission for the d'Aguilar family. Matthews, 25-26.

¹⁴ For more on Solomon Gibson in the context of his Liverpool contemporaries, see Timothy Stevens, "Sculptors Working in Liverpool in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Patronage & Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, ed. Penelope Curtis (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1989), 42-49.

John].”¹⁵ In a strange turn of events, he was on his way to see his brother in Rome after hearing of his stroke, when he himself died unexpectedly in Paris on 24 January 1866, three days before John’s death.

Benjamin had a closer relationship with John, their age difference perhaps encouraging the elder brother to become more of a father figure. This paternal instinct would have been especially true after the deaths of their parents in the 1830s. During the 1820s, Benjamin exhibited a number of works at the Liverpool Academy.¹⁶ He moved to Rome in 1836, probably at his brother’s encouragement, and remained with John until his own death fifteen years later. During this time he became a vital part of the Gibson studio. In addition to original subjects, Benjamin also made for patrons reductions after John’s works, such as *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 3.16), which was based on a larger subject John had done in the 1820s for Sir George Beaumont, discussed below. More about Benjamin’s work will be discussed in the next chapter on John’s studio practice in Rome.

“Mr. Ben,” as John called his brother, became his “classical dictionary,” relating ancient mythology, philosophy, and history to John in his studies of Greek culture.¹⁷ Benjamin learned Latin and Greek, was often seen reading works by Horace and Homer, and began acting as a *cicerone* for tourists in the catacombs and the Vatican.¹⁸ Benjamin also published essays on classical and archaeological subjects.¹⁹ Sadly, he had a history of illness and Eastlake records that during the late 1840s he became ill more frequently with colds and other viruses, as well as occasional large blisters that required surgery and extended periods of recovery. John took care of his brother, hiring doctors and servants to look after him, and traveling with him to places such as Lucca for the healing properties of the baths. During John’s trip to London for the Great Exhibition, Benjamin returned in August 1851 to the baths in Lucca. While

¹⁵ Eastlake, 6.

¹⁶ Benjamin exhibited at the Liverpool Academy in the years 1822, 1824, and 1828-30. Morris and Roberts, 253-54.

¹⁷ Eastlake, 6, 194. A few manuscripts in the Gibson Papers show different handwriting. From a visual comparison to extant correspondence, it seems likely that Benjamin helped John keep business records and transcribed some of the quotations from classical and contemporary texts in his journals.

¹⁸ R. W. A., “Fragments from the Diary of an English Traveller Through France and in Italy. No. V. The Catacombs of St. Agnese,” *The Child’s Friend and Family Magazine* 25 (1 February 1855), 120-23; George Guy Greville, Earl of Warwick, 30 December 1841, Journal, Osborn d418, Beinecke Library, Yale University; Derrick Pritchard Webley, *Cast to the Winds: The Life and Work of Penry Williams (1802-1885)* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1997), 62, 70.

¹⁹ See, for example, Benjamin Gibson, “On the Sculptures of the Ionic Monument at Xanthus, Discovered by Sir Charles Fellows,” *Museum of Classical Antiquities* 1, no. 2 (April 1851), 131-56. This essay was published four months before his death.

there, he tripped over a stone, suffered a head injury, and died. He was buried in Lucca and John raised a monument in his memory in the Protestant cemeteries there and in Rome.²⁰

Matthews records that a year after John's birth, his father converted to the Baptist faith and was rebaptized in Fford-Llas. When the minister of the parish there moved away, the Gibsons came to live in this town and William became a local preacher. This arrangement only lasted until 1795, at which time a conflict arose and the Gibsons supposedly returned to Gyffin.²¹ There are some discrepancies in these dates, for as noted above a second son was born to the Gibsons in October 1792. In addition, a surviving letter dated August 1794, written by the Deacon Elders of the Baptist Church in Salem (located in central Wales) to a Rev. Medley of the Byrom Street Baptist Church in Liverpool, introduces William Gibson as a member of their faith and asks the recipient to look after him. Later in this letter, written in a different hand, it has been noted that "He was crossed off for non-attendance Feby 28 - 1826," suggesting that by this late date the Gibsons were no longer active in the Baptist faith.²² What is of course more important from this letter is that it suggests to us when the Gibsons moved to Liverpool.

According to Gibson's memoirs, he was nine years old when his father decided to join a party of Welsh people who were emigrating to America. This would date their departure to 1799. Gibson's mother, however, changed their plans. Upon arriving in Liverpool, from where they planned to emigrate, his mother saw the size of the ships in the dock and balked at the thought of crossing the ocean in one. With that, the family settled in Liverpool. The newly discovered information from the above 1794 letter for Rev. Medley suggests that the family made their way earlier than has been documented. Alternatively, it could suggest that their father had traveled to Liverpool previously and that the rest of the family arrived in 1799. The future discovery of Solomon Gibson's baptismal record will help clarify this discrepancy,

²⁰ The inscription on the monument in Rome reads as follows: "IN LOVING MEMORY OF / BENJAMIN GIBSON / MEMBER OF THE / BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION / OF LONDON / WHO DIED AT THE BATHS OF LUCCA / ON THE 13TH. AUGUST 1851 / AGED 40 / HE RESIDED 14 YEARS AT ROME WHERE HIS LEARNING AMIABILITY AND VIRTUE / MADE HIM BELOVED AND ESTEEMED / ERECTED BY HIS AFFECTIONATE BROTHER / IOHN GIBSON R.A. / 1852." Sebastian Rahtz, *The Protestant Cemetery Catalogue* (Rome: British School at Rome; Swedish Institute in Rome, 2000), 291-92, available online: <http://www.acdan.it/protcem/work/cem.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2013). To date I have been unable to obtain a reproduction of this monument.

²¹ Matthews, 251.

²² "Biographical Sketches of Baptist Worthies," 286 OWE/4, Liverpool Record Office, Central Library.

although it is noteworthy that in the 1861 census he claimed he was born in Beaumaris, Anglesey, Wales.²³

Gibson ends his discussion of his youth in Wales by relating how it was in these early years that his interest in art began. "When about seven years old I began to admire the signs painted over ale-houses, and used constantly to gaze up at them with great admiration."²⁴ He did not attempt to recreate these images, but instead turned his eye toward nature, his first composition being a line of geese floating on the water, which he drew on his father's casting-slate. After receiving encouragement from his parents, he rubbed out the drawing, continuing to alter and perfect it. His mother then suggested he try a horse, so he went to look upon one and then "drew him in profile, all by memory." He continued to work on the horse, adding a rider at his mother's suggestion. In addition to demonstrating parental support of his talents, Gibson established here his supposed innate ability for visual recall: "I never thought of copying from the object itself on the spot, but after looking long at it, went home, and there drew from recollection."²⁵ This early talent for visual recall based on the observation of nature is a trait in which Gibson took great pride for the rest of his life: "Should I see any momentary action in the street or drawing-room, impressing it upon my mind at the moment and wishing to remember the action, I can sketch it a month later."²⁶

Liverpool

The Gibsons settled in Liverpool at 13 Green Lane, Clarence Street, south of Brownlow Hill, and the children were sent to school. During his free time, Gibson continued to sketch with his parents' encouragement. There was a print and stationers shop on Church Street, owned by a man identified by Gibson as Mr. Tourmeau. Gibson could not afford to buy prints, but he decided that he would choose a single print and memorize it, go home and copy it, then return each day to the shop to look at the print so as to reinforce his memory, and go home to perfect the drawing. He began to sell these drawings to his schoolmates, and one of them eventually gave Gibson what he claimed was his first paid commission, a

²³ Solomon was living as a boarder with the Malcolm family on Islington Road, Liverpool. The wife of the head of the household also was born in northern Wales. Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861, The National Archives, Public Record Office, London, available online: <http://www.ancestry.com>.

²⁴ Matthews, 3; Eastlake, 22.

²⁵ Matthews, 4; Eastlake, 23.

²⁶ Matthews, 6; Eastlake, 24.

drawing in color as the frontispiece of his prayer book, for which he received six shillings. Gibson showed him a sampling of his different works, and the boy chose his recent drawing from a print after Jacques-Louis David's 1800-01 painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. None of these early drawings have been traced.

Once he began selling drawings to his schoolmates, Gibson earned enough money to buy from Tourmeau's shop more paper and "colours," presumably either pastel crayons and/or chalks.²⁷ Very little is known about Tourmeau, but he played an important role in Gibson's early training. Recognizing early talent in his drawings, Tourmeau showed him his own personal collection of academic drawings after the live nude model, drawn on colored paper in black and white chalk, the first such drawings Gibson had ever seen. These were drawings Tourmeau himself had done when he supposedly had studied at the Royal Academy school.²⁸ He lent his drawings and small plaster casts to Gibson and provided him with instruction in improving his draftsmanship, and thus can be credited with being Gibson's first art teacher.

Following the tradition among the working classes, in 1804, at the age of fourteen, Gibson entered into a seven-year contracted apprenticeship. At the time, he wanted to apprentice to a painter, but his parents could not afford the premium required to work in a painter's studio. He went to work instead with the cabinetmakers Messrs. Southwell and Wilson. His first year there was uneventful, but in his second year he began working as a wood carver decorating furniture. In a brief biographical sketch in *The Art-Union*, it was noted that during his apprenticeship Gibson also "attended an evening drawing-school, held by a Mr. Pether, (brother to the artist who has been distinguished for his moonlight subjects)."²⁹ This instructor could have been Thomas Pether, a wax-modeler who exhibited at the Free Society of Artists, but about whom little else is known. He was the brother of the landscape painter Abraham Pether, who specialized in moonlight and firelight scenes.³⁰ He also may have been the author of *A Book of*

²⁷ Matthews, 7; Eastlake, 26.

²⁸ There are no extant records of a Tourmeau or any person with a close variant of that name exhibiting at the Royal Academy or officially enrolled as an RA student. It is possible Tourmeau was French and studied at the French Académie. As such it could explain the print after David's painting, as England and France were at war at this time.

²⁹ "The Sculptor, Gibson," *The Art-Union* (1 July 1843), 199.

³⁰ F. M. O'Donoghue, "Pether, Abraham (1756–1812)," rev. J. Desmarais, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press), online edition, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/22031> (accessed 18 July 2011).

Ornaments, Suitable for Beginners (1773).³¹ It is unknown if Pether ever lived in Liverpool, but considering the book's subject, it seems plausible that Gibson may have studied from this text and used the plates to instruct himself while he worked for Southwell and Wilson.

When Gibson was about sixteen, he was introduced by a friend who was a flower carver in marble to Messrs. Samuel and Thomas Franceys, who owned a large marble-works factory on Brownlow Hill, near his family home. Gibson was duly impressed by the clay models and finished works in marble he saw there. It is unknown which of the Franceys Gibson befriended. According to an 1820 published guide to Liverpool, the factory was owned by two branches of the same family, and their products in marble were mostly for home decorative purposes, but also included funerary monuments, statues, and busts:

The Marble-Rooms of Messrs. S. Franceys and Son, and Messrs. T. Franceys and Spence, sculptors, modellers, and marble-masons, Brownlow-hill; where a great variety of marble chimney-pieces are exhibited, in the Egyptian, Grecian, Gothic, and modern tastes, and in various species of the most beautiful Italian, Egyptian, and British marbles. Marble tables for halls, side-boards, &c.; monuments, plain, or sculptured after elegant designs; various figures in marble, bronze, and artificial stone, to support dials and lamps; statuettes, busts, &c., of excellent execution.³²

Working as a modeler for the Franceys was the Prussian-born sculptor Francis Legé.³³ Gibson was given permission by Franceys to visit the marble-works factory regularly, and on one occasion even to borrow a head of Bacchus made by Legé so that he could copy it in clay. Franceys was impressed by Gibson's finished copy, but because he had paid Legé for his original designs, and because Gibson was apprenticed to another firm, he could no longer permit him to copy any other works.

Disgruntled by this news, but invigorated by his discovered interest in clay and marble, Gibson came up with the idea that Franceys could purchase the remainder of his apprenticeship from Southwell and Wilson. Franceys agreed and offered the cabinetmakers £70 to buy Gibson's contract. At first they refused, but it was only when Gibson responded by not doing any more work that his masters agreed to release him. By 1805 or 1806, Gibson was now apprenticed to Messrs. Franceys, where he drew, modeled, and learned marble carving. Gibson's apprenticeship would have ended by 1812, and afterwards he presumably was kept on as an employee, receiving as his pay six shillings per week (the same amount he had received for his one drawing from the print after David's painting). Gibson

³¹ Dick Reid, "Thomas Pether's 'Book of Ornaments,' 1773," *Furniture History: The Journal of the Furniture History Society* 11 (1975), 46-47.

³² *The Stranger in Liverpool; or, an Historical and Descriptive View of the Town of Liverpool and Its Environs*, 6th ed. (Liverpool: T. Kaye, 1820), 164-65.

³³ Eastlake refers to him as Lüge and Matthews as Liege.

apparently was so successful at his job that the Franceys decided that they no longer needed Legé and he was dismissed. By 1814, Legé was working as an assistant in the London studio of Francis Chantrey.³⁴

A few months after he began his new apprenticeship, Franceys introduced Gibson to William Roscoe, whom Gibson described as “a tall, magnificent-looking old gentleman. ... His hair was white as snow, aquiline nose, thick brows; and his manner was most benevolent.”³⁵ This introduction became a turning point in his burgeoning career. Roscoe was shown Gibson’s drawings and models, and he responded positively to his work. He ordered from Franceys a chimneypiece to decorate the fireplace in his library at Allerton Hall, and requested that Gibson make a bas-relief in terracotta for the center panel. The subject was to be *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer* (fig. 2.1), taken from a print he had brought with him. Depicting the Macedonian general ordering his men to place Homer’s *Iliad* in a casket taken from the Persian emperor Darius, the engraving was by Marcantonio Raimondi after the fresco in the Vatican by Raphael (fig. 2.2).³⁶

William Roscoe (1753-1831) was a lifelong resident of Liverpool, rarely leaving his native city except to go to London. He was trained as an attorney, married, and had a large family. Early on he developed a great love of Italian art, literature, and history, and began collecting Renaissance paintings, drawings, and engravings, and he amassed a large library of early Italian and English books. His greatest success came from his own writings, most notably *The Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici, Called the Magnificent* (1795), a highly acclaimed biography that went through seven editions in his lifetime and six after his death.³⁷ In the 1790s he retired from the legal profession and purchased Allerton Hall, expanding it to accommodate his growing art and book collection. In the early 1800s he entered politics, advocating the abolition of the

³⁴ Alison Yarrington et al., *An Edition of the Ledger of Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., at the Royal Academy, 1809-1841*, in *The Fifty-Sixth Volume of the Walpole Society 1991/1992* (London: Walpole Society, 1994), 9.

³⁵ Eastlake, 30; Matthews, 11.

³⁶ A version of this bas-relief currently is part of the collection of the National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, but was unavailable for viewing at the time of my visit. After the sale of Allerton Hall, Roscoe kept the final terracotta version with him. According to his son, during Roscoe’s final days it was hanging above the fireplace in his sitting room. Henry Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe* (London: T. Cadell, 1833), 2:380.

³⁷ Donald A. Macnaughton, “Roscoe, William (1753–1831),” in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/24084> (accessed 23 July 2011). On Roscoe’s contribution to the study of Renaissance art, literature, and history, see the essays in Stella Fletcher, ed., *Roscoe and Italy: The Reception of Renaissance History and Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

slave trade. The reaction in Liverpool from many of the slave merchant companies was violently decisive, and Roscoe's political career quickly ended. In attempting to help a friend, he invested in a failing bank. This led in 1816 to his own need to declare bankruptcy. He was forced to sell his home and his collections of books and art.³⁸

At the time Gibson met Roscoe, however, he was living comfortably and became a source of inspiration and support in many ways. He encouraged him to study anatomy as many of the great artists of the past had done, and introduced him to a Dr. Vose, who allowed him to join his medical students in observing autopsies, during which Gibson would draw dissected cadavers (fig. 2.3). He noted in his memoirs that he did this for three years. Through Roscoe, Gibson also became close friends with the d'Aguilar family. George Charles d'Aguilar (1784-1855) was an officer in the British army, later becoming Lieutenant-Governor of Hong Kong and receiving a knighthood.³⁹ His sister Rose d'Aguilar Lawrence (1777-1857) was a poet and translator of German texts, and her husband Charles Lawrence became mayor of Liverpool in the 1820s.⁴⁰ Their elder sister Emily d'Aguilar Robinson (died 1829) became especially close friends with Gibson in his early career, taking an active (and possibly even romantic) role in encouraging his talent and urging him on to London and Rome. Upon meeting her, he was struck by her "natural taste for the beautiful in art and also in poetry.... She was like a gift from the gods."⁴¹ With a dark complexion and black hair and eyes, she was for him an exotic beauty: "Her bracelets and chains of gold jingled with the rustling of her silks ... and she filled the air with a delicious perfume."⁴² Following her death, Gibson made a funerary monument for her at his own expense (fig. 2.4).⁴³

³⁸ The Liverpool-based auctioneer Thomas Winstanley sold Roscoe's library of 1,813 lots in August/September 1816 and his collections of prints (1,352 lots), drawings (610 lots), and paintings (156 lots) later in September 1816. *Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of Drawings and Pictures, the Property of William Roscoe, Esq.* (Liverpool: [Winstanley], 1816); *Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of Prints, Books of Prints, &c. the Property of William Roscoe, Esq.* (Liverpool: [Winstanley], 1816); *Catalogue of the Very Select and Valuable Library of William Roscoe, Esq.* (Liverpool: [Winstanley], 1816); Stella Fletcher, "Introduction," in Fletcher, *Roscoe*, 16-17.

³⁹ H. M. Stephens, "D'Aguilar, Sir George Charles (1784-1855)," rev. James Lunt, in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/7004> (accessed 23 July 2011).

⁴⁰ Marilyn Bonnell, "The Unidentified Recipient of a Wordsworth Letter: Rose d'Aguilar Lawrence," *Notes and Queries* 37 (March 1990), 22-25.

⁴¹ Matthews, 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴³ Her funerary monument is now located in the St. James Oratory, Liverpool, and identifies her husband as Gervas Robinson. According to the India Office Ecclesiastical Returns for the Bengal Presidency, she married Robinson in Benares, India, on 12 June 1792. *India, Marriages, 1792-1948*, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/show#uri=http://hr-search->

Soon after the commission for the terracotta bas-relief had begun, Roscoe invited Gibson to his house on a regular basis. During these visits, he proudly showed Gibson his portfolios of engravings after the old masters and his collection of original drawings by Italian Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo, Raphael, and Luca Cambiaso. Gibson noted in his memoirs that it was Michelangelo in particular who “began to exercise considerable influence over me.”⁴⁴ Roscoe gave Gibson permission to copy the drawings and prints to improve his own artistic skills. Gibson came to respect Roscoe’s artistic opinion, bringing to Roscoe all of his new designs to hear his opinion. When evaluating his work, Gibson noted that Roscoe always considered “whether the subject was expressed simply and clearly, whether the figures moved and acted naturally, with truth of character, and just expression.”⁴⁵

Although Gibson was learning a great deal from the old masters, Roscoe directed Gibson’s attention toward the ancient Greeks and told him to study casts, gems, and prints after their works. Roscoe noted in particular that while one certainly could admire Michelangelo’s genius, when it came to sculpture the Renaissance master had “missed the purity of the Greeks.” Roscoe added: “The works of the ancients will teach you how to select the scattered beauties displayed in Nature. The Greek statue is Nature in the abstract, therefore when we contemplate those sublime works we feel elevated.”⁴⁶

Roscoe’s words are intrinsic to an understanding of the “true style” at this time. The classical ideal in Greek sculpture was a montage of the most beautiful features from various individuals to create the perfect form. This was best exemplified in the story of the Greek painter Zeuxis, who used many women to paint a perfect picture of Helen of Troy, a subject painted by artists such as Angelica Kauffmann and François-André Vincent. Furthermore, Roscoe notes how this appreciation of idealized beauty can only cause one to be “elevated” because the figures are “sublime.” Roscoe here is paraphrasing the writings on classical sculpture by Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), with which he would have been

api:8080/searchapi/search/collection/1584967 (accessed 22 March 2012). This means she was about fifteen to twenty years older than Gibson. Her husband was a merchant affiliated with the British East India Company, exporting large quantities of indigo to Britain in the early nineteenth century. However, he fell into debt a number of times from 1809 through 1823, jeopardizing his business relationships with a number of individuals, including his in-laws. See Anthony Webster, *The Richest East India Merchant: The Life and Business of John Palmer of Calcutta, 1767-1836* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2007), 55, 61, 83.

⁴⁴ Matthews, 19; Eastlake, 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Eastlake, 34; Matthews, 21.

most familiar through his own friendship with the painter Henry Fuseli (1741-1825).⁴⁷ Roscoe had been an advocate of the art of Fuseli long before the painter had become well known in British art circles. He had arrived in London in 1764 from his native Switzerland largely to work as an art critic. Among his most important texts was a translation into English of Winckelmann's important art historical essay *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755), which he titled *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1765). This was the text in which Winckelmann first established his idea of *edle Einfalt und stille Größe* (noble simplicity and quiet grandeur) with regard to the *Laocoön*. The writings of Winckelmann will be discussed further in chapter four on the homoerotic body, but what is more relevant regarding Gibson's work in Liverpool was his awareness through Roscoe of the work of Fuseli.

From 1770-78 Fuseli was in Rome where he developed his unique stylistic approach to antiquity and Renaissance masters such as Michelangelo. According to Martin Myrone his work showed "free interpretations, emphasising a sense of dynamic virility."⁴⁸ Fuseli returned to London after Rome and in the early 1780s he met Roscoe and became lifelong friends with him. Fuseli was among other London-based artists who willingly sent work to provincial art exhibitions such as those held in Liverpool at this time. Roscoe in turn purchased a number of Fuseli's paintings, which were displayed in the dining room of Allerton Hall. He also reportedly provided some financial support for Fuseli's Milton Gallery, which opened in 1799, displaying forty paintings with subjects taken from works by John Milton, including twenty-seven from *Paradise Lost*. A number of the pictures were available for purchase as engravings as well. Unfortunately for Fuseli and Roscoe, the Milton Gallery was a financial failure.⁴⁹

Fuseli returned to Liverpool and stayed with Roscoe in 1804. This predates by a few years when Gibson first met Roscoe, and Gibson would not meet Fuseli until 1816 or 1817, but Fuseli's presence in

⁴⁷ The well-read Roscoe also would have been familiar with the widely disseminated ideas of the sublime and beautiful as propagated by Edmund Burke in his seminal text *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Alex Potts contrasts the sublime (female figures) and the beautiful (male figures) in Winckelmann's writings as a basis for aesthetic appreciation: "With Winckelmann, the sublime involves the viewer in a compulsive engagement with fear of self-annihilation, while the beautiful foregrounds the body's sensuality and invites a more affirmative projection of self and the self's desires." *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 113.

⁴⁸ Martin Myrone, *Henry Fuseli* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 18.

⁴⁹ For more on Fuseli's Milton Gallery, see Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Roscoe's life clearly had an influence on Gibson. This is perhaps most apparent in a drawing Gibson exhibited at the Liverpool Academy in 1811. Titled *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* (fig. 2.5), the drawing takes its subject from Book 6 of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which God condemns Satan and his minions to Hell.⁵⁰ The drawing is significant not only because of its large size (64 1/8 x 43 3/16 in. on three joined sheets of paper), but also because the subject and style seem so contrary to Gibson's classical oeuvre. Most noteworthy is the composition itself, in which the dominant figure is Satan, who seems not to be falling but rising, challenging God's authority.⁵¹ Gibson would have seen prints after Fuseli's paintings of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Roscoe's collection or through the Liverpool printseller Tourmeau.⁵² Indeed, the medium in which Gibson worked (pen and ink over pencil with wash) would have allowed him to create volume and texture in the figures through a close study of engravings.

Another connection is that of Fuseli's RA diploma work, *Thor Battering the Midgard Serpent*, 1790 (fig. 2.6). According to Myrone, the key to understanding Fuseli's art is to recognize the "singularity" of his figures, which he argues were received well by some commentators because their manneristic display drew on a variety of continental sources and thus could reinvigorate British painting.⁵³ Fuseli's diploma work was successful because he chose the atypical subject from Norse mythology for a history painting, yet based the central figure on the early manneristic vision of Michelangelo: Thor echoes the figure of Christ from the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel.⁵⁴ Gibson was readily familiar with prints of Michelangelo's work and like Fuseli also based the central figure of Satan in his drawing on

⁵⁰ In the exhibition catalogue, the work was accompanied by a long quote from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Quoted in Edward Morris, "John Gibson's Satan," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), 398.

⁵¹ During a portion of the nineteenth century, the drawing was renamed *St. Michael and the Rebellious Angels*. Morris has argued this was because the figure's dominance made him too heroic, so viewers believed it had to be Michael the Archangel. Morris, 397-98. The figure of Satan was not uncommon in British art at this time, with Fuseli having portrayed him in Kaspar Lavater's *Essays in Physiognomy* (1779), and with William Blake, James Barry, and others using him to represent the sublime and to symbolize their sentiments on revolution and the war with France. See Brian Lukacher, "Visionary History Painting: Blake and His Contemporaries," in *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen F. Eisenman (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 102-18.

⁵² The first set of prints after Fuseli's paintings of *Paradise Lost* were published in 1802, with subsequent prints appearing in 1807 and 1808. For more, including illustrations, see D. H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations by and after Henry Fuseli: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1994), 201-05, 225-26.

⁵³ Myrone, *Fuseli*, 38-39.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

Michelangelo's Christ from the *Last Judgment*.⁵⁵ Indeed, in her article on Gibson, Anna Jameson noted that these days in Liverpool were a period of "creative imagination ... made upon [Gibson's] fancy by the works of Michael Angelo."⁵⁶

In his drawing Gibson was very conscious of the three-dimensional quality and foreshortening of the figures, for he noted that in working on it he followed the tradition of making clay figures and hanging them in groups from the ceiling. "The upper figures were lighted naturally from above, and for the lower groups, supposed to be lighted by the flames of hell, I placed a lamp beneath my clay models, and thus got a correct and beautiful effect."⁵⁷ He also made a number of preparatory drawings for the subject, including one example (fig. 2.7) showing the angel at the top center, and another example (fig. 2.8) showing the angel on the center left, both falling from the heavens. The first figure's cartoon-like, muscle-blown features suggest the influence of William Blake. The linear quality of the second study suggests the influence of John Flaxman.⁵⁸

Gibson's awareness of Blake's prints is unknown, but much like with those after Fuseli's paintings, he may have seen them in Roscoe's collection or Tourmeau's shop. The same holds true for engravings published after Flaxman's drawings. Scholars today are most familiar with Flaxman's line engravings illustrating classical works like the *Iliad* and the influence of these prints on a generation of artists including Anne-Louis Girodet and J.-A.-D. Ingres, but Flaxman also used this abstracted linear quality for a less well-known series illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy*.⁵⁹ In the context of the discussion above, not surprisingly Flaxman included an image of the fall of Lucifer illustrating Canto XII of the *Purgatorio*. This series of engravings was first published in Rome by Thomas Piroli in 1793, with a subsequent edition published in London by Piroli in 1807.⁶⁰ Undoubtedly, Gibson would have been familiar with these

⁵⁵ Among Roscoe's prints and drawings sold at auction were five engravings after Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* and a drawing in pen annotated as "Michelangelo's Dead Rising; the principal Group in the Last Judgment." *Catalogue Prints Roscoe*, 8; *Catalogue Drawings Roscoe*, 14.

⁵⁶ Jameson, "John Gibson," 139.

⁵⁷ Eastlake, 32; Matthews, 20.

⁵⁸ Andrew Wilton first made this connection to Flaxman, noting the similarities in how Gibson applied parallel hatching to the left arm and shield. "An Early Drawing by John Gibson," *The British Museum Quarterly* 37, no. 3/4 (Autumn 1973), 118-19.

⁵⁹ For more on the Dante series in the context of Flaxman's interest in classicism and the Gothic, as well as the Neoclassical pursuit of the *tabula rasa*, see Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 169-74.

⁶⁰ Detlef W. Dörrbecker, "A Survey of Engravings after Flaxman's Outline Compositions 1793-1845," in *John Flaxman*, ed. David Bindman (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), 184.

engravings as well, so it is not surprising to discover that he too made a number of drawings based on Dante's *Inferno*, including a near life-size drawing of *A Sinner Tormented by a Serpent*.⁶¹ He also exhibited drawings taken from Dante at the Liverpool Academy in 1812 and 1813.⁶²

Following up on her comment about Gibson's early love of Michelangelo, Jameson noted that fortunately he was saved by Roscoe whose intervention prevented him from "becoming a mannerist and an imitator."⁶³ Although her statement was meant to suggest Gibson's gravitation exclusively toward the Greeks, it is apparent that Michelangelo was not his only source of inspiration in the Liverpool years of his life. Fuseli, Blake, and Flaxman may be counted among the new masters whose work influenced him. Nevertheless, as Jameson notes, this was a period of transition, which can be seen in the wide array of subjects he exhibited at the Liverpool Academy at this time, suggesting perhaps his own interest in demonstrating to viewers his familiarity with antiquity as well as Renaissance and modern British masters.

The Liverpool Academy of Arts had been established in 1810 as a regional art school comparable to the Royal Academy, its founders including Roscoe and Henry Blundell, an art collector with a large cache of antiquities at his estate Ince. Like the RA, the Liverpool Academy held an annual art exhibition, and Gibson was an active participant from the very beginning. Although most of the works he exhibited are now untraced, some do survive. In 1810, while still an apprentice with the Franceys, he exhibited three works: *Psyche* (no. 189), *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer* (no. 190), and *Experience Directing Youth to the Temple of Fame* (no. 343). Gibson wrote in his memoirs that the first work of *Psyche* was a life-sized figure admiring a butterfly.⁶⁴ The second work was either the model or final terracotta relief he had designed for Roscoe's chimneypiece. The last was a collection of six allegorical drawings in one frame. The following year, he exhibited four works: *Pomona* (no. 158), *Psyche, a Tablet in Marble* (no. 161), *The Falling Angels* (no. 212), and *A Holy Family* (no. 228). Of these, only the large-scale drawing, also called *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* and discussed above, has been traced. The first work probably

⁶¹ Eastlake, 32; Matthews, 19. According to Morris, this drawing was last recorded in the 1887 sale of its owner Joseph Mayer's art collection and is now untraced. Wilton reported that a smaller study for the work is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, but I have been unable to confirm this. Morris, 399; Wilton, 119.

⁶² Morris and Roberts, 254.

⁶³ Jameson, "John Gibson," 139.

⁶⁴ Eastlake, 35. This work was owned by Roscoe, who had it installed on a pedestal in his sitting room, near the terracotta bas-relief which hung on the wall. Roscoe, *Life*, 2:378. Its present location is unknown.

was a model in clay or plaster of the Roman goddess of spring, the second a bas-relief, and the last work probably another drawing.

From 1812 on, Gibson was no longer bound by his apprenticeship and, although still employed by Franceys, he now exhibited works independently. He showed three works that year: *Design from the story of Bestia* (no. 200), *Figure of Genius, Part of the Monument to Be Erected in Sephton Church, to the Memory of the Late Henry Blundell, of Ince, Esq.* (no. 267), and *Portrait of a Young Lady* (no. 282). Of these, the first was a drawing and was accompanied by a quotation from Dante's *Inferno*. The second probably was a work in plaster or marble that he had completed for the funerary monument. The third work is untraced but could have been a drawing or sculptural object. The following year he also exhibited three works: "*Come, seize your prey, ye ministers of pain!*" (no. 287), from Dante's *Inferno*, probably a drawing; *A Bacchante Diverting the Attention of a Tiger, with Her Cymbals* (no. 309; fig. 2.9), a model in terracotta; and *Medallion of William Roscoe, Esq.* (no. 310; fig. 2.10), a profile portrait in plaster.

In 1814, he exhibited *Hercules Mad* (no. 291), a work whose medium is unknown, accompanied in the catalogue by a quote from Euripides's play *Hercules*, and a *Bust of John Philip Kemble, Esq.* (no. 292; fig. 2.11), the famous actor whom Gibson met through the d'Aguilars. Surprisingly, after 1814, Gibson stopped exhibiting at the Liverpool Academy for many years.⁶⁵ Why he suddenly stopped is unknown, but it is possible that he may have realized the provincialism of this environment and market, and knew that if he wanted to make sculpture his career, he needed to go to London and Rome.

London

In his memoirs, Gibson wrote: "Once London had been the goal of my ambition; now my soul was all on fire for a higher flight."⁶⁶ It is a simple sentence, one overlooked by most because Gibson is seen exclusively as a British sculptor of the Roman school, his "higher flight" being Rome. But Gibson's acknowledgment that London had something to teach him is important. It suggests that although he had dreams of working in the land of antiquity, he knew that in order to be a successful British sculptor, he had to leave the provincial art environment of Liverpool and assert his presence in London, the capital of

⁶⁵ Gibson did not exhibit here again until 1840, when he submitted from Rome a bas-relief in plaster of *Jocasta Repressing the Ire of her Sons, Eteocles and Polynices* (no. 688), and then in 1848 with a statue of *Aurora* (no. 682).

⁶⁶ Eastlake, 40; Matthews, 34.

the commercial art world, in order to receive recognition for his artistic endeavors. Gibson also wrote that the more he studied antiquity and improved his skills, the more he recognized the need to work beside rivals: “For it is only by comparing ourselves with others that we advance and gain victories. In Liverpool I felt like one chained down by the leg, panting for liberation; ever longing to join in the race for the green branch—the laurel crown.” He went on to note that “the wealthy in Liverpool did not then concern themselves much about art.”⁶⁷

Those who did support art, however, helped fund his trip. It had been William Roscoe’s intention to finance Gibson’s career, but bankruptcy curtailed his abilities to do so. Emily Robinson came to Roscoe’s assistance and together they succeeded in soliciting financial support from a number of people in Liverpool, ultimately raising for Gibson £150 for his trip to Rome, but also presumably to help pay for his living expenses in London.⁶⁸ It is important to note also that, at Robinson’s encouragement, Gibson originally intended to follow the example set by every other British sculptor: he would stay in Rome for “two to three years; then return and have my studio in London.”⁶⁹ Thus, throughout Gibson’s early training and career, the London world of British sculpture and art production was his intended focus, with Rome as a temporary stop for classical training.

The published editions of Gibson’s memoirs suggest that he first arrived in London in early 1817.⁷⁰ However, new evidence suggests that Gibson arrived in London in early 1816, or even possibly late 1815, based on unpublished correspondence with Roscoe and the important commissions he received from George Watson Taylor for a series of portrait busts of his family, which is discussed later in this chapter.⁷¹ With only £150, plus any limited funds of his own, Gibson would have needed commissions such as this in order to remain in London as long as he did. Soon after Gibson settled in London, Robinson “took a residence there,” and once he returned from Rome she planned to “fix her permanent residence near to

⁶⁷ Eastlake, 40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶⁹ Matthews, 41.

⁷⁰ Eastlake, 40; Matthews, 34.

⁷¹ Douglas Lewis has proposed that Gibson may have arrived in London as early as November/December 1815 based on the calculated length of time it would have taken him to model each of the six portrait busts of Watson Taylor’s family. “Portrait Bust of George W. Watson Taylor, Esq. M.P. (1771-1841)” (unpublished manuscript, 15 August 2006), [4]. My thanks to Lewis for his permission to cite his unpublished work and for his support of my research. My thanks also to Darrell Andruski, Osuna Art Gallery, Bethesda, MD, for providing me with a copy of this unpublished essay.

me for the remainder of her life,” another reminder that they had a very close relationship.⁷² Gibson’s published memoirs never discuss where he lived in London, so this mention of Robinson allows one to speculate that their close relationship may have led to him being her houseguest for at least some period of time. However, further evidence shows that Gibson worked for a time in Joseph Nollekens’s studio on Mortimer Street in Marylebone, and that he resided for at least a brief time with Nollekens’s stone mason William Henshall.⁷³ Surprisingly, Nollekens makes only a minor appearance in Gibson’s published memoirs as someone “who was then very old” and who “highly approved of my going to Rome.”⁷⁴ This would suggest that Gibson and/or his editors intended to focus on his long-term career in Rome and thus possibly distance him from what was perceived by them as the poor standard of “native” sculptural production in Britain, against which Gibson contrasted himself.

The heretofore unpublished information that now suggests Gibson worked in London much longer than his published memoirs suggested demonstrates, then, the critical nature of how the rising British school of sculpture in London was influential on his early career. For example, when Gibson arrived in London, Parliament had been involved in a major artistic campaign that placed public sculpture at the heart of urban politics. Enduring twenty years of war with France, the government early on began commissioning a series of monuments commemorating their military heroes fallen in battle. This was a period of fervent nationalism, and patriotic commemoration required that the sculptors of these monuments be British-born. As Holger Hoock has demonstrated, the wars with France led to a “strong patriotic impulse to assert the value of native culture in comparison with that of other nations shaped, and ... sustained by, the depiction of the death of military heroes.”⁷⁵ Hoock has argued that the Royal Academy played an important role in cultural politics at this time, acting in an advisory capacity as each new monument was commissioned. Between 1794 and 1823, thirty-six national monuments were approved by Parliament at total cost of £117,075, almost all of them placed in St. Paul’s Cathedral. These frequently larger-than-life public sculptures were erected for commanding officers and high-ranking

⁷² Matthews, 35, 41.

⁷³ Lewis, [2] and n. 10. Henshall and his wife are named in Nollekens’s biography as recipients of a bequest from his will. John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and His Times: Comprehending a Life of That Celebrated Sculptor; and Memoirs of Several Contemporary Artists, from the Time of Roubiliac, Hogarth and Reynolds to That of Fuseli, Flaxman, and Blake* (London: Henry Colburn, 1829), 2:23.

⁷⁴ Matthews, 41.

⁷⁵ Holger Hoock, *The King’s Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 8.

junior officers killed in significant battles, but others were approved for “spectacularly brave, gallant (and often suicidal) actions, especially of young captains, reflecting a revival of militaristic, heroic, and chivalric ideals among the British ruling élite.”⁷⁶

Many of London’s leading sculptors of the day participated in the creation of these important public monuments. Those who had traveled to Rome and wished to showcase their talents with poetic subjects merged the “true style” with the “native style,” bowing to popular taste. One of the more successful examples of this was Flaxman’s *Monument to Admiral Lord Nelson*, which depicted Nelson in modern dress (discreetly disguising his amputated arm). Most of the work is classical in design, however, including the goddess Athena in her reinvented guise as Britannia. Other sculptors eschewed the “true style” in favor of naturalistic images of fallen heroes. Richard Westmacott’s *Monument to General Abercrombie* does not allegorize the hero, but instead strives for pathos and naturalism, focusing on the specific moment when he suffered valiantly in the throes of a patriotic death. Gibson surely would have visited St. Paul’s to see these new monuments *in situ*, but even if he did not, he visited the studios of many of these sculptors and would have seen the models for these works.

A second significant event in London about the time of Gibson’s arrival was the 1816 purchase of the Parthenon marbles from the Earl of Elgin for £35,000. Hock has argued that, much like the sculptural campaign of commemorating fallen heroes, the purchase of the Elgin Marbles also can be seen as a form of patriotism. Following Britain’s involvement in the return to Italy of numerous works from antiquity that Napoleon had removed to Paris, and the current wave of pro-Greek sentiment in their fight for freedom from the Ottoman Empire, many at the time believed that it was Britain’s cultural responsibility to take ownership of the Elgin Marbles for posterity.

Supporters of their acquisition emphasized the notion that Britain—in the form of Elgin, the Royal Navy, Parliament, and the British Museum—had saved the stony refugees from Periclean Athens from further damage that would most certainly have been inflicted upon them by the Turks, the French, and other travellers.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid., 259.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 292-93. The fact that Elgin also had offered to sell the marbles to the French clearly motivated the British into convincing themselves they would not be outdone by them. Those in support of the purchase noted that unlike Napoleon’s claiming of ancient works as war booty, the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles was an authorized purchase from the Ottoman government. For more on the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles in the context of other contemporary collections of antiquity, see Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasures of Antiquity: British Collectors of Greece and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), chapter seven, 219-34.

Faced with tremendous debt from the war, Parliament initially was hesitant to purchase the marbles and asked for testimonies from numerous academicians, including Flaxman, Westmacott, Nollekens, and Benjamin West, as to the cultural significance of the marbles. All of these artists agreed that they should be purchased, arguing that the reliefs and pedimental sculptures would have great pedagogical value for future artists, as the works exemplified a truth to nature that had not been seen before in ancient art.⁷⁸ By extension, they also were prized because they were seen as first-generation sculptures by Phidias, and thus part of the pure *tabula rasa* of Greek antiquity, which until that time had only been experienced through Roman derivatives.⁷⁹ Nollekens himself testified that the pedimental figure of Theseus was equal in quality to the *Apollo Belvedere*, and that the Parthenon sculptures exemplified “ideal beauty, and closeness of study from nature.”⁸⁰

This idea of studying natural form within the context of classical idealism would have a direct impact on Gibson. As noted above, he consistently took pride in his ability to copy nature from memory, and as his training began under Tourmeau and Roscoe, and would continue under Antonio Canova and at the Accademia di San Luca, this blending of naturalism and antiquity would become an intrinsic part of Gibson's oeuvre. In early 1817, about the time of Gibson's arrival in London, the museum exhibited the Parthenon sculptures for the first time in a temporary gallery.⁸¹ It was in these early months of 1817 that Gibson first visited the Elgin Marbles room. John Thomas Smith reported that Gibson accompanied Nollekens and his protégé Joseph Bonomi there soon after Smith's own appointment in 1816 as Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum.⁸² Gibson probably met Bonomi first, and the two became life-long friends. A sculptor and future Egyptologist, Bonomi later worked with Gibson on a publication

⁷⁸ *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin's Collection of Sculptured Marbles* (London: Printed for J. Murray, by W. Bulmer and Co., 1816).

⁷⁹ For more on the contemporaneous artistic appreciation of the Elgin Marbles, see Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture: Greek Sculpture and Modern Art from Winckelmann to Picasso* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 38-73; and Alex Potts, “The Impossible Ideal: Romantic Conceptions of the Parthenon Sculpture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain and Germany,” in *Art in Bourgeois Society, 1790-1850*, ed. Andrew Hemingway and William Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 101-22.

⁸⁰ Smith, 1:243.

⁸¹ On the installation history of the Elgin Marbles, see Ian Jenkins, *Archaeologists and Aesthetes in the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800-1939* (London: British Museum, 1992), 75-101.

⁸² Smith, 1:311.

about human proportions in art.⁸³ They also collaborated with Owen Jones on the creation of the polychrome temple for Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and other works exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. In these early days, however, Bonomi was the close companion of Nollekens and was responsible for introducing Gibson to the master sculptor.

Gibson's experience with the Elgin Marbles did not end after he left London, as he wrote about them in his memoirs. As he was modeling *The Hunter and His Dog* (fig. 1.2), he worked with "a very fine model in the prime of his youth, and his proportions correct," but also went to "contemplate the casts from the Elgin marbles at the academy of St. Luke." He continued: "The sculptures of the Parthenon, called the Elgin collection, are the most valuable and interesting in existence; we behold works Phidias himself directed, and ... if we cannot equal those noble examples, we can at least penetrate into their transcendent excellence."⁸⁴ Gibson does not reveal which of the marbles in particular inspired him with this work, but it is telling that among his sketches there is a finished drawing of the back of the Theseus/Dionysus figure from the pedimental group (fig. 2.12). A closer examination of his drawing beside a side view of the *Hunter* shows the profiles of both figures have features that resemble one another, and in the drawing the volumetric shading in the muscles of the neck, shoulders, and upper back take on three-dimensional form in the *Hunter's* bent upper body. Even the left arms of both figures are positioned the same. Although the drawing is not a direct study for the sculpture, the two works share in common the Theseus/Dionysus figure as a direct source of inspiration from Gibson's first visit to see the statue in 1817.

There is no date for this drawing, so it could be taken from one of the casts at the Accademia and thus would be closer in date to the statue itself. However, it is worth noting that plaster casts of the Elgin

⁸³ In 1856 Bonomi published a pamphlet on human proportions and the following year expanded it with illustrations based on Gibson's theories of proportions, which he himself had derived from the writings of Vitruvius and Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. See Joseph Bonomi, *The Proportions of the Human Figure, According to the Ancient Canon of Vitruvius. Also A Canon of the Proportions of the Human Figure, Founded upon a Diagram Invented by John Gibson, Esq., R.A.* ... (London: Chapman & Hall; Henry G. Bohn, 1857). This work went through at least three more editions over the next fifteen years. For more on Gibson and the study of proportions in nineteenth-century art, see Jonathan L. Fairbanks, "America's Measure of Mankind: Proportions and Harmonics," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1988), 72-87.

⁸⁴ Matthews, 99; Eastlake, 89-90.

Marbles did not arrive in Italy until the 1820s.⁸⁵ Also, the paper on which Gibson drew his study is watermarked 1816. Gibson wrote that when he first went to London he had brought with him a large roll of his original drawings. The paper for this particular drawing is rectangular and a loose sheet, and similar in appearance to his other drawings made in Liverpool. High-quality paper for drawing was expensive, so it would not be surprising for Gibson to have kept all of his sheets and reused them as necessary. Once he reached Rome, he began to use bound sketchbooks, which were more convenient for travel. Since it is unlikely that he could have drawn the subject from prints of the Elgin Marbles in Liverpool, since reproductions of them had not yet been seen there, Gibson very well could have made this drawing from the original sculpture itself during his initial 1817 visit, and reused it later as a study when he began modeling the *Hunter*. It is also worth noting that while he was in London, Gibson worked on a model of *Theseus Combatting a Centaur*, discussed below. This subject suggests an ongoing association not only with the pedimental figure, but also with one of the many Parthenon metopes showing battle scenes between the Lapiths and the Centaurs, sculptural works which Gibson would have seen at the British Museum.

Considering two significant events related to sculpture took place at the time of Gibson's arrival—the installation of numerous sculptural monuments at St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and the purchase and installation of the Elgin Marbles—it is surprising that scholars have never looked more closely into this period of Gibson's life. This is even more curious when one realizes he interacted with many of the leading London artists at this time. As noted, Gibson had brought with him to London a roll of his drawings that included both sketches after the antique and his original designs. He reported that upon meeting Benjamin West, the President of the Royal Academy said of these drawings, "There is that in them which labour can never attain."⁸⁶ He met William Blake and also showed him his drawings, of which "he gave me much credit for the invention which they displayed."⁸⁷ Blake in turn shared with Gibson "his cartoons, and complained sadly of the want of feeling in England for high art, and his wife joined in with him and she was very bitter upon the subject."

⁸⁵ On the British Museum's production and distribution of plaster casts of the Elgin Marbles, see Ian Jenkins, "Acquisition and Supply of Casts of the Parthenon Sculptures by the British Museum, 1835-1939," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 85 (1990), 101-02.

⁸⁶ Eastlake, 42; Matthews, 39.

⁸⁷ Matthews, 39.

Roscoe had given Gibson a letter of introduction to Henry Fuseli. Gibson wrote that Fuseli not only praised his drawings but also “received me graciously, and he encouraged me to repeat my visits to him, which I did,” suggesting that he became at least a social acquaintance of Fuseli.⁸⁸ Fuseli in turn wrote him a letter of introduction to Flaxman, then Professor of Sculpture at the RA.⁸⁹ Flaxman complimented his drawings and remembered his bas-relief of Psyche, which had been exhibited at the 1816 RA exhibition. More importantly for Gibson, however, was Flaxman’s insistence that he should go to Rome.

Mr. Flaxman encouraged me strongly to go to Rome, saying, that there I should be in the best school in Europe, surrounded by the finest works, and by artists of all nations, and there I should have the opportunity of becoming known to the rich English patrons who crowded to Rome every winter, and that Canova was generous to young artists of talent.⁹⁰

This encouragement from Flaxman is noteworthy not only because he refers to Canova but because of what Rome offered aspiring artists. It was the “best school in Europe” with a large number of works from antiquity, and there was a community of international—not just British—artists who could open his mind to new ideas. Patronage clearly is important in Flaxman’s mind as well. He recognized that wealthy British patrons preferred to order works with poetic subjects for their country estates while on holiday in Rome, much the way Thomas Hope had ordered *Aurora Visiting Cephalus on Mount Ida* from Flaxman in 1789 and *Jason* from Bertel Thorvaldsen in 1803, commissions which saved both sculptors from financial ruin. Flaxman also could be intimating that, because fewer British sculptors were in Rome at that time, there would be less competition when British visitors patronized the studios of native sculptors.

In this context, it is worth noting that Gibson also visited the studio of Francis Chantrey, at that time the acknowledged rising star of the London sculptural community. He did not meet Chantrey himself until the latter’s visit to Rome in 1819, but Chantrey’s feelings about Rome were strongly opposed to those of Flaxman. Chantrey let it be known to Gibson through their mutual patron Watson Taylor that “in London

⁸⁸ Ibid., 35, 39.

⁸⁹ A. N. L. Munby argued that this letter of introduction from Fuseli, with the salutation “Sir,” was written to the sculptor John Bacon the Younger. However, I agree with David H. Weinglass that the letter was the one written to Flaxman, based on Gibson’s mention of it in his memoirs. A reproduction of the letter in Munby’s article seems to show a date of “May 31^t _ 10,” which is a problem as Gibson did not arrive in London until 1815 or 1816. A closer examination of the original letter may help clarify this mystery. A. N. L. Munby, “Letters of British Artists of the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries—Part IV,” *The Connoisseur* 119 (June 1947), 82; Henry Fuseli, *The Collected English Letters of Henry Fuseli*, ed. David H. Weinglass (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1982), 418-19.

⁹⁰ Matthews, 39.

might be found every requisite for his improvement.”⁹¹ Gibson, however, preferred the advice of Flaxman, who having studied there himself for seven years, “had experience of the advantages there, and that artists from all parts had flocked to Rome for the last three hundred years.”

As discussed above with regard to the Elgin Marbles, Gibson also met in London the artist and later Egyptologist Bonomi, and through him the sculptor Nollekens, who allowed Gibson to work in his studio. One source for this comes from the catalogue for the auction of Nollekens’s effects after his death. Among the items for sale on the second day was lot 53, a terracotta model of *Theseus Combatting a Centaur*, annotated in the catalogue as being “by the elder Gibson, (now at Rome,) modelled in Mr. Nollekens’s Study.”⁹² As noted above, the subject is reminiscent of the Parthenon metopes showing battle scenes between the Lapiths and the Centaurs, and unfortunately is untraced.

Nollekens, who was 80 years of age, gout-ridden, and deaf at this time, had been exhibiting clay models and terracottas with classical subjects for a number of years, reportedly taking the “greatest pleasure ... when modelling small figures in clay, either singly or in groups, which he had baked.”⁹³ Considering, however, that Nollekens had established a successful career as a maker of portrait busts, it is telling that Gibson himself was commissioned at this time to model a few busts while in London, which is discussed in more detail below. It is very possible that Gibson, living on a small fixed income from donations by Roscoe’s friends, would have needed free studio space in which to work and store his models, and a work station in Nollekens’s studio may have been as good a location as any other. Gibson in fact may have purposely left this model there as a gift to Nollekens in gratitude. Although Gibson mentions little else about Nollekens in his memoirs, the master sculptor approved of his decision to go to

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁹² *A Catalogue of the Whole of the Highly Valuable Collection of Antique and Modern Sculpture, of the Late Joseph Nollekens, Esq., R. A. Dec.* (London: Christie’s, 1823), 14. A handwritten annotation in the catalogue deposited at the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, shows that it was purchased for 1.4.0 by Tatham. This was probably the architect and designer Charles Heathcote Tatham, who was friends with the Blake family and exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. Richard Riddell, “Tatham, Charles Heathcote (1772–1842)”, in Goldman, *Oxford DNB*, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/26990> (accessed 24 March 2012). Alice Lankester doubted the veracity of this terracotta, arguing that Gibson “did not have any idea ... how to structure a clay model” before going to Rome. This is only true with regard to life-sized models with steel armatures, which he did not learn how to construct until he worked with Canova. He was very familiar with small clay models and terracottas. Alice Lankester, “John Gibson: A Sculptor’s Life in Rome,” B.A. Hons. Diss., University of Leeds, 1982, 44-45, n. 6.

⁹³ Smith, 2:13-14. For more on Nollekens’s terracottas, see K. S. Esdaile, “A Group of Terracotta Models by Joseph Nollekens, R. A.,” *The Burlington Magazine* 85, no. 498 (September 1944), 220-23.

Rome, as he himself had been there from 1760 to 1770. Later in Rome Gibson received an “encouraging” letter from Nollekens about his move forward.⁹⁴

One may argue that the presence in Gibson’s life of West, Blake, Fuseli, Flaxman, Nollekens, and other important British artists was too brief to have had a major influence on him. However, as I have discussed above, Gibson’s early drawings done in Liverpool clearly are indebted to the influence of Flaxman, Blake, and Fuseli, so he was familiar with their work even before he ever met them. But, more importantly, the influence of these men did not end simply because he left London and began working with Canova.

In the Gibson Papers at the Royal Academy, there is an unpaginated journal filled with quotations transcribed in his own hand from the published editions of lectures and writings by Fuseli, Flaxman, Joshua Reynolds, and others, joining quotations extracted from numerous other sources, ranging from ancient authors such as Plato, Aristotle, and Pausanias, to modern authors like Johann Joachim Winckelmann and Gottfried Lessing.⁹⁵ Because he was a classicist, Gibson naturally would have quoted ancient authors and men like Winckelmann, but extensive quotations from the leaders of the British Academy show that he continued to be influenced by them long after he went to Rome. Indeed, Gibson could not have quoted from Flaxman’s lectures until they were published in 1829, twelve years after his move to Rome.⁹⁶

One example among Gibson’s quotations from the Royal Academicians is a sentence taken from Fuseli’s third lecture on painting: “To invent is to find: to find something, presupposes its existence somewhere, implicitly or explicitly, scattered or in mass.” This phrase by itself seems disjointed, but it is in fact part of Fuseli’s larger discussion of invention, the idea of extracting from the past to envision something new:

From what we have said it is clear that the term invention never ought to be so far misconstrued as to be confounded with that of *creation*, incompatible with our notions of limited being, an idea of pure astonishment, and admissible only when we mention Omnipotence: to *invent* is to find: to find something, presupposes its existence somewhere, implicitly or explicitly, scattered or in a mass.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Thomas B. Brumbaugh, “John Gibson in Rome: An Unpublished Letter,” *The Connoisseur* 183 (June 1973), 126.

⁹⁵ Notebook of Literary Sources, GI/7, Gibson Papers.

⁹⁶ John Flaxman, *Lectures on Sculpture, as Delivered by Him Before the President and Members of the Royal Academy, with a Brief Memoir of the Author* (London: John Murray, 1829).

⁹⁷ Henry Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1820), 106 (Fuseli’s italics). Fuseli may have had Michelangelo in mind when writing this. Michelangelo

Here Fuseli is advocating the advance of art based on the old masters, for to assume one can create something new is to suggest one is God himself. This sentiment is repeated in another quotation from Gibson's journal, this time taken from Reynolds's second discourse: "Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit."⁹⁸ This quotation reinforces Reynolds's principle of invention, which elsewhere in the same discourse he had defined as "little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory."⁹⁹

Reynolds, Fuseli, and others from this first generation of academicians established a British school of art based on invention, the imitation of masters from the past. For painters such as these, those masters included Renaissance greats such as Michelangelo and Raphael, and classical masterworks such as the *Apollo Belvedere*. From a consideration of these and other quotations taken from the leaders of the RA, it becomes clear that Gibson was inspired by the British academic notion of borrowing from the past as a way to create something new. Indeed, this lesson was endemic to all artists who were pursuing what was then called the "true style," what we now call Neoclassicism, but which perhaps should be more broadly described as inspiration coming from masters and masterpieces of the past. It was only through imitation, not slavish copying, that one could create modern classics.¹⁰⁰

Gibson never officially enrolled at the RA school, but his awareness of the lessons of its teachers clearly suggests an affinity with the Academy's principles. Indeed, it is tempting to consider that, even though he was not an official student, he still could have sat in on a few classes while he was in London, in particular those led by Fuseli, who in 1817 was Keeper of the RA schools, and with whom Gibson was,

and his followers propagated the Neoplatonic myth of *concetto*, that the artist was not creating but rather discovering the work of art that God had made within a block of marble. For more on Michelangelo and the *concetto*, see Erwin Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. Joseph J. S. Peake (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 115-21. On the disavowal of this theory with regard to Michelangelo, see Simona Cohen, "Some Aspects of Michelangelo's Creative Practice," *Artibus et Historiae* 19, no. 37 (1998), 43-63.

⁹⁸ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1778), ed. Robert R. Wark, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 30.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1981), 21, 61. The idea of imitation after the antique also relates to the writings of Winckelmann, whose influence on Gibson will be discussed in chapter four.

at least, now socially acquainted.¹⁰¹ As the instructor for the classes in which students drew from casts and live models, Fuseli was apparently well known for his “unconventional teaching methods,” which ranged from ignoring some students to actively redoing the work of others, and his administrative skills were equally erratic and lackadaisical.¹⁰² Even if Gibson had had no direct exposure to the teachings of men such as Fuseli and Flaxman, their understanding of the “true style” permeated all artistic training in England.

When Gibson arrived in London, he had at least three letters of introduction written by Roscoe and/or the d’Aguilars. The first of these was to Fuseli and has been discussed above. The second was to Henry Brougham, later Baron Brougham and Vaux, a lawyer, radical politician, and journalist for the *Edinburgh Review*.¹⁰³ Roscoe and Brougham knew one another politically when the latter ran for a local seat in the Liverpool government but was defeated in the election. The third letter was for James Christie, the son of the founder of the London-based auction house, and its director from 1803 until his death in 1831.¹⁰⁴ Gibson described him as “a man of classical learning and pure taste in art.”¹⁰⁵ Gibson brought with him the aforementioned roll of his drawings to show these men, and Christie in turn introduced him to the art collector and politician Watson Taylor, whom Gibson dubbed “one of the most liberal patrons of art.”¹⁰⁶

George Watson Taylor (1771-1841) became Gibson’s first London patron.¹⁰⁷ He commissioned Gibson to model six portrait busts of his family.¹⁰⁸ This auspicious commission for an unknown sculptor

¹⁰¹ Mark Pomeroy, Archivist, Royal Academy of Arts, has confirmed that while records for officially enrolled students at this time do exist, no information was recorded about students who took classes unofficially until later in the century. My thanks to Pomeroy for his assistance on my numerous research trips to the Royal Academy.

¹⁰² Myrone, *Fuseli*, 67.

¹⁰³ Michael Lobban, “Brougham, Henry Peter, first Baron Brougham and Vaux (1778–1868),” in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/3581> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹⁰⁴ H. R. Tedder, “Christie, James (1773–1831),” rev. Francis Russell, in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/5363> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Eastlake, 40; Matthews, 34.

¹⁰⁶ Eastlake, 41.

¹⁰⁷ Watson Taylor was born George Watson, the son of a Scottish entrepreneur with an estate in Jamaica. In 1810 he married Anne Taylor, the daughter of a baronet whose brother was a wealthy sugar planter, also in Jamaica. On the death of Anne’s brother, Sir Simon Taylor, in 1815, the baronetcy expired and Anne (now Mrs. Watson) inherited her family’s fortune. Her husband changed their family name from Watson to Watson Taylor and assumed financial control of their combined estates. For more on Watson Taylor, see the catalogue entry for lot 72 in the 22 October 2002 sale of *The John Hobbs Collection Part II* (New York: Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg, 2002), 128-35.

¹⁰⁸ By 1832 Watson Taylor was forced by bankruptcy to sell his estate and belongings. The auction catalogue for the sale identifies six portrait busts of the family sculpted by Gibson. In the morning room were busts of *George Watson Taylor, Esq., M.P.* and *Mrs. Watson Taylor*. In the corridor, all dated 1816,

only makes sense when one recalls Gibson was working in Nollekens's studio and would have been observing Nollekens's own success in this genre. In an undated letter to Roscoe from this time, Gibson wrote that he was modeling the Watson Taylors' busts while visiting Lord Spencer's villa with them.¹⁰⁹ The Watson Taylors were pleased with the success of Gibson's first bust, so much so that they told him it was better than the version recently modeled by Chantrey.¹¹⁰ Gibson completed the two children's busts in marble in time to exhibit them at the 1817 RA exhibition (nos. 1032 and 1034; fig. 2.13). He finished in marble those of Watson Taylor and his wife (figs. 2.14 and 2.15) later in Rome, thereafter exhibiting the bust of Mrs. Watson Taylor at the RA in 1819. Watson Taylor also commissioned Gibson to model a portrait bust of Roscoe (fig. 2.16), so he returned briefly to Liverpool to do this.¹¹¹ This too he completed in marble later in Rome, making a second copy in marble for himself which in 1827 he donated to the Liverpool Royal Institution, of which Roscoe then was President.¹¹²

were Gibson's busts of the children: *Simon Watson Taylor*; *Isabella Watson Taylor*; *George Greome Watson Taylor*; and *John Walter Watson Taylor*. An additional portrait bust of son *Emilius Watson Taylor* was a sculpture made by Edward Hodges Baily in 1824. *Catalogue of the Magnificent Assemblage of Property at Erlestoke Mansion near Devizes, in Wilts, Accumulated, within This Far-Famed Abode of Taste and Vertu, During the Last Twenty Years, at an Enormous Expense, the Whole Selected by George Watson Taylor, Esq. M.P.* ([London]: George Robins, 1832), 168. Of the four children's busts, Gibson recorded in his memoirs that he finished the commission "with the baby—a little thing with no shape at all." Eastlake, 41. Of the four children's busts, only that of John Walter has been traced. The bust of George Watson Taylor is in the collection of the Osuna Art Gallery. The bust of Anne Watson Taylor was included in the Sotheby's auction of 2-3 November 1989 (lot 104), but it did not sell and presumably remains in a private collection.

¹⁰⁹ John Gibson to William Roscoe, [Summer 1816], MSS 1730, Roscoe Letters and Papers, 920 ROS, Liverpool Record Office, Central Library (hereafter cited as Roscoe Papers). See also the response, William Roscoe to John Gibson, 31 October 1816, MSS 1731, Roscoe Papers. My thanks to Roger Hull at the Liverpool Central Library for providing me with copies of the Gibson-Roscoe correspondence. Excerpts from these two letters also were published in Matthews, 36-38.

¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Watson Taylors did commission a marble version of this supposedly inferior bust from Chantrey in 1819. They failed to pay for it and other busts they ordered from him. The fact that they did pay Gibson must be because he had charged them less, as he was not as well known. For more on the Watson Taylor commission with Chantrey, see Alex Potts's essay "Watson Taylors Bust," in Yarrington et al., *Edition*, 107.

¹¹¹ Lewis speculates Roscoe's bust was modeled from late 1816 into early 1817, at which point he returned to London. Lewis further argues that this explains the reference in Gibson's published memoirs to his arrival in London taking place in 1817 and not before. Lewis, [3].

¹¹² The Watson Taylor bust of Roscoe is now in the Yale Center for British Art. The Liverpool Royal Institution bust of Roscoe is now in the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool. Once in Rome, Gibson received additional commissions from Watson Taylor for a statue of the Trojan youth Paris and a statue of a nymph dressing herself. *Paris* was listed in the auction catalogue of Watson Taylor's collection as standing "the size of life, sculptured in statuary marble, raised upon a plinth, to the height of eight feet." *Catalogue ... Erlestoke Mansion*, 167. *Paris* is now in the collection of the Perth Museum & Art Gallery in Scotland. The statue of the nymph was not listed in the auction catalogue and is untraced.

In 1816 Gibson had three works accepted for his first RA exhibition: *Bust of Young Lady* (no. 914), *Bust of H. Park, Esq.* (no. 924), and *Psyche Carried by Zephyrs. "To pleasure's blooming isle / Their lovely charge they bear."* (no. 937).¹¹³ The first work's generic title does not help us identify the sitter, but it is worth considering that the sitter could have been Robinson, whose support of Gibson was active at this time. The bust is now untraced. The second bust, also untraced, was undoubtedly that of Henry Park, a Liverpool-based surgeon whose success with joint surgery led to the publication of his *Account of a New Method of Treating Diseases of the Joints of the Knee and Elbow* (1783).¹¹⁴ Park also worked in the role of what we now call an obstetrician and pediatrician, attending to the birth of Liverpool children for decades, all of which were recorded in his "Book of Genesis."¹¹⁵

The third work exhibited, also untraced, was a bas-relief and relates to the earlier relief and statue of Psyche that Gibson had exhibited at the 1810 and 1811 Liverpool Academy exhibitions. He noted of this new Psyche that he "finished it very highly" which means it probably was in marble.¹¹⁶ The quotation that accompanied the work's title in the catalogue was taken from Canto I of the poem "Psyche" by the Irish-born poet Mary Tighe.¹¹⁷ Originally published in 1805, the poem had been republished in 1811, one year after her death, and was reviewed well by critics.¹¹⁸ Although Gibson's work was classical in subject, it seems significant that he chose to exhibit it with a quotation taken not from an ancient source such as Apuleius but from a contemporary English-language poem written by an Irishwoman who had lived in London, and whose poetry was popular with the literati of the time. Clearly Gibson was aware of his British audience.

¹¹³ Solomon Gibson exhibited at the same exhibition his head of *Mercury* (no. 957), which probably was the work which he sent to Thomas Lawrence, as discussed above. He second and final RA work was in 1822 with a portrait bust. Benjamin Gibson did not exhibit at the RA.

¹¹⁴ C. W. Sutton, "Park, Henry (1745–1831)," rev. Michael Bevan, in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/21272> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹¹⁵ This unpublished book is held by the Liverpool Medical Institution Library. Park's most famous recorded birthing was that of William Ewart Gladstone, the future Prime Minister, in 1809. Future research might show that Benjamin Gibson was among the births administered by Park and could explain a connection between the two families.

¹¹⁶ Eastlake, 39.

¹¹⁷ Pam Perkins, "Tighe, Mary (1772–1810)," in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/27443> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹¹⁸ Mary Tighe, *Psyche, with Other Poems*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1811). For more on this poem, see Harriet Kramer Linkin, "Romanticism and Mary Tighe's *Psyche*: Peering at the Hem of Her Blue Stockings," *Studies in Romanticism* 35 (Spring 1996), 55-72.

Gibson noted that he “took courage” in sending these works to the RA for the first time.¹¹⁹ In a letter from London dated 5 April 1816, the miniaturist painter and printmaker Moses Haughton wrote to William Stanley Roscoe in Liverpool about Gibson’s submission, assuring him (and Gibson in a separate letter now lost) that the sculptor’s work had arrived safely. He noted: “Mr. Fuseli is one of the council and I have no doubt but he will attend to gibson’s [*sic*] interest in obtaining as good a situation as he can for Gibson—because he knows you all wish Gibson very well, and also because he has an oppinion [*sic*] of Gibsons [*sic*] talents.”¹²⁰ Haughton was Fuseli’s chief engraver.¹²¹ He had lived in Liverpool during the 1790s, befriended Roscoe (father of the recipient of this letter), and engraved the Fuseli pictures in his collection. This correspondence may suggest that the Roscoes were able to use their connections to have Gibson’s work not only accepted but displayed well in the 1816 exhibition. However, Gibson wrote of the installation, “Mr. Flaxman knew nothing of me, but looked on my basso-relievo with such kindness that he obtained a conspicuous place for it near a window, with a beautiful light.”¹²² This suggests then that Flaxman saw Gibson as a rising talent and displayed his work in a way that it would be received well by viewers.¹²³

Because there are no surviving records detailing exactly how sculpture was installed in the Life or Model Room on the ground floor of Somerset House, Alison Yarrington has proposed that statues were displayed in the center of the room and busts and reliefs were arranged chronologically on shelves around the room, with a number of the best works arranged on a shelf that ran around all the walls. This arrangement was not unlike the way that their painting counterparts were installed “on the line” in the galleries upstairs.¹²⁴ For sculpture, however, other steps would have been necessary to highlight these

¹¹⁹ Eastlake, 39.

¹²⁰ Moses Haughton to W. S. Roscoe, 5 April 1816, MSS 1959, Roscoe Papers, published in Fuseli, *Letters*, 417.

¹²¹ D. H. Weinglass, “Haughton, Moses, the younger (1773–1849),” in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/12615> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹²² Eastlake, 39.

¹²³ As Professor of Sculpture, Flaxman usually was responsible for their installation at the RA exhibitions. See Alison Yarrington, “Art in the Dark: Viewing and Exhibiting Sculpture at Somerset House,” in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 172-87.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 178, 180. As I argue in the remainder of this section, the arrangement of sculpture at the 1817 RA exhibition was significant for Gibson, as well as Canova and Chantrey. Although little is known about how the sculpture gallery was installed, there is significant evidence detailing how the painting galleries were installed, whereby attention was drawn to some works, so it stands to reason this was normal practice for the sculpture gallery as well. On the installation of the painting galleries, see John Murdoch,

works high on the shelf, like placing the better quality objects near windows for more natural lighting. Gibson's bas-relief apparently was considered of high enough quality by Flaxman to be given a prime location with good lighting and probably was located on the main shelf in the sculpture room or certainly hung just above it. The work did make an impression on Flaxman who, as noted earlier, remembered it and praised Gibson for it when he met him some time later.

Gibson's submissions for the 1817 RA were the newly made *Bust of Master S. W. Taylor* (no. 1032) and the *Bust of Master J. W. W. Taylor* (no. 1034; fig. 2.13). These works may not seem important unto themselves at first, but continuing with Yarrington's proposal that sculpture was installed chronologically, it is interesting to consider how they probably were displayed near other works. There were seventy works of sculpture on display that year. Westmacott was responsible for their installation, and juxtaposing classical subjects near busts and other naturalistic subjects suggests that he was conscious of showcasing the diverse skills of sculptors in London in a unique way, intentionally placing interesting subjects near one another.

For instance, no. 1031 was *The Rape of Proserpine* by James Heffernan, a student of Chantrey's, hence an unusual subject considering Chantrey's general disinterest in classical subjects. Between or just near the two Gibson busts was no. 1033, *Hercules Wrestling with Achelous*, a sketch for a large group by Edward Hodges Baily, a student of Flaxman's who was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy that year. No. 1035 was a *Model for a Bust of an Artist* by George Garrard, who had started as a painter but switched to sculpting in the 1790s, and no. 1036 was *A Design from Homer's Iliad* by John Buck, a work accompanied in the catalogue by a quotation that tells us its subject was Achilles dragging Hector's body around the walls of Troy. This curious arrangement of classical subjects with violent themes just near Gibson's two busts of children (and Garrard's unidentified artist) suggests a purposeful attempt to display in one group both dynamic poetic subjects and tranquil naturalistic portraits. These works can be seen as a microcosm of diverse talents in the London-based sculpture world at this time.

However, the 1817 RA exhibition is most important to the history of British sculpture because of two individuals: Canova and Chantrey. This exhibition was the first time works by the Italian sculptor were publicly displayed in London. This must be due in part to Westmacott, who met Canova when he was in

"Architecture and Experience: The Visitor and the Spaces of Somerset House, 1780-1796," and John Sunderland and David H. Solkin, "Staging the Spectacle," in Solkin, 9-37.

Rome from 1793-97.¹²⁵ Following up on Canova's one-month visit to London from November to December 1815, in which he impressed the Academy with his modesty and was feted at a dinner in his honor, Canova's inclusion in the 1817 exhibition was meant to honor his position as the most famous sculptor of his day. In turn, the inclusion of his works helped raise interest in sculpture that year, an important moment in RA exhibition history, because in the past sculpture had been doomed to a dark, uninviting space at the end of the visitor's tour through hundreds of works in the paintings galleries. More importantly, as Yarrington has noted, "Canova's presence at this exhibition encouraged comparisons between the acknowledged leader of international neoclassicism and the nascent English School."¹²⁶

Canova had three works in the exhibition, all with poetic subjects, which he and his followers excelled in. There were two statues of Greek goddesses, *Terpsichore* (no. 1008) and *Hebe* (no. 1009; fig. 2.17), and an allegorical *Bust of Peace* (no. 1030). The life-sized statues probably would have been arranged in the center of the gallery, either beside or across from one another. The bust, interestingly, would have been placed near or beside Heffernan's *Proserpine* and Gibson's two busts. Considering Gibson's desire to go to Rome, and that he eventually worked with Canova, this placement of his busts so near to Canova's seems almost prescient, and may even have been intentional on Westmacott's part.

But it was Chantrey who actually drew the most attention that year. He exhibited the plaster model for one of his major works, the *Monument to Be Placed in Litchfield Cathedral in Memory of Two Children* (fig. 2.18), a work so successful it led to his election as a full member of the RA that same year.¹²⁷ Representing the recently deceased young sisters Ellen Jane and Marianne Robinson, posed sentimentally as if they were asleep rather than dead, this work quickly came to symbolize for visitors and critics the British alternative to continental classicism. A reviewer for the *New Monthly Magazine* praised Canova's *Hebe* as "a most lovely production; the extremities are delightfully executed; the whole form is

¹²⁵ Yarrington, "Art in the Dark," in Solkin, 182. A long-established tradition by scholars such as Rupert Gunnis and Margaret Whinney had claimed that Westmacott studied with Canova when he was in Rome, but Marie Busco asserts that there is no evidence for anything more than a friendship and professional relationship between them. Gunnis, 423; Margaret Dickens Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain, 1530-1830* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 211; Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott, Sculptor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10.

¹²⁶ Yarrington, "Art in the Dark," in Solkin, 183.

¹²⁷ Francis Legé, the Prussian-born sculptor who previously had worked for the Franceys in Liverpool, was responsible for the marble carving of the Litchfield monument. Yarrington et al., *Edition*, 7. Chantrey also exhibited seven busts at this exhibition, including no. 1038, a *Bust of J. Nollekens, Esq., R.A.*, which would have been placed just near Garrard's *Model for a Bust of an Artist*, continuing to suggest Westmacott's purposeful arrangement of works near one another.

that of a superior being; youth, grace, and beauty are embodied in this charming figure.”¹²⁸ Turning to Chantrey’s funerary monument, however, the same reviewer quickly noted its superiority over the works of Canova:

This is a most lovely production; and although we disclaim all petty national feeling, we confess that we felt great pleasure in turning to it after the works of Canova. There is so much pathos, so much tenderness in this simple group, that he who can behold it unmoved must be insusceptible alike to the charms of social life, and to the bitter pain excited by the disunion of its ties. Such a person must be an ascetic, and unfit for the society of human beings.—Two lovely children are sculptured, reposing on a mattress, their innocent arms entwined around each other, and the hand of one of them grasping a few simple flowers, whose faded appearance well accords with the sad story which is so admirably told.

Despite the critic’s declared desire to avoid a nationalistic bias, he clearly is suggesting that Chantrey’s native-born talents have introduced a more naturalistic and thus more pathos-driven, emotionally satisfying sculpture, one which contrasts greatly with the artificial playfulness of Canova’s works. As Yarrington has argued, the nascent British school of sculpture was suddenly confirmed by critics in their favor with this display of Chantrey’s work beside that of a foreigner’s, Canova, an apt comparison following years of war with France and Britain’s subsequent isolationism and xenophobia.¹²⁹ As Anne Puetz further has suggested, this exhibition helped reinforce the burgeoning ideology that foreigners exhibiting at the RA were the “Other” against which critics could identify what British art was not.¹³⁰ Chantrey’s work represented a “native style” with which many post-war Londoners greatly sympathized.

Returning to the installation of the works, it is worth noting that Chantrey’s monument was no. 1029. It was large enough that it would have been on the floor, but this means it probably was located just in front of or near the wall on which would have been displayed nos. 1030 through 1036, i.e. the busts by Canova, Gibson, and Buck, and the classical models by Heffernan, Baily, and Garrard. Upon entering

¹²⁸ “Exhibition of the Royal Academy Continued,” *The New Monthly Magazine* 7, no. 42 (1 July 1817), 544.

¹²⁹ Yarrington, “Art in the Dark,” in Solkin, 183-84. For more on the Canova-Chantrey exhibition as it relates to the British school of sculpture, see Yarrington’s essay “Anglo-Italian Attitudes: Chantrey and Canova,” in *The Lustrous Trade: Material Culture and the History of Sculpture in England and Italy, c. 1700 to c. 1860*, ed. Cinzia Maria Sicca and Alison Yarrington (London; New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 132-55. On the role of Chantrey as the nationalistic sculptor of post-Napoleonic Britain, see Alex Potts, “Chantrey as the National Sculptor of Early Nineteenth-Century England,” *Oxford Art Journal* 4, no. 2 (November 1981), 17-27. On the rise of the British school of sculpture in discourse and criticism, see Matthew Craske, “Reviving the ‘School of Phidias’: The Invention of a National ‘School of Sculpture’ in Britain (1780-1830),” *Visual Culture in Britain* 7, no. 2 (2006), 25-45.

¹³⁰ Anne Puetz, “Foreign Exhibitors and the British School at the Royal Academy, 1768-1823,” in Solkin, 241.

the gallery then, visitors would have walked between Canova's goddesses and seen his allegorical bust on the shelf, but Chantrey's monument would have become an unavoidable focal point toward which all visitors would have proceeded. In this context, Gibson's busts in particular suddenly become much more interesting. As representations of two living boys, they would have looked down and out upon two sleeping girls, Chantrey's monument to the deceased Robinson children. The placement of the figures as such not only suggests the gendering of voyeurism, but also reminds viewers of their participation in this voyeuristic act, most notably of staring at two dead girls and two living boys. The juxtaposition of these works might make almost any viewer ponder the randomness of childhood mortality. Because of their similar subject matter, but very different execution, this arrangement of the Gibson busts over Chantrey's monument could not have been just a coincidence on Westmacott's part.

However, seen in the larger context of Gibson's busts among works by Canova and Chantrey, as well as other poetic subjects and busts, one can imagine Gibson facing the dilemma of his own future career. Should he remain in London and work primarily as a "native style" sculptural portraitist, for which he apparently had talent? Or should he go on to Rome to learn more about antiquity and try his hand at large-scale, "true style" subjects favored on the continent? It was Watson Taylor who conveyed to Gibson Chantrey's advice for him not to go to Rome. Watson Taylor supported this decision and encouraged Gibson to remain in London so that he could finish his commissions. He also offered to help finance a career for him there, and to forward him additional commissions. Gibson admitted he was tempted to stay. However, his dream to go to Rome persisted, and he told Watson Taylor he and the unfinished busts were going to Italy. Although Gibson's memoirs remain relatively brief about the time he spent in London, clearly greater contemporary events in the history of sculpture played an important role in his burgeoning career. Indeed, it is tempting but difficult to imagine what his career might have been like had he listened to Chantrey instead of Flaxman, and never gone to Rome at all.

Rome

As discussed above, it had been William Roscoe's intent originally to send Gibson to Rome at his own expense. When Roscoe was hit with bankruptcy and the need to sell off Allerton Hall as well as his art and book collections, his ability to financially support Gibson dwindled. However, his influence in the

Liverpool community remained strong, and with the help of Emily Robinson they were able to pool £150 from a number of individuals who funded Gibson's trips to London and Rome. It is worth noting that the painter Joseph Farington recorded in his diary in November 1816 that Antonio Canova had reported recently that a student studying in Rome at that time could live "very comfortably" on £80 per year, which suggests that Gibson had little if any money to sustain himself long in London, and in fact would have had little remaining to live in Rome, had he not obtained any of the commissions he received from George Watson Taylor.¹³¹

Gibson departed from London in September. He traveled through Paris and arrived in Rome on Monday, 20 October 1817. Like many before him who had traveled to the Eternal City, his first impressions of it were not great, having been misled by engravings that glorified its wonders: "I did not like the dulness of the place, the filth, nor the moaning solicitations of the numerous wretches that creep about."¹³² However, as he acclimated to the city, he became "familiarized to see the sky beautifully clear, and to see all the fountains of Rome playfully spouting their waters with sunbeams, and to see the stars, at night, more sparkling & bright than they are ever seen in England. I wish to stay here for years. I am alive, surrounded by art and by Artists." Soon after his arrival, Gibson met Canova and arrangements were made for him to work with him in his studio. Gibson's interactions and training with Canova, as well as Thorvaldsen, will be discussed in the next chapter on Gibson's studio practice.

As Gibson was the first British sculptor to arrive in Rome following the wars with France, his arrival heralded a new beginning. The last British sculptor to study in Rome had been Richard Westmacott, who had departed twenty years earlier. However, Gibson's arrival soon paved the way for others from the British isles to join him. The Scottish sculptor Thomas Campbell arrived in 1818 and remained until 1830. Richard Westmacott, Jr., son of the aforementioned Westmacott, worked in Rome 1820-26. Richard James Wyatt arrived in 1821 and like Gibson remained in Rome the rest of his life. In 1824, Joseph Gott,

¹³¹ Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*, ed. James Greig, vol. 8, 19 May 1815 to 30 December 1821 (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1928), 100. This comment may have coincided with the decision by the RA the following year (when Gibson was in London) to reinstate their Rome prize. This award had been in existence since the early days of the RA, but had been in abeyance since 1795 due to the wars with France. By July 1817, however, Farington recorded in his diary that due to a confusion in the rules regarding different possible qualifying candidates, no one was awarded the prize. Farington, 141. According to Sidney Hutchison, it was officially reinstated in 1818. *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986*, 2nd ed. (London: Robert Royce, 1986), 74.

¹³² John Gibson to "Sir" [Mr. Abercromby?], 1 March 1818, Huntington Library, San Marino, typed transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

best known for his sculptures of animals, arrived and remained in Rome until his death, although he frequently returned to England. The Irish sculptor John Hogan also arrived in 1824 and kept a studio in Rome until 1849.

Among these men, Wyatt was probably Gibson's closest friend and one of his greatest competitors, their studios being near one another. Although Wyatt's talents were never acknowledged by the Royal Academy's council, Gibson declared Wyatt to be a masterful sculptor, and through his encouragement Queen Victoria commissioned work from him, including *Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses* (fig. 1.4). Gibson noted in particular that Wyatt's strength was in the crafting of female figures: "His statues are remarkably chaste in sentiment, refined in character, and graceful in action: he had a strong feeling for the beautiful."¹³³ Indeed, Wyatt's statue of *Glycera* was named for a posthumous Council Medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Following Wyatt's death, Gibson designed his funerary monument in the Protestant Cemetery (fig. 2.19).

In addition to the sculptors, a number of British painters also came to Rome at this time. One of the first to arrive was Charles Lock Eastlake, who, after having established connections in Paris, reached Rome in November 1816 and began attending evening classes at the French Academy in the Villa Medici. He received two commissions from the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, who lived in Rome. She was an ardent follower of Canova and had funded archaeological excavations in the Roman Forum. The painter Seymour Kirkup also arrived that same year, and in 1819 J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Lawrence visited Rome and other parts of Italy. In November 1820, the painter Joseph Severn arrived with the ailing young poet John Keats. They took up residence on the Piazza di Spagna, where Keats died a few months later. It was Keats and his doctor who first encouraged Severn to introduce himself to Gibson. Upon first entering his studio, Severn saw that Gibson was speaking with Lord Colchester and made to depart, but "Gibson caught me by the arm and insisted on my entering along with my lord. ... He showed me the same attention as he did to Lord Colchester, and I was so struck by this generous consideration towards a poor and unknown young artist like myself."¹³⁴ Gibson's demeanor and

¹³³ Matthews, 111.

¹³⁴ William Sharp, *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1892; New York: AMS Press, 1973), 65.

subsequent friendship made Severn realize that, unlike in London where artists were driven by the making of money, Rome was first and foremost a city of Art.¹³⁵

Francis Chantrey visited Rome in 1819. Ever the proponent of the “native style” of sculpture, he still was active in making patriotic monuments, portrait busts, and sentimental representations of children. However, at this time, he had received a commission for his first classical subjects, so he recognized the need to study antiquity in Rome as previous sculptors had done before him. His early biographer George Jones noted, however, that the trip to Italy did little to enhance Chantrey’s appreciation for antiquity:

The well known and often described specimens of ancient sculpture found in him a ready admirer; but he was not prepared to go the length of travellers in Italy with respect to the ruins and antiquities of Rome; he selected and intensely admired a few; and they were admired by him for their perfection—not from association of ideas or from historical or classical reminiscences—they were admired solely on their merit as works of art.¹³⁶

Moreover, the trip confirmed for him that he was not a sculptor of classical subjects: “Chantrey’s journey through Italy seems to have been in furtherance of his desire to learn what to avoid rather than what to adopt.”¹³⁷ He subsequently canceled the classical commissions and returned to sculpting his “native style” busts and monuments.

Chantrey visited all the Grand Tour sites and in Rome toured the studios of Canova and Thorvaldsen. At this time, Gibson and Campbell were the only British sculptors working in Rome, and it was through Canova’s intervention that Chantrey went to Gibson’s studio. While there, he asked Gibson how long he had been in Rome. He replied three years and that he intended to stay for another three years, to which Chantrey replied: “One three years is enough to spoil you, or any other artist.”¹³⁸ When Gibson asked him if he thought he was in “a bad school,” Chantrey made no reply, a tacit acknowledgment of his distaste for what was being produced in Rome.¹³⁹

When he returned to London, Chantrey continued to express his despair over what the British artists were doing on the continent. In December 1819, Farington wrote in his diary that Chantrey had said:

¹³⁵ In an 1838 letter to the painter Charles Brown, Severn wrote that Gibson and he were planning a London monument to the memory of Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, but this project never came to fruition. Grant F. Scott, *Joseph Severn: Letters and Memoirs* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005), 373.

¹³⁶ George Jones, *Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A.: Recollections of His Life, Practice, and Opinions* (London: Edward Moxon, 1849), 31.

¹³⁷ Jones, *Chantrey*, 36.

¹³⁸ Matthews, 53; Eastlake, 55. Gibson had only been in Rome for two, not three, years at this time.

¹³⁹ Matthews, 53; Eastlake, 56.

“The English Students at Rome were doing but little towards advancing themselves in the art, indeed it might more properly be said they were going backwards rather than improving.”¹⁴⁰ In January 1820, John Constable reported to Farington that Chantrey had issued “a general condemnation of the mode of study pursued by modern artists at Rome, those who went from England & from all other quarters, but he declined mentioning the works of any individuals.”¹⁴¹ These remarks from Chantrey, a powerful voice in the London art world at this time, surely would have influenced his fellow academicians to provide little encouragement for these young struggling artists.

After having received nothing but discouragement from Chantrey earlier in London and later in Rome, it is perhaps not surprising that of all the artists discussed by Gibson in his memoirs, Chantrey is one of the few who is sharply attacked. Eastlake did not publish these remarks in her edition of his memoirs, probably because Chantrey’s followers were still active at this time, but Matthews had no hesitation doing so: “Chantrey was a man of no genius, he had not received from nature the power of invention, nor had he been trained in early life in the higher department of the art.”¹⁴² Gibson went on to acknowledge that Chantrey was a successful sculptor of busts of men, but his busts of women “wanted elegance and grace.” His critique of Chantrey could have been based on some amount of jealousy, considering Chantrey’s tremendous success in London from an early date. Whatever Gibson’s reason, it was compounded by the fact that Chantrey was a success despite choosing to ignore the example of the ancient Greeks. In ignoring classical precedent, Chantrey, according to Gibson, was among those who led British sculpture down the wrong path toward experimentation, not idealism and invention.

All those men of genius in modern times who have deviated from the principles of Greek art have left us works not superior but greatly inferior to the ancients—we should profit by their errors. The desire of novelty destroys pure taste and some artists neglect the true principles of beauty for the purpose of producing something new and thereby to attract the ignorant. Novelty diverts us, truth and perfection instruct us.¹⁴³

Unlike Chantrey, Gibson had found in Rome what he first had learned from Roscoe, Fuseli, Joshua Reynolds, and John Flaxman: the lessons of “pure taste” and “true principles of beauty” associated with antiquity and the “true style.” Later in life Gibson frequently urged the Royal Academy to create and sponsor a British Academy in Rome where he and others could teach these same principles to future

¹⁴⁰ Farington, 237.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 238.

¹⁴² Matthews, 53-54.

¹⁴³ Matthews, 90; Eastlake, 86-87.

generations of artists. This organized Academy never happened in his lifetime, but the foundations for it began soon after his arrival in Rome.

In December 1821, twelve to fifteen of these British painters and sculptors began to meet regularly at each other's studios for drawing sessions, their intent primarily to share in the cost of paying for live models. They gradually organized themselves as the British Academy in Rome. Eastlake was named Secretary and Severn was Treasurer. They applied for financial support in England and their benefactors included King George IV, the Duke of Devonshire, Sir William Hamilton, the RA, and the British Institution. Without a steady stream of support and with many of the artists involved moving back to London, the group could never formalize itself and became more like a gentlemen's club than an official academy.¹⁴⁴

These British artists working in Rome naturally associated with one another because of their common language, but it is important to remember that Rome always had had an international community of sculptors and painters, which only increased after the Napoleonic wars.¹⁴⁵ As discussed earlier, this international environment was exactly one of the reasons why Flaxman had urged Gibson to go, noting that exposure to the work of others outside of London could only enhance his artistic experience and appreciation for antiquity. Canova had a large following of many Italian sculptors, the most noteworthy including Pietro Tenerani and Adamo Tadolini, both of whom worked in Rome. Of the two, Gibson considered Tenerani to be "one of the first sculptors now in Europe."¹⁴⁶ Gibson also befriended the Italian history painter Vincenzo Camuccini, who after Canova's death became his successor as President of the Accademia di San Luca. He wrote of Camuccini that "he would have made a greater sculptor than painter. Many of his best works have great power of composition and fine drawing."¹⁴⁷ Camuccini taught him about the unity of parts and natural simplicity, traits associated with the idealistic beauty of ancient Greek art.

¹⁴⁴ For more on the British Academy in Rome, see Sue Brown, "Joseph Severn and the Establishment of the British Academy in Rome," *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 10 (2009), 63-72.

¹⁴⁵ Gibson only spoke English and Welsh when he arrived in Rome, but he soon learned Italian, a necessity considering his teacher and studio workers were all Italian. On the last page of one of his sketchbooks dated 1823 he wrote a chart and conjugation of Italian verbs. GI/7/3785, Gibson Papers. He probably also knew some German, since he travelled frequently to Germany and Switzerland on summer holidays, but he did not know French.

¹⁴⁶ Eastlake, 204; Matthews, 147.

¹⁴⁷ Eastlake, 73; Matthews, 82.

Northern European sculptors other than Bertel Thorvaldsen included the Dutch sculptor Mathieu Kessels, who arrived in 1817, and the German sculptor Emil Wolff, who arrived in 1822. The Nazarene painters were also active in Rome at this time, although their early hermetic days and *Quattrocento* style were evolving to reflect an interest in High Renaissance art under the influence of Peter von Cornelius, who had arrived in 1811. Sculptors also came to Rome from the United States and France. The American sculptor Horatio Greenough worked in Rome from 1825-26, went back to the United States, then returned in 1828 and worked in Florence until his death.¹⁴⁸ At the Villa Medici, Jean-Pierre Cortot, James Pradier, and Charles-François Leboeuf, called Nanteuil, were among the French sculptors who were *Prix de Rome* winners working in Rome around the time of Gibson's arrival.

This international group of artists all regularly gathered at the Caffè Greco for their meals and drinks. Gibson himself could be found there every morning eating his breakfast, usually either before or after his morning walk that frequently included a visit to the gardens of the Villa Medici. Despite the language barrier that may have impeded communication among the different nationalities working in Rome, at the very least these sculptors and painters would have known one another by reputation and work and through visits to their studios. Gibson noted frequently to his friends and colleagues in England that in Rome all the sculptors would regularly visit one another's studios, "making critical remarks on the clay models which they are engaged upon, ... a most salutary effect, which is felt by all of them."¹⁴⁹

Soon after Gibson settled into his new life in Rome, working in Canova's studio and drawing at the Accademia di San Luca, he began making large clay models. Within a year, he had moved to his own studio on Via Fontanella near the Piazza di Popolo, which we assume from all accounts was the same address he kept for the remainder of his life. Gibson finished the portrait busts for Watson Taylor, and exhibited the bust of Mrs. Watson Taylor at the RA in 1819. Canova also kept his promise to send wealthy Englishmen to Gibson if he showed progress. The first and most of important of these was the Duke of Devonshire who in 1819 commissioned in marble *Mars Restrained by Cupid* (fig. 4.3), which is discussed in chapter four on the homoerotic body. A few years later, Devonshire's uncle, Lord George

¹⁴⁸ Hiram Powers, the sculptor of the *Greek Slave*, arrived in Italy in 1837 and worked in Florence until his death, and Thomas Crawford from 1835 on worked in Rome, initially studying with Thorvaldsen. By the time of their arrivals, however, Gibson was more firmly established as the leading British sculptor in Rome.

¹⁴⁹ Matthews, 221.

Cavendish, commissioned a version of his *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (fig. 2.20), the first life-sized figure Gibson modeled in Rome.¹⁵⁰

Another of his important early works from this period was *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 2.21), which was commissioned by Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753-1827) early in 1822.¹⁵¹ Beaumont and his wife are credited with introducing the poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge to London society, and were seen in their day as arbiters of taste.¹⁵² A baronet, he entered politics briefly, but his true love was art. He was a landscape painter and exhibited regularly at the RA from 1794 to 1825.¹⁵³ His greatest achievement in the art world, however, was in his role as a patron and collector. Beaumont's art collection included masterworks by artists from Poussin to Rubens, and he purchased Michelangelo's *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John* in 1822 while in Rome. He was an early founder of the National Gallery and bequeathed to it much of his art collection, although Michelangelo's tondo was given to the RA.

At Canova's encouragement, the Beaumonts went to Gibson's studio. He had begun modeling *Psyche* in clay late in 1821, and Beaumont returned frequently during the winter months to watch his progress. The sculpture, its figures slightly under life-size, shows the girl raised above the heads of the twin gods of the West wind as they carry her to Mount Olympus. Satisfied with Gibson's model, Beaumont commissioned the work in marble, agreeing to his price of £700, the most Gibson had received for any work up to this time. After he left Rome, Beaumont wrote to Gibson often, expressing pleasure

¹⁵⁰ Timothy Stevens, "John Gibson's 'The Sleeping Shepherd Boy,'" in Curtis, *Patronage*, 57-59.

¹⁵¹ The version commissioned by Beaumont is now untraced. Another version from the late 1830s was commissioned by Prince Torlonia and is now located in the Palazzo Corsini, Rome. Gibson applied gilt to parts of this version, which will be discussed in the chapter on polychromy. A third version from 1842-45, slightly reduced in size, was commissioned by Czar Alexander II and is now located in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. In the early 1840s, Benjamin Gibson made a reduced version after his brother's work for Richard Vaughan Yates, a Liverpool iron merchant and nail manufacturer. This work is now located at the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

¹⁵² Felicity Owen and David Blayney Brown, "Beaumont, Sir George Howland, seventh baronet (1753-1827)," in Goldman, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.metmuseum.org/view/article/1872> (accessed 30 July 2011).

¹⁵³ As a landscape painter, Beaumont often was critical of his more famous colleague J. M. W. Turner, whom he disparaged for using a white ground when painting. In examining Turner's shipwreck scenes, Beaumont described his effect of water as looking like veins from slabs of marble. Ian Warrell, *J. M. W. Turner* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 16, 50.

over the progress of his statue.¹⁵⁴ In a letter from Rome soon after the commission had been made, Beaumont wrote effusively to Thomas Lawrence, now President of the RA, about the work:

Now, if Gibson had been a man of common abilities, there would not have been so much in it, but he is as I dare say you know an artist of the highest promise. He has lately finished a model of the Zephyrs raising Psyche to heaven, which I really think one of the most beautiful groups I have seen, the airy spring, with which the Zephyrs are bounding from the earth, is admirably expressed, & the innocent timidity of Psyche who is placed between them, on their shoulders, is inimitable. This you are aware, was a nice point to him—had her apprehension been “overdone or come tardy of” it would have been insipid or ludicrous but nothing can be more happy; her eyes are not directed to either of her supporters but with delicate anxiety looking towards the ground between them, —another elegant thought because as they are beautiful, & tenderly turning their eyes up towards her, a ensorious world might have suggested she was thinking more of them than Cupid. Another beauty in this lovely group, is the extreme youthfulness he has given to Psyche, she does not seem older than 13 or 14 at the remotest & as far as my judgement goes, her form is admirable, I never saw a fairer blossom. Perhaps I am saying more than I ought but the promise of this young countryman of ours gives me so much pleasure I could not restrain. It is a pleasure to add, that I hear his private character equals his taste & skill.¹⁵⁵

Beaumont wasn't alone in his excitement. Others traveling in Rome reported on the progress Gibson was making with this and his other commissions. The *Literary Gazette* published a letter by an unidentified correspondent who praised Gibson for showing “extraordinary promise” and noted of *Psyche* its “fine invention, purity of sentiment, and beautiful form.”¹⁵⁶ The *London Magazine* declared the work “the admiration of all who pretend to *virtú*,” and having been given Canova's commendation, Gibson's studio had “become a lounge for all the fashionables at Rome.”¹⁵⁷ The *European Magazine, and London Review* wrote: “The expression, beauty of form, and the delicate *contour* of this statue unite to make it a *chef d'oeuvre [sic]*.”¹⁵⁸

It took Gibson longer to finish the work than he had intended, largely because he had become inundated with a number of new commissions. When it was completed, he exhibited it at the 1827 RA exhibition (no. 1124). Unfortunately, Beaumont died in February of that year, so he never saw the finished work in marble. Although Gibson had received advance acclaim for the statue, the reception of it at the RA was less enthusiastic. He noted in his memoirs, “The work was said to be inferior to the

¹⁵⁴ Matthews, 56-62.

¹⁵⁵ Sir George Beaumont to Sir Thomas Lawrence, 14 May 1822, LAW/4/20, Sir Thomas Lawrence, PRA, Letters and Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (Beaumont's emphasis). The quote “overdone or come tardy of” is from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* III.ii.6-7, when Hamlet advises the actors on how to perform their roles, suggesting that Gibson has made Psyche appear natural and not affected.

¹⁵⁶ “British Artists at Rome,” *Literary Gazette* 286 (13 July 1822), 441.

¹⁵⁷ “Literary and Scientific Intelligence; &c.,” *London Magazine* 6, no. 33 (September 1822), 288.

¹⁵⁸ “Intelligence Relative to the Fine Arts, Foreign and Domestic,” *European Magazine, and London Review* 83 (January 1823), 59.

performances produced at home. One of the articles in the daily papers asserted that its only merit consisted in the beautiful finish of the material.”¹⁵⁹

In December 1828, Watson Taylor sent him a letter also commenting on the poor reception *Psyche* had received. He noted in particular the importance of setting, that works with poetic subjects were better suited to be admired in private spaces such as those in his own mansion, rather than “mixed with other works in the dark, little, crowded room at Somerset House, with all that envy, ill-nature and prejudice could deal out unjustly and shabbily upon it.”¹⁶⁰ The problems with the installation of sculpture in the dungeon-like space at Somerset House have been discussed above, but Watson Taylor’s letter also points to a larger issue at the time: private aesthetic experience versus public exhibition and reception. The latter scenario was particularly damaging to works like Gibson’s *Psyche*, which was intended for a private space. As Yarrington has noted about the crowded RA sculpture room, there began to be “a tension between what was understood to be an essentially closed and cultured, epicurean experience—an elite response involving the use of highly developed imaginative faculties—and a public domain where the aesthetic lay open to misinterpretations by the undiscerning majority.”¹⁶¹

These “misinterpretations” also became problematic for Gibson because, not based in London, he was beginning to be criticized for having lost his British sensibility about the art scene in his homeland. By 1827 he had been in Rome for a decade, longer than he had ever claimed he would initially stay, and his Canova-like “true style” works were not following the trend for Chantrey-like “native style” sculpture in London. Indeed, the negative reception of his work was tantamount to xenophobia in some cases. In the same aforementioned letter, Watson Taylor told Gibson:

As an absentee at Rome you are considered by a certain set, who can give a cry one way or another, an alien Competitor, and the John Bull feeling in favour of native talent last year certainly was stirred up to pronounce upon your group of Psyche and Zephyrs as inferior to works which were notoriously not equal to yours.¹⁶²

Watson Taylor’s letter suggests that Gibson’s work was in fact superior to much of what was being produced and exhibited in London, but Gibson’s insistence on remaining away from this world was creating a backlash against him that passed judgment on his “true style” work because of his choice to

¹⁵⁹ Matthews, 68.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 69.

¹⁶¹ Yarrington, “Art on the Line,” in Solkin, 182.

¹⁶² Matthews, 69.

remain in Rome and seemingly ignore the Chantrey-influenced London sculpture scene. Public monuments in contemporary dress, naturalistic portrait busts, and sentimental depictions of children and death scenes being the “native style” subjects “John Bull” preferred, Gibson’s works were seen by the London public as having little relevance to the British school of sculpture. Only men such as Watson Taylor, Devonshire, and Beaumont, who could afford private commissions for poetic subjects imitative of antiquity, could see Gibson as a beacon for the future of British sculpture.

Watson Taylor pointed out to him that soon he would have to make a decision, to be either “Gibson of Rome or Gibson of London.”¹⁶³ Gibson suggests in his memoirs that this was an easy decision: he would be Gibson of Rome. There he had the potential to be recognized internationally and he could pursue subjects in the “true style” as he wished—“those that demand the highest efforts of the imagination and the greatest knowledge of the beautiful”; in England he would be forced into “making busts and statues of great men in anti-sculptural dress.”¹⁶⁴ But Gibson was not abandoning his British allegiance or heritage. His primary clientele remained the British, he exhibited works regularly at the RA, and like all British artists at this time he aspired for recognition by his peers with an election to the RA as an Associate and then as a full member. Academic recognition eventually did come for Gibson, but this happened first in Bologna and then at the Accademia di San Luca. It took until the 1830s for his peers in London to acknowledge his accomplishments as a British sculptor working in Rome, but this probably only occurred because powerful friends like Eastlake intervened on his behalf.

Royal Academician

By the 1860s, Gibson was able to claim membership in at least nine international academies of fine art: the Pontifical Academies of Bologna, Ravenna, and St. Luke in Rome; the Royal Academies of Turin, Munich, and Berlin; the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, Russia; the National Academy of Design in New York; and the Royal Academy in London.¹⁶⁵ Gibson visited only about half of these cities in his lifetime, so his election to places such as St. Petersburg and New York was based on his international reputation and his patrons from these cities. The accounts of his life omit the details of most of these

¹⁶³ Matthews, 65; Eastlake, 62.

¹⁶⁴ Matthews, 65; Eastlake, 63.

¹⁶⁵ These affiliations are listed on the title page of *Engravings from Original Compositions Executed in Marble at Rome by John Gibson, R.A.* (London: P. & D. Colnaghi, Scott & Co., 1861).

memberships, but Gibson does note the date of what probably was the first of them, his election as an honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Bologna on 12 May 1826.¹⁶⁶

Some art historians have noted that it was not difficult for foreign artists to be elected to the regional academies in Italy, the one requirement usually being simply the submission of a diploma work for their collection.¹⁶⁷ The exception was the Accademia di San Luca, which until the early 1800s required that an artist show proof of membership in an academy from his homeland. The election of Antonio Canova as President, however, seems to have altered things, as he made numerous British artists such as John Flaxman and Thomas Lawrence honorary members without the need for them to provide certifications. After Canova's death, the painter Vincenzo Camuccini and then Bertel Thorvaldsen took over leadership of the Accademia. With the support of these two men, Gibson's name was proposed as a member in 1829 following the death of a sculptor named Francesco Massimiliano Laboureur. Gibson noted in his memoirs: "The white balls were more numerous than the black ones, and I was elected Resident Academician of Merit."¹⁶⁸

Membership in this most prestigious of Italian academies became important for advancing Gibson's candidacy for membership in the RA. So too, however, were the close friendships he had nurtured during the 1820s with other British artists who had worked in Rome. The most notable of these friends was Charles Lock Eastlake, future President of the RA. Eastlake and he could have met in Rome as early as 1819, but after 1821 they developed what became a lifelong friendship, and spent time together helping to establish the British Academy in Rome. In November 1827 Eastlake was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA), followed in February 1830 by full membership (RA). His rapid ascent through the ranks of the RA is surprising when one realizes that he had exhibited for only the third time at the RA in 1827. His connections with other leading artists and patrons in the London art world clearly must have helped in his election. According to David Robertson, Eastlake was the first British artist to be elected

¹⁶⁶ Eastlake, 60; Matthews, 67. Gibson was elected an honorary member of the National Academy of Design in New York in 1833, but no other information related to this membership is known. My thanks to curator Bruce Weber at the National Academy Museum & School for his assistance in this research.

¹⁶⁷ See, for instance, Frank Salmon, "Charles Heathcote Tatham and the Accademia di S. Luca, Rome," *The Burlington Magazine* 140, no. 1139 (February 1998), 85-92.

¹⁶⁸ Eastlake, 63; Matthews, 71.

ARA in absentia.¹⁶⁹ He had listed his residence as Rome for the RA exhibition that year, but in all likelihood Eastlake still maintained an official residence in England, because his residency was not an issue for his election. The fact that he immediately moved back to London permanently in early 1830 suggests his awareness of this concern. All of this is significant because, unlike with Eastlake's election, Gibson's election was problematized by his residency.

The RA by-laws stipulated the following requirements for elected members: "They shall all of them be men of fair moral characters, of high reputation in their several professions; resident in Great Britain; and not members of any other Society of Artists established in London."¹⁷⁰ Gibson fulfilled (presumably) all of these requirements with the exception of residency. At the General Assembly meeting of the Academy held on 4 November 1833, on the agenda was the election of two ARAs, one sculptor and one painter. Among the RA members present for the meeting were President Martin Archer Shee, the sculptors Edward Hodges Baily and Richard Westmacott, and the painters William Etty, John Constable, J. M. W. Turner, and Eastlake.

Ten sculptors were named for possible ARA election, including Thomas Campbell, Richard Westmacott Jr., and Gibson. There was a separate list of painters for possible ARA election. Before voting could begin, however, an issue had to be addressed: "The name of Mr. Gibson being objected to on the ground of his not being resident in Great Britain. The President put the Question, if the name of Mr. Gibson be kept on the list, as eligible on this occasion, it was decided in the affirmative, the Ayes being 16, the No's 5."¹⁷¹ In the vote for a ranking of final candidates for sculptor and painter ARA membership, Gibson and Thomas Uwins respectively were named the leading contenders. In a final tally, Gibson received sixteen votes, Uwins eighteen votes, and both were duly elected ARAs.

Despite his election, Gibson's residency was still an issue. The minutes record that Turner expressed concerns over the residency requirement: "Mr. Turner gave notice that at the next General Assembly he would move, that it be referred to the Council to take into consideration the propriety of making a law to

¹⁶⁹ David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 28.

¹⁷⁰ Royal Academy of Arts, *Abstract of the Constitution and Laws of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: B. McMillan, 1815), 2.

¹⁷¹ General Assembly Minutes, Vol. 4, [174-75], RAA/GA/1/4, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London.

explain the extent of non residence in Great Britain allowable to members of the Royal Academy."¹⁷² While this does not mean that Turner was opposed to Gibson's election—indeed, the minutes do not record how anyone voted, ensuring some level of anonymity in the official voting process—it does suggest that some members were concerned that the residency requirement was a problem that needed to be either changed or at least more clearly defined. Curiously, no mention of this residency issue was brought up by Turner or anyone else at the next and other subsequent meetings through the 1830s, and Gibson's election to full membership in 1836 met with no such issue.

There is some evidence that Gibson had submitted his name for ARA status a few times in the past, but had met with rejection each time. One journalist noted about this that Gibson had had "patience, but it is supposed to be exhausted."¹⁷³ He stated further in his memoirs that he had requested Eastlake to submit his name as a candidate that year, perhaps in the hope that would help.¹⁷⁴ Eastlake, then, must have had some influence in swaying the majority in Gibson's favor over the residency issue. Having been elected ARA himself while in Rome, Eastlake must have argued in defense of Gibson as an exception because of his ongoing contributions to the RA exhibitions, the number of important commissions he had received by British patrons, and his involvement with Eastlake in the establishment of a British Academy in Rome. In short, Eastlake presumably convinced the majority that Gibson's permanent residency in Rome did not invalidate his identity as a practicing British artist.

Gibson was well aware of the special dispensation made with regard to his election. Upon receiving the news in a letter from the RA Secretary Henry Howard, Gibson replied by expressing his gratitude for this auspicious acknowledgment and honor. He noted in particular the issue of his residency, but quickly pointed out how his membership would reinforce his standing as a British artist, albeit one living abroad:

I am the more sensible of the peculiar compliment which the R. Academy has thus bestowed upon me, by electing me one of their members while residing out of England, and I am sure that my friends will equally with myself acknowledge this mark of grateful liberality.

The raised pride which I now feel in in [*sic*] being connected with the greatest artists of my own country—gives me a new impulse, and will stimulate my endeavours the more ardently to render those works worthy—which I hope occasionally to send as my mite towards the support of the annual exhibition.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Ibid., [177].

¹⁷³ G. F., "The Royal Academy Exposed," *The New Monthly Magazine* (May 1833), 79.

¹⁷⁴ Matthews, 84.

¹⁷⁵ John Gibson to Henry Howard, 26 November 1833, Records of the Secretary, RAA/SEC/2/42/1, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London.

Gibson knew that this election was an important acknowledgment of his talents by his fellow artists and the community at large. He even hoped it would stop the “depreciatory tone of the London articles on my Anglo-Roman works.”¹⁷⁶

Indeed, it was in the 1830s that some critics first began to speak disparagingly of his works exhibited at the RA. Art criticism was inherently based on the personal relationships between critics and artists. Since Gibson was not an active part of the art world in London, it is not surprising that critics began to look negatively at some of his works on exhibition. For instance, one reviewer acknowledged the execution of his *Nymph Untying Her Sandal* (fig. 2.22), but then criticized the figure’s lack of grace: “We are aware that the posture is natural, but there is an elegant as well as a vulgar nature; the lady sets out her back too much for the line of beauty.”¹⁷⁷ Another reviewer called his *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (fig. 2.20) elegant, but was disappointed by what seemed to be the lack of an internal skeleton: “There is a want of something to support the sleeping body; we are anxious lest he should fall from his seat, and therefore the feeling of repose is broken in upon.”¹⁷⁸ Contrary to what Gibson may have felt was a barrage of negativity, there were a number of positive reviews too. His *Venus and Cupid* (fig. 2.23), for instance, was praised for its grace and beauty, one reviewer calling it “the highest order of statuary” and “worthy of the divinities presiding over love.”¹⁷⁹ This work was exhibited in 1833, and its combination of classicism, naturalism, and sentimentality probably was a significant boost that helped determine his ARA status, as it was exhibited just months before the election.

Notices appeared in the press about Gibson being made an ARA, and in general these were all neutral in their tone.¹⁸⁰ One critic, however, did publish disparaging remarks about the RA overlooking its by-laws in favor of Gibson’s election. In a review of the 1835 RA exhibition, the unnamed critic disregarded Gibson’s contributions entirely, choosing instead to question how he had become an ARA at all:

As Mr. G. still belongs to another Society, how comes it that the R.A. violated their bye-law [*sic*], never to give any encouragement to Art out of their own pale, by electing him an *Associate*? It is true

¹⁷⁶ Matthews, 84.

¹⁷⁷ “Exhibition of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture,” *Englishman’s Magazine* 1, no. 3 (June 1831), 324.

¹⁷⁸ “Exhibition of the Royal Academy, Somerset House. [Continued.],” *Leigh Hunt’s London Journal* 66 (4 July 1835), 212.

¹⁷⁹ “Royal Academy,” *Monthly Magazine* 15, no. 90 (June 1833), 690.

¹⁸⁰ See, for instance, “Royal Academy,” *The Literary Gazette* (9 November 1833), 715.

that *the Society* was at Rome—it was *foreign*—it was not in *Suffolk-street*—there was something in that; and its title was perhaps not without a charm to recommend the Association.—*St. Luke*.¹⁸¹

As cited earlier, the by-laws stated that candidates had to be residents of Great Britain and could not belong to any art society based in London. In the 1820s, the Society of British Artists had been formed as an alternative to the Royal Academy, and they exhibited annually in a gallery on Suffolk Street in London. Gibson never belonged to the SBA or exhibited with them, but he did belong to the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, which the critic points out for readers is foreign, not British. The critic's references to these different societies that represent British or Roman affiliation, and thus suggest an adherence to a nationalistic school of art, become a mask for his true xenophobic sensibility, that Gibson is now Roman and no longer British.

Despite this attack, Gibson had followers who felt his work gave pride to their national school of art by increasing its presence on the continent. In discussing Gibson as a student of Canova, the author of one article sought to demonstrate how Gibson's Roman practice actually had improved the British school of sculpture:

We have no hesitation in saying, that, owing to the labours of Gibson, English sculpture has acquired a reputation on the continent, to which it had never before attained. The beauty of execution, and the exquisite surface so conspicuous in Canova's works, are to be traced in the delightful productions of Gibson, which, in emulating the pure spirit of Grecian Art, bear an impress of individual feeling and national character, without which the successive efforts of ages become ungenial transmissions of object imitation, and demand no other rank than that of hereditary monographs.¹⁸²

Lady Elizabeth Eastlake noted that by the time of Gibson's election to full membership in the RA, he was "at the very zenith of his powers."¹⁸³ His election took place on 10 February 1836 during the General Assembly meeting, in which they were voting on a replacement as RA for the recently deceased painter Henry Bone. He received 18 votes and was duly elected a Royal Academician, his residency in Rome clearly no longer an issue. In accordance with the rules of the RA to submit a diploma work, he sent *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24). This work was shown at the 1838 exhibition (no. 1255) and was well received. One critic wrote that it deserved "special commendation. It is one of the most delicately moulded things we ever saw."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ "Modern Academy," *The Observer* (24 May 1835), 3 (reviewer's italics).

¹⁸² "A Word about Canova and Gibson," *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts* 3, no. 5 (March 1834), 422.

¹⁸³ Eastlake, 78.

¹⁸⁴ "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the Royal Academy," *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1838), 633.

Victorian Sculptor

In 1840, Gibson turned fifty and it was during this decade that he began the extensive correspondence with Margaret Sandbach that eventually led to the writing of his memoirs, and Anna Jameson wrote her biographical article on him in *The Art Journal*. The last twenty-six years of his life are among the most documented in contemporaneous sources. A number of tourists regularly visited his studio while in Rome and wrote about him afterwards.¹⁸⁵ People more actively saved his correspondence from these later years, and these letters to date make up the vast majority of his extant letters. Improvements in the use of illustrations in the press also led to Gibson's sculptures being reproduced regularly in the pages of titles ranging from the mainstream, such as the *Illustrated London News*, to specialized serials like *The Art-Union* (later on *The Art Journal*), both of which began publication by the 1840s. Perceived as the self-taught working-class Welsh sculptor who had made a success of himself and lived in Rome, the foreign land of art, Gibson had become an art hero for the rising middle classes, while still receiving commissions from the international aristocracy.

Gibson returned to England for the first time in 1844 to carry out a royal commission to sculpt a portrait statue of Queen Victoria (fig. 2.25) and traveled to Osborne House to model her bust. Completing the statue, he decided to tint it. It was received so well by the Queen and Prince Albert that they ordered a replica, and over time ordered other works from Gibson. This commission for the polychrome portrait statue will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. He afterwards received a government commission for an allegorical statue of Victoria for Westminster Palace, the Houses of Parliament (fig. 2.26), and thus modeled a second portrait bust of her about a decade later. As the years passed, his relationship with the royal family extended to that of their son, the Prince of Wales, who upon coming of age commissioned works from Gibson such as a reduced version of the *Tinted Venus* and a bust of his wife Princess Alexandra. Gibson maintained regular communication with Victoria and Albert. They so respected him as an arbiter of taste that he acted as their agent in commissioning works from other sculptors in Rome, including Pietro Tenerani, Richard James Wyatt, Lawrence Macdonald, Henry

¹⁸⁵ See, for instance, Count Hawks Le Grice, "Gibson's Studio," in *Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome with a Brief Historical and Critical Sketch of Sculpture* (Rome: Crispino Puccinelli, 1841), 1:99-119.

Timbrell, and William Theed the Younger, as well as the cameo maker Tommaso Saulini.¹⁸⁶ As his reputation grew, his studio became a mandatory stop for tourists of all nations, and over the years he received commissions from a number of important visiting international dignitaries, including Czar Alexander II, Count Schönberg of Bavaria, Prince Torlonia in Rome, the zamindar and merchant Dwarkanath Tagore from Calcutta, and the exiled Prince Duleep Singh from the Punjab. Throughout his career, Gibson continued to make portrait busts and statues and funerary monuments.

Nevertheless, his primary interest always remained classical gods and heroes as he strove to aspire to the idealism of the Greeks. He continued to exhibit regularly these types of works at the Royal Academy until 1864. He also exhibited five of his more important sculptures at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857: *The Hunter and His Dog* (no. 7; fig. 1.2), owned by the Sandbachs; *Love Tormenting the Soul* (no. 20, exhibited as *Eros*; fig. 3.23), owned by Mrs. Yates of Liverpool; *Narcissus* (no. 44; fig. 2.24), owned by Richard Fort; *The Wounded Amazon* (no. 96), owned by the Prestons; and the portrait statue of *Sir Robert Peel* (no. 130; fig. 3.9), lent by H. Cardwell, presumably a copy after the statue of the Prime Minister commissioned by the government and installed in Westminster Abbey.¹⁸⁷

Gibson also joined his colleagues in exhibiting work at the first three international expositions. At the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, Gibson exhibited a plaster cast of his bas-relief *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun* (fig. 5.5), and his statue *The Hunter and His Dog* was lent by its owner, the Earl of Yarborough. The display of these two works in the context of the Great Exhibition will be discussed in more detail in chapter five on reproductive media. Yarborough's version of the *Hunter* also was displayed at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris (no. 1131, exhibited as *Chasseur et chien*), along with *Hylas and the Nymphs* (no. 1132, exhibited as *Hylas emporté par les nymphes*), which was lent by the National Gallery.¹⁸⁸ The 1850s also saw the full fruition of Gibson experimenting with polychrome sculpture, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. At the 1862 International Exhibition in London, in addition to three polychrome statues, Gibson also exhibited four additional works: *Nymph Playing with Cupid*, owned by John Malcolm; *Nymph Untying Her Sandal* (exhibited as *Girl at the Bath*; fig. 2.22),

¹⁸⁶ Jonathan Marsden, ed., *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love* (London: Royal Collection, 2010), 44. See also John Gibson to George E. Anson, 24 March 1845, GI/1/7, Gibson Papers.

¹⁸⁷ Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions 1813-1912* (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1970), 1:415. The curatorial files at the Walker Art Gallery note that Gibson's drawing *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* also was shown at the 1857 exhibition (no. 243), on loan at that time from the Liverpool Royal Institution.

¹⁸⁸ H. W. Janson, ed., *Paris Salon de 1855*, reprint (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 123-24.

owned by Yarborough; a bust of the Roman model *Grazia*, owned by Queen Victoria; and a bust of the *Duchess of Wellington* which she herself loaned.¹⁸⁹

Gibson's memoirs and extant letters describe in great detail a number of other contemporary events. Perhaps the most significant of these is his first-hand account of the *Risorgimento*, a violent period in Italian history beginning around 1848 when many Italians fought for a united nation. A closer study of this material alone, in particular how it relates to the sculptures he made during this period of time, is but one area of his life that warrants further study, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Gibson began to suffer from fainting spells and the effects of a heart condition during the summer of 1865. He recovered, but fell ill again in January 1866, inevitably suffering the first of a series of strokes. Of all those who sent their best wishes for his recovery, it was a telegram from Queen Victoria which he treasured most.

The Queen, of whom he loved to speak, conferred on him the greatest marks of her favour and respect, and on Friday last a telegram arrived, sent by her Majesty's order, to inquire after the health of her gifted subject. It was placed in the dying artist's hands; a gleam of satisfaction lighted up his features, and, holding it so firmly as to resist every attempt to withdraw it, he fell asleep. Happy the nation whose Sovereign appreciates and sympathises with the genius of her most gifted subjects.¹⁹⁰

Although he reportedly recovered enough to continue working, inevitably illness overcame him. He died at approximately 7:30 AM on Saturday, 27 January 1866, after having collapsed while working on the model of his last work, *Theseus Killing the Robber*. He was buried two days later in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome. Because he had been awarded the *Légion d'honneur*, Napoleon III ordered a gun salute by French troops at his funeral, and news of the funeral and cortege was reported in the *Times*, *Illustrated London News*, and other international newspapers.

His close friend Penry Williams was the executor of his estate and had the responsibility of dismantling Gibson's studio and dealing with his personal effects and belongings. Williams ensured that Gibson's primary marble carvers, such as Felice Bains, completed the last few unfinished commissions and were paid for their work. From a surviving flyer, we know that at least one public auction was held in Rome on 27 February 1868, where "plaster models, statues, fragments of statues, stands, workbenches,

¹⁸⁹ Graves, *Century*, 1:415.

¹⁹⁰ "The Funeral of John Gibson, R.A.," *Illustrated London News*, 10 February 1866, 137.

stoves, furniture and other items” were sold.¹⁹¹ Presumably these were objects that were not destined for London, as Gibson had bequeathed to the RA the contents of his studio, including his marble and plaster statues, busts, and reliefs, his drawings, and all of his personal papers.

He also left the RA £32,000 for the construction of a Gibson Gallery where future sculptors could study his work. In doing this, he followed the precedents established by Thorvaldsen, for whom a museum was established in his name in Copenhagen, and Chantrey, who also left funds to the RA for the future support of sculptural activity, a fund on which it still draws. The Gibson Gallery opened to the public on 27 November 1876, and the *Times* praised the installation and his sculptures. They noted that he was for the RA “the greatest of all their sculptor members, if not the first of all modern sculptors,” and concluded that “Gibson had all the native power of genius tempered with a justness of taste rarely exhibited so fully in any of the works of modern sculpture.”¹⁹²

The perception of the *Times* that Gibson was a sculptor whose works were “modern” suggests that even ten years after his death he was still seen as one of the leading British artists of the day. The subsequent artistry and art historiography of modernism, which rejected classicism, ultimately led to his dismissal as being anything but modern-thinking. This chapter reorients this perception. In reevaluating the story of his education, training, exhibition history, and the reception of his work, I have argued that Gibson’s life and career were influenced by the academic principles of his day, which emphasized imitation from the ancients in an attempt to create a modern interpretation of classical antiquity. Having examined his life, the next chapter will consider Gibson’s studio practice in Rome. In evolving from a pupil in Canova’s studio to one of the most important sculptors active in Rome, Gibson ultimately modified his standing as not just a sculptor of the modern classical body, but a gentleman artist who taught pupils and visitors about the “true style” and how antiquity inspired modern classics.

¹⁹¹ This text in Italian read: “*modelli in gesso, statue, frammenti, cavalletti, banconi, stufi, mobili ed altro.*” This information also was published in the *Giornale di Roma*, 25 February 1868, 188. The flyer and news clipping are in GI/4, Gibson Papers.

¹⁹² “The Gibson Gallery,” *Times*, 27 November 1876, 6.

Chapter 3. From Modeling to Tinting: Gibson's Studio Practice

John Gibson and his studio assistants produced hundreds of works over a career that lasted more than fifty years. Most of that time was spent working in a studio on Via della Fontanella in Rome, two blocks away from the Piazza del Popolo. In order to understand how he produced so many works over half a century, it is important to consider his training and studio practice. Although Gibson learned things from Joseph Nollekens while working in his London studio, as discussed in the previous chapter, Gibson flourished in Rome, basing his career on the examples provided by Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen. Learning from them the art of sculpture and the skills necessary to manage a studio with many *practiciens*, he in turn passed these lessons on later in life to his pupils, the most famous of whom was the American Harriet Goodhue Hosmer.

After the deaths of Canova in 1822 and Thorvaldsen in 1844, Gibson became the foremost sculptor working in Rome. His studio was visited regularly by tourists who sought to commission modern classical sculptures from him, and he welcomed the role of *cicerone* of his own studio, as contemporaneous published accounts by visitors reveal. Gibson ultimately cultivated an identity not just as a sculptor of the modern classical body, but as a gentleman artist who taught pupils and visitors about the “true style,” Greek art, and the creation of modern classics. His popularity was never higher than when he began his experiments in polychromy, and the display of the *Tinted Venus* in his studio during the 1850s was a must-see event at the time, a fact which few, if any, scholars ever have discussed in art-historical literature. This chapter, then, will discuss Gibson's early training in Rome, the establishment of his own studio and the role of his studio assistants, his evolving presence from craftsman to gentleman artist, his interactions with Hosmer, and his explorations of polychromy as a component of his studio practice. By exploring these varied topics, one can better sense how Gibson developed his interpretation of the classical body for a modern audience.

Making Sculpture in Rome

In order to contextualize Gibson's training with Canova and Thorvaldsen and his own studio practice, it is necessary to consider the craft of making sculpture as it was carried out at that time. Because of

Rome's connections with antiquity and the Renaissance, the city long had been the destination for Grand Tourists, most notably the British. Wealthy young lords received their classical education *in situ*, observing and learning about the masterworks of the past accompanied by tutors or hired *ciceroni*, tour guides. These tourists typically purchased as souvenirs antique sculpture for their estates back in England.¹ However, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fewer collectors purchased ancient Greco-Roman sculpture. One reason for this was because there was a new awareness for identifying and appreciating actual ancient sculpture, not composite works that had been the norm throughout the eighteenth century with sculptors such as Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, who established a career in ancient/modern recreations.² A second reason was strictly economical: the Vatican began imposing inflated license fees, and in some cases outright bans, on the exportation of ancient sculpture.³ As a result, a market opened for the creation of "modern classics," new sculpture inspired by antiquity that cost less, and ultimately developed into its own form of modern art. It was with this mode of production that sculptors like Canova became internationally famous.

British painters such as Gavin Hamilton and Joshua Reynolds traveled to Rome at their own expense to observe first-hand ancient and Renaissance works seen previously only in prints or casts. So too did sculptors who recognized that the rising taste for "modern classics" called for a closer study of antiquity and a better understanding of sculptural production in Rome. Although H. W. Janson claimed that the British taste for classicism made British sculptors the first Neoclassicists, it would be more appropriate to argue that Rome drew an international coterie of sculptors who each developed his or her own interpretation of the "true style."⁴ Germans such as Johann Heinrich von Dannecker and Johann Gottfried

¹ For more about the British on the Grand Tour and their collecting practices, see Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century*, pbk. ed. (Thrupp, England: Sutton Publishing, 2003); Vicky Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Robert Hughes, *Rome: A Cultural, Visual, and Personal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), chapter 9, 310-53; David Irwin, *Neoclassicism* (London: Phaidon, 1997), chapter 1, 11-63; and Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasures of Antiquity: British Collectors of Greece and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

² On ancient copies and composites, see Coltman, chapters 5 and 6, 123-93. On Cavaceppi, see Seymour Howard, *Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, Eighteenth-Century Restorer* (New York: Garland, 1982).

³ These restrictions allowed the Vatican to lay first claim on ancient works excavated throughout Rome, and the fees helped support the newly formed Museo Pio-Clementino. Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 80-82.

⁴ H. W. Janson, *19th-Century Sculpture* (New York: Abrams, 1985), 16. On the international group of sculptors, painters, decorative artists, and art critics active in Rome at this time, see, for instance, *The*

Schadow were in Rome during the mid-1780s, and the Scandinavian sculptor Johan Tobias Sergel was in Rome 1767-78. Among the first British sculptors who traveled to Italy were Joseph Wilton, from 1748-55, Nollekens, from 1760-70, and Thomas Banks, from 1772-79. The next generation of British sculptors in Rome included John Flaxman, from 1787-94, and Richard Westmacott, from 1793-97.⁵ The wars with France led to approximately twenty years in which no British sculptors went to Rome. Gibson was the first to do so in 1817. It stands to reason that these sculptors may have established studios in London that resembled what they had experienced in Rome, but little research has been done on sculptors' studios in England to confirm this. In contrast, sculpture production in Rome is better understood not only because of Canova's and Thorvaldsen's popularity, but also because the carving of marble sculpture was part of a long-standing classical tradition that dated back to Renaissance masters such as Michelangelo and even further, at least in theory, to ancient Greece and Rome.

Canova and Thorvaldsen managed warehouse-sized studios in Rome that included both work spaces and gallery spaces that showcased large-scale plaster casts that visitors could see and commission in marble. Despite the long-standing tradition of sculpture production as a studio practice involving numerous individuals working under a single artist, it was still not uncommon for the lay person to mistakenly believe that sculptors did all the marble carving themselves. For instance, when the French writer Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle) toured Canova's studio around 1811, he was surprised to see many people hard at work, but not Canova, so he inappropriately assumed the Italian did little work.⁶ However, as Hugh Honour has noted, based on extant manuscripts and accounts by other visitors, Canova was active in his sculpture production, most notably in the early stages of drawing and modeling, and in the final carving and polishing of many of his works. Few visitors, however, had the opportunity to "penetrate the room in which Canova himself worked," suggesting he required his own private space where he could

Age of Neo-Classicism (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972); Edgar Peters Bowron and Joseph J. Rishel, *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2000); Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1981); and Irwin, *Neoclassicism*.

⁵ For more on these sculptors, see Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, rev. ed. (London: Abbey Library, [1964]); and Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M. G. Sullivan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). On Flaxman in Rome, see David Irwin, "Flaxman: Italian Journals and Correspondence," *The Burlington Magazine* 101, no. 675 (June 1959), 212-17. On Westmacott in Rome, see Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott, Sculptor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8-10.

⁶ Hugh Honour, "Canova's Studio Practice—II. 1792-1822," *The Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 829 (April 1972), 215.

concentrate on his art, an image that reinforced the mystique of the artist at work.⁷ Thorvaldsen in his own day was often accused of being unable to carve stone and relying too much on his studio workers, and although he may have finished some works in marble, he was known to prefer modeling to chiseling.⁸

The rise in popularity of modern classical sculpture, and the desire of other sculptors to be as successful as Canova, probably both contributed to the publication in 1802 of what may be the first pedagogical manual for academic students of sculpture. While this manual is a product of Enlightenment education, not unlike in some ways Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (which also had a section on sculpture), the manual also suggests there was a need to educate students in what being a sculptor meant in theory and in practice. This book, *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura*, was written by Francesco Carradori with engravings by Carlo Lasinio, who taught, respectively, sculpture and printmaking at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence.⁹ Carradori's text was arranged as a series of essays that addressed issues from the importance of proportion and anatomy to the layout of a sculptor's studio. Each essay was illustrated by an engraving that highlighted parts of the text. Plate VI, for example, provided students with a step-by-step understanding of how plaster molds and casts were made (fig. 3.1). Carradori's book is perhaps most useful today because it assists scholars in better understanding the sculpture-making process at that time. However, it is worth noting that Carradori's text and plates does not provide a perfect step-by-step solution for examining every sculptor's working oeuvre. As Malcolm Baker has pointed out with regard to eighteenth-century sculpture, there is a danger in assuming "sequential ordering," that all related works for a sculpture are early stages that unfold step-by-step, inevitably leading to a finished product in marble.¹⁰ Not all drawings, models, casts, and marble works were done in regimented stages. As Baker demonstrates in his discussion of the work of Nollekens and others, there are numerous instances in which stages were done not only out of sequence but in fact served no specific purpose at all and should be seen as independent works.¹¹

⁷ Hugh Honour, "Canova's Studio Practice-I: The Early Years," *The Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 828 (March 1972), 147.

⁸ Dyveke Helsted, "Work in the Ateliers," in *Thorvaldsen*, by Dyveke Helsted et al. (Copenhagen: Thorvaldsen Museum, 1990), 26.

⁹ Francesco Carradori, *Elementary Instructions for Students of Sculpture [Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura]*, trans. Matti Kalevi Auvinen (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002).

¹⁰ Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London: V&A Publications; Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000), 40.

¹¹ For more on this topic, see Baker, 34-49.

Nevertheless, in considering sculpture production in Italy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Carradori's text and Lasinio's plates assist the scholar today in understanding how most studios traditionally operated. Many sculptors began with drawings, which could range from *primi pensieri* to finished presentation drawings, although depending on their training the level of importance of these drawings may have varied. Canova, Flaxman, and Gibson are known today for draftsmanship that shows great ability in handling different types of drawings, whereas Thorvaldsen's drawings were typically rough sketches of ideas. According to Carradori, a sculptor, or perhaps his assistant, would then create a *bozzetto*, a small model in clay.¹² These small models allowed the sculptor to experiment with different ideas. In the case of portrait busts, the *bozzetto* allowed the sculptor to perfect the modeling of the features of the sitter. More finished versions of these clay models could be fired and preserved as terracotta statuettes. A market for terracottas developed in France during the mid-eighteenth century, but this tradition had long flourished in Italy since the 1600s, and Canova was among those who made a number of terracotta works for himself and for collectors. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, terracottas largely had fallen out of favor.¹³

In general, however, *bozzetti* were left in rough, unfinished states. Using the *bozzetto* as a guide, a full-sized model in clay was made, often by studio assistants. These large-scale models were reinforced with a metal and wood skeletal structure, a necessity so as to prevent the clay figure from collapsing under its own weight. Most of these larger models were destroyed in the next step, the creation of the plaster mold. Layers of plaster were applied in stages to the large model, which sometimes itself could be divided for ease of making the plaster mold. Once the plaster mold was solid, it was removed in pieces, then reassembled so that fresh plaster could be poured inside sections. When the plaster cast was hard, the mold was removed, individual pieces were fit together, with additional metal or wood supports as needed, then the cast was filed down or touched up with fresh plaster.

¹² Some sculptors preferred to work with wax *bozzetti*. The making of wax sculpture by British artists was an established practice in the late eighteenth century, with some major artists, including Flaxman, making reliefs and portraits in wax that were displayed regularly in the early years of the Royal Academy exhibitions. Connections between Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and wax sculpture will be discussed later in this chapter. For more on wax sculpture, see Alexandra Corney, "Wax," in *The Making of Sculpture: The Materials and Techniques of European Sculpture*, ed. Marjorie Trusted (London: V&A Publications, 2007), 20-33.

¹³ For more on terracottas at this time, see the exhibition catalogue James David Draper and Guilhem Scherf, *Playing with Fire: European Terracotta Models, 1740-1840* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004).

These plaster casts came to be appreciated during the Neoclassical period as the most important part of sculpture production, primarily because they were cheaper to make and, lighter and more portable than marble, they could be sent to exhibitions in London, Paris, and elsewhere.¹⁴ In short, plaster casts became a marketing tool. Displayed in studios and exhibitions, the models gave patrons a sense of what the finished work would look like when they ordered a marble version from it. Moreover, as H. W. Janson noted, plaster casts already were the most common way people experienced ancient sculpture, the originals of which were housed in faraway collections like the Vatican.¹⁵ Modern plaster casts, then, could be appreciated the same way. Indeed, the modern plaster cast actually offered the buyer a better opportunity, for whereas he could own only a plaster cast of an ancient statue like the *Apollo Belvedere*, he could own a finished, modern marble work that was based on an ancient precedent. As Janson stated: "The only difference between a modern original plaster and a cast from an ancient statue was that the latter transmitted to the viewer the essence of a work that was not directly accessible while the former gave him a 'preview' of a marble or bronze statue that did not yet exist."¹⁶

To go from the original plaster to the marble sculpture required a complex series of measurements using calipers and a number of drills and other tools, as Plate VIII shows (fig. 3.2). This was often complicated, labor-intensive, and time-consuming work as *practiciens* whittled down the block of marble, although some *practiciens* over time were able to perform this task more rapidly. As measurements were taken, very small holes were drilled into the plaster model and lead pencil points inserted or scratched onto the hole. Carradori noted in his manual that although the adding of lead points was a relatively simple procedure, it was in fact one of the more important parts of measurement, as it ensured consistency in the making of the first marble version and later replicas and reductions.¹⁷ Because these continuous measurements were necessary, the carving of marble subjects frequently took months if not years, perhaps helping to explain why Thorvaldsen's statue of *Jason* infamously took twenty-five years to complete, from the 1803 life-sized model to the 1828 marble statue. It was also not uncommon for

¹⁴ It is worth noting that Gibson seems to have been an exception to this rule. He usually exhibited at the Royal Academy works in marble, not plaster. When he shipped completed commissions back to England, he usually arranged for them to be exhibited before they were installed in their permanent location.

¹⁵ Janson, *Sculpture*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁷ Carradori, 37.

sculptors to discover flaws in their blocks of marble. These flaws included veins, holes, or cracks, and Gibson himself reported that this had happened to him on more than one occasion. In those instances, new blocks of marble had to be selected from the quarry in Carrara, although those remaining blocks might be recycled for use in smaller marble commissions such as busts.

Italian studio workers who had developed the trade of marble carving were responsible for most of this work, although as noted above the master sculptor typically finished the work. Once the marble version was completed, it was washed and polished. The texture of the stone varied from sculptor to sculptor. Canova polished his marble works so that they had a sheen and smooth surface. In contrast, Thorvaldsen's figures frequently were left "rough and matt."¹⁸ Gibson fluctuated in this area, sometimes polishing his figures, other times leaving them with a dull finish. It was only one of many ways in which Gibson demonstrated his awareness of how both Canova and Thorvaldsen worked.

Gibson, Canova, and Thorvaldsen

Art historians rarely dispute that the two greatest Neoclassical sculptors in Rome were Canova and Thorvaldsen.¹⁹ Canova was born in the Veneto region and moved to Rome by 1780. His exposure to works from antiquity inspired him to modify his Baroque style of sculpting. He began emulating ancient Greco-Roman art, but also made a close study of nature. Canova's first major commission was for the

¹⁸ Emma Salling, "Canova and Thorvaldsen: A Study in Contrasts," *Apollo* 96, no. 127 (September 1972), 215.

¹⁹ The literature on these sculptors is extensive. Recent scholarship on Canova includes: *Canova* (New York: Marsilio, 1992); *Canova all'Ermitage: Le Sculture del Museo di San Pietroburgo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1991); Timothy Clifford et al., *The Three Graces: Antonio Canova* (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 1995); Hugh Honour, "Canova's Studio Practice—I. The Early Years," *The Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 828 (March 1972), 146-59, and "Canova's Studio Practice—II. 1792-1822," *The Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 829 (April 1972), 214-29; Christopher M. S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Fred Licht, *Canova* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983); Satish Padiyar, *Chains: David, Canova, and the Fall of the Public Hero in Postrevolutionary France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); and Mario Praz, *L'Opera completa del Canova* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1976). Recent scholarship on Thorvaldsen includes: Dyeke Helsted, "Thorvaldsen's Technique," *Apollo* 96, no. 127 (September 1972), 228-34; Dyeke Helsted, et al., *Thorvaldsen* (Copenhagen: Thorvaldsen Museum, 1990); David Irwin, "Thorvaldsen in London," *The Burlington Magazine* 116, no. 850 (January 1974), 60-63; Patrick Kragelund and Mogens Nykjaer, *Thorvaldsen: L'ambiente, l'influsso, il mito* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1991); Elena di Majo, Bjarne Jørnaes, and Stefano Susinno, *Bertel Thorvaldsen 1770-1844: Scultore danese a Roma* (Rome: De Luca Edizioni d'Arte, 1989); and Denys Sutton, "Il Cavaliere Alberto," *Apollo* 96, no. 127 (September 1972), 176-93. See also Mario Praz, "Canova and Beauty" and "Il Cavaliere Alberto," in his *On Neoclassicism*, trans. Angus Davidson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 130-52, 268-78.

Tomb of Clement XIV in St. Peter's Basilica, which he completed in 1787. Thereafter, his career was established. He rose to international celebrity and ran one of the most prolific studios of the time, at 27 Via delle Colonnate, off Via del Corso, which continued to generate work in his name long after his death. His only serious competitor, Thorvaldsen, from Copenhagen, lived nearly forty years in Rome, arriving in 1797. Had it not been for the British art collector Thomas Hope, who commissioned the marble version of *Jason*, he would have abandoned Rome and soon returned home. Once his career was established, his studio in the stables of the Palazzo Barberini began to rival Canova's but only superseded it after the Venetian's death in 1822.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, however, Canova was widely considered the world's greatest living sculptor. Although he made a number of commissions for Napoleon and his family, he struggled to remain apolitical while working in his studio in Rome. Afterwards, in celebration of Rome's historical legacy, he acted on behalf of the Papal state and, with the assistance of the British, repatriated works such as the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Laocoön* that had been looted for the Musée Napoleon in the Louvre. From November to December 1815, he traveled to London where he saw the Elgin Marbles. He impressed the art world with his modesty and was feted by the Academy with a dinner in his honor.²⁰ In 1817, three of his works appeared in the Royal Academy exhibition for the first time. It is not surprising, then, that an artist such as Gibson, who was still training in his craft and had set his sights on Rome, was determined to learn as much as he could from Canova.

Gibson arrived in Rome on Monday, 20 October 1817. He carried with him a letter of introduction to an Abbé Hamilton, who brought him to Canova's studio.²¹ Gibson presented Canova with letters of introduction from Henry Fuseli, Lord Brougham, and General d'Aguilar. Canova inspected his drawings and told him to return that Sunday morning when they could talk more. On 26 October, speaking in halting English, Canova surprised Gibson by offering to pay for his living expenses. D'Aguilar's letter apparently intimated that Gibson would need financial assistance. In London Canova had expressed to

²⁰ The dinner was held on 1 December 1815. The painter Joseph Farington did not attend the dinner, but recorded in his diary: "Fuseli spoke to me of Canova in very approving terms, thinking highly of His modesty & His talents." Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*, ed. James Greig, vol. 8, 19 May 1815 to 30 December 1821 (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1928), 48.

²¹ The Abbé's identity has not been confirmed, but he seems to have had no association to the painter Gavin Hamilton or the diplomat and collector William Hamilton.

the Academy that a student needed £80 to live in Rome, so Gibson must have had less than this amount upon his arrival.²²

Gibson tried to refuse, noting that his commissions in London from George Watson Taylor had helped increase his income, but Canova insisted that he was wealthy and wanted to support young talent. It was then that Gibson nervously asked if he could work directly with Canova.

I plucked up my courage and asked whether I might venture to look to him for instruction, saying that it was my highest ambition to be his pupil, and to model in his studio. To all this Canova replied in the most encouraging terms, and told me to look to him for everything that might be in his power.²³

While Canova's warm reception of Gibson could very likely have been based on his recognition of the Welshman's talents, in all probability Canova also agreed to take Gibson on as his first British sculptor to reciprocate the positive welcome he had received from the artistic community in London. Canova told Gibson: "If I see that you study your art with zeal and improve, I will bring you to the notice of the rich English who come here."²⁴ This was a promise he soon kept, sending patrons such as the Duke of Devonshire and Sir George Beaumont to Gibson's studio within the first few years.

It has been noted in the previous chapter that, during his time in London, Gibson had practiced some level of academic draftsmanship and had worked in Nollekens's studio modeling in clay and possibly carving in marble. However, he claimed in his memoirs that until he arrived in Rome, "I never had received any instructions from a master, nor had I studied in any academy."²⁵ Reflecting back on his past, his insistence on associating his sculptural training with Canova is significant because of his long career in Rome and his interest in the "true style." In passing over his London experience, he was able to distance himself from the "native style" of sculpture practiced there that he found lacking in the highest artistic quality derived from the Greeks. Thus, Canova became for him the first major sculptor to provide personal instruction and criticism in modeling and drawing. At this time there were two opportunities for students to receive academic training in Rome. The first was at the Accademia di San Luca, of which Canova was then President. The second was Canova's own academy, which was funded by Emperor

²² Farington, 100.

²³ Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 47; Thomas Matthews, ed., *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: W. Heinemann, 1911), 45.

²⁴ Matthews, 44-45.

²⁵ Matthews, 45; Eastlake, 48.

Franz I of Austria. Canova admitted Gibson, who claimed his master “only admitted such as he thought promising, including students from all parts of Italy.”²⁶

The students in Canova’s academy studied life modeling by making clay *bozzetti* of models presented before them, and Canova visited twice a week to critique their work. When Canova took Gibson to the class for the first time, he showed him a model, “a youth of extraordinary beauty,” whom he commanded to pose as the *Apollo Belvedere*, which he did “with the utmost exactness—the lofty air, a touch of ire on the expression of the face, the swelling nostrils, and the mouth slightly conveying a feeling of disdain rendered both the action and expression perfect ... like the statue come to life.”²⁷ The model then posed on command as the *Mercury* by Giovanni da Bologna and adopted poses from Canova’s own figures. Gibson was encouraged to look at work by the other students, as Canova believed one learned by observing others.

Despite this auspicious beginning, Gibson admits in his memoirs that it wasn’t an easy transition. He did not yet know Italian, and although his fellow students were polite they regretted the inability to communicate with one another. Gibson also was overwhelmed by their advanced artistic skills, in particular because many were younger than he. By the following year, however, he had learned Italian and his fears began to diminish as he improved in his artistic skills. In a letter from “Allo studio del Marchese Canova” to J. T. Milligan in London, Gibson wrote:

The grand object that takes up my thoughts & time is the arts[.] indeed I have every inducement to continue studying from the approbation which Canova has expressed to some of my friends here. [H]e seems pleased with my efforts. I also feel myself improving. The young artist[s] here are very clever but I feel less frightened now.²⁸

Gibson went every evening to the academy for three years, declaring these evening studies to have “furthered my progress in no small degree.”²⁹ Canova noticed Gibson’s regular attendance and was known to tap him on the shoulder and congratulate him on his consistency. Canova acknowledged early on Gibson’s knowledge of anatomy, which he had acquired from studying dissected corpses at Dr. Vose’s

²⁶ Eastlake, 49; Matthews, 46.

²⁷ Matthews, 46-47; Eastlake, 49.

²⁸ John Gibson to J. T. Milligan, 1818, Weyle Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Yale Center for British Art.

²⁹ Matthews, 49. Gibson stopped going to Canova’s academy because the Emperor ended his financial support.

in Liverpool, although he noted: “As you improve in imitating nature you will blend anatomy more, rendering it less distinct.”³⁰

Working in Canova’s studio, Gibson ventured to model a copy of his master’s *Pugilist* on a large scale. After working on it for a few days, it fell apart. The figure lacked an armature, the internal skeletal structure, that Gibson claimed to have had no knowledge of until this time. This also was one of Canova’s lessons: “It seems that my Master had observed to his foreman, Signor Desti, that my figure must fall; ‘for you see,’ said he, ‘that he knows nothing about the skeleton work—but let him proceed, and when his figure comes down, show him how the mechanical part is done.’”³¹ A blacksmith crafted for him a skeletal structure made of iron, with the addition of crosses of wood and wire. Onto this, one of Canova’s pupils applied clay, roughing out the large-scale model and allowing the clay to harden. From this point on, Gibson finished the model, perfecting its features in clay.

He worked in Canova’s studio for at least one year before his master determined that he had advanced enough to have his own studio and directed his foreman to find a studio near Canova’s in which Gibson could work independently. The location of this particular studio probably was the same large studio on Via della Fontanella for which he became most famous, but it seems surprising that, lacking commissions, he would have been able to afford the expenses of a large studio and his own stone carvers. Canova must have provided him with some form of financial assistance. He even may have had some controlling interest in the space, as Hosmer later wrote that her room in Gibson’s studio had once been occupied by Canova.³² By 1822 *London Magazine* was reporting that Gibson’s studio had become “a lounge for all the fashionables at Rome.”³³

It was in this new studio space that he began working on his first large-scale independent model which became *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (fig. 3.3). Canova would visit often “to correct me as it advanced, and his remarks were of course most invaluable to me.”³⁴ In 1819 he began working on his first large-scale group work, and although Canova had first advised him to wait until he was better skilled, once he saw the small model he encouraged him to make the larger version in clay. This was the model

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Eastlake, 48; Matthews, 45.

³² Cornelia Carr, ed., *Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1912), 22.

³³ “Literary and Scientific Intelligence; &c.,” *London Magazine* 6, no. 33 (September 1822), 288.

³⁴ Matthews, 49; Eastlake, 53.

on which he was working when the Duke of Devonshire visited his studio and ordered Gibson's first commission in marble, *Mars Restrained by Cupid* (fig. 4.3), which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Gibson greatly admired Canova, and he recurrently noted how much he owed him for his early training. Reflecting back on this period in his memoirs, he wrote, "Dear generous master, I see you now before me. I hear your soft Venetian dialect, and your words of encouraging praise inspiring my efforts and gently correcting my defects—yes—my heart still swells with grateful recollection of you."³⁵ Canova remained in Rome until 1822, then moved to Venice where he died on 25 October, almost five years to the day from when Gibson first began working in his studio.

Although Canova dominated the Roman school of sculpture at this time, he was well aware of the city's international community and encouraged Gibson to visit the studios of many of these men so as to see how they were reinterpreting the antique. Gibson loved the fact that sculptors' studios in Rome were open to one another: "Every man sees another's works, and holds free communion with him, giving and receiving advice, and carrying on the labour of art by a combination of minds."³⁶ This contrasted greatly with what he saw in England, where sculptors worked in isolation, which he saw as the leading cause for poor quality of work: "To advance sculpture in England it is necessary that the artists should come in contact with each other, and also, if possible, with artists from other countries."³⁷ Of all the sculptors in Rome, however, Canova most notably encouraged him to "go as frequently as you can to Thorwaldsen; he is a very great artist."³⁸

Although Canova's more sensual style dominated classical taste in sculpture at this time, as the century progressed Thorvaldsen's more severe style came to be seen as superior to that of Canova. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake herself clearly favored Thorvaldsen, and in her edition of Gibson's memoirs she succinctly classified the differences between Canova and Thorvaldsen. Although the former's work was "exquisite in finish and sometimes in sentiment, [it] never attained that feeling of force and simplicity which distinguishes Flaxman, Thorvaldsen, and Gibson."³⁹ In grouping the Dane with the Englishman and Welshman, Eastlake further declared that these northern European sculptors "showed a greater

³⁵ Matthews, 45; Eastlake, 47.

³⁶ Eastlake, 50-51.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁸ Matthews, 50; Eastlake, 54.

³⁹ Eastlake, 18.

sympathy with the genius of antique art than did their softer southern brother.”⁴⁰ Eastlake’s Flaxman/Thorvaldsen/Gibson sculptural triumvirate also implies a preference for the austere, moral righteousness associated with Victorian Anglicanism, in sharp contrast to the sensuality associated with Italian Catholicism. Henry Weekes, the fourth Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, also praised Gibson’s sculpture for its purity, noting that although they had the finish of Canova’s style, they had “far less of the affectation and other vices” associated with Canova’s works.⁴¹

After Canova’s departure and death, Gibson and his fellow British sculptor Richard James Wyatt “had recourse to Thorvaldsen for instruction.”⁴² Established in his own studio for a few years at this point, Gibson received instruction from Thorvaldsen primarily in the form of advice and guidance. It would seem he learned nothing new about the actual making of sculpture that Canova had not taught him already, nor does he write in his memoirs about anything Thorvaldsen did for him that was comparable to the type of instruction he had received from Canova. But Thorvaldsen was important to all young sculptors working in Rome, including Gibson, because he would help those who asked for his thoughts on their work:

I profited greatly by the knowledge which this splendid sculptor had of his art. On every occasion when I was modeling a new work he came to me, and corrected whatever he thought was amiss. I also often went to his studio and contemplated his glorious works, always in the noblest style, full of pure and severe simplicity. His studio was a safe haven for the young, and was the resort of artists and lovers of art from all nations.⁴³

Thorvaldsen and the history painter Vincenzo Camuccini were instrumental in having Gibson elected a member of the Accademia di San Luca in 1829. Thorvaldsen also recommended Gibson’s statue of a female dancer at rest (untraced) to Count Schönbrunn of Bavaria as a companion piece to a faun by the Italian sculptor Pietro Tenerani, Thorvaldsen’s student. After the death of Francis Chantrey in London, Thorvaldsen asked Gibson pointedly why he did not return there and assert himself as Chantrey’s successor. In response, Gibson asked him where he “could produce the best works—in Rome or in London,” to which Thorvaldsen reportedly replied, “Oh! in Rome, Rome.”⁴⁴ This anecdote reinforced

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ Weekes also compared him favorably to Thorvaldsen, noting that Gibson’s works were not nearly as “unpleasantly rigid.” Henry Weekes, R.A., *Lectures on Art, Delivered at the Royal Academy, London* (London: Bickers and Son, 1880), 156-57.

⁴² Eastlake, 130; Matthews, 111.

⁴³ Eastlake, 63-64; Matthews, 81.

⁴⁴ Eastlake, 71. For more on Gibson’s personal relationship with Thorvaldsen and Baroness von Stampe, his caretaker until his death in 1844, see Eastlake, 65-73. For an anecdote about Thorvaldsen and the painter Peter von Cornelius jumping through the canvas of a cartoon by a Saxon painter named Plattner,

Gibson's own belief that if he were to return to London, he would be forced to work exclusively in the "native style" established by Chantrey and abandon his model of excellence with the Greeks.

Canova and Thorvaldsen were instrumental in the growth of Gibson's career by providing him with the basic instruction he needed to make large-scale clay models and to perfect them. They taught him to learn from antiquity, to observe nature, and to look at other sculptors' works. But perhaps most importantly from the perspective of the business of art, Canova and Thorvaldsen showed Gibson by example the proper organization of a studio with numerous workers and a showroom for his best works. Gibson's studio would grow to become one of the most productive and most visited in the nineteenth century. A consideration of what took place behind the double doors of his large studio at 4 Via della Fontanella provides a better understanding of how Gibson crafted his modern classics.

Gibson's Studio

In 1841 the writer Count Hawks Le Grice published *Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome*, in which he introduced to readers a type of encyclopedic description of the major sculptors and their works.⁴⁵ Although this work did little to describe the activity of the studios, it did provide readers with one of the earliest and most detailed lists of subjects and titles of works which these sculptors had at that time. Later, in 1857, the engraver Frederick William Fairholt published a series of articles in *The Art Journal* entitled "Rambles in Rome," in which he similarly focused on the works these sculptors were then producing. In one of these essays, he described what these studios of Rome were like:

The studios of modern Roman sculptors—including as they do many who are only Romans by residence—are among the most delightful visiting places within the whole city walls. You need no ceremonious introductions here. You merely knock and enter. Around you are the workmen and their labours,—the living artists who cut from the shapeless marble block works destined to last ages after the frail human hand that fashioned them has mouldered into its native clay. Happy men seem they all!—for all true lovers of art must be happy.⁴⁶

see Matthews, 221-22. On a September 1841 visit to the studio of Hiram Powers in Florence by Gibson and Thorvaldsen, see Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers: Vermont Sculptor, 1805-1873* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 1:127-28.

⁴⁵ Count Hawks Le Grice, *Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome with a Brief Historical and Critical Sketch of Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Rome: Crispino Puccinelli, 1841). Much of Le Grice's text deals with Thorvaldsen, but also includes British sculptors such as Lawrence Macdonald and William Theed the Younger. Gibson and his works are discussed in 1:99-119 and 2:140-57.

⁴⁶ These essays were collected and republished after Fairholt's death. See Frederick William Fairholt, *Homes, Works, and Shrines of English Artists with Specimens of Their Styles to Which Is Added Rambles in Rome* (London: Virtue & Co., 1873), 180-81.

Although Fairholt's assumptions about the happiness of the studio workers may be exaggerated, both his essays, and Le Grice's book, provided information which tourists to Rome could use to prepare themselves for their upcoming trip.

Indeed, the increasing production of travel guides aimed toward the rising middle classes included, for Rome specifically, information about artists' studios that were open to tourists. One of John Murray's guides began this section with Gibson's studio:

Sculptors.—*John Gibson*, R.A., No. 4, Via della Fontanella, between the Via Babuino and the Corso. First amongst our countrymen resident at Rome is this distinguished sculptor, who merits the high praise of having united the styles of the two greatest sculptors of modern Rome, Canova and Thorwaldsen: most of his works are in England, but models of all will be found in his studio.⁴⁷

The area around Gibson's studio was inhabited by a number of resident English and American painters and sculptors. Not surprisingly, English and American tourists and expatriates also populated this area from the entrance of the city at the Porta del Popolo to the Spanish Steps.

Although all these texts helped inform people in Britain about Gibson and other artists in Rome, the visual representation of the studio itself was absent. Three other images produced during the late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries serve as visual aids to understand different ways in which the sculptor's studio in Rome was understood by contemporaries. The first two show the studio space as a working environment and as a showroom. The third focuses on studio workers.

The first of these is a watercolor from about 1787 by Francesco Chiarottini depicting the interior of Canova's studio (fig. 3.4). It shows a large warehouse space whose ceiling at its peak must be at least 30 feet high, if we assume the proportions are correct. Large tiered windows flood the otherwise dark interior with light, enabling the workers to see. Studio workers attend to the three main figures for the tomb of Pope Clement XIV, destined for the Church of Santi Apostoli in Rome. Latticework and plumb lines hanging over two of the figures denote that they are being transferred from plaster cast to marble, while the third figure, separate from its cast, has a studio worker applying finishing touches to the face. Two visitors stand to the left looking toward the two versions of the pope. Visible through a large archway into a second room are two early works in marble—*Theseus and the Minotaur*, 1781-83, and *Icarus and Daedalus*, 1777-79—and a number of busts on a shelf. This watercolor shows a working studio and

⁴⁷ *A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs*, 7th ed. (London: John Murray, 1864), xlii. Gibson's studio address also has been recorded as 6 Via della Fontanella.

arguably may be a source for Lasinio's engravings in Carradori's manual. However, there are only four workers visible in this representation, and sculptors' studios never could have functioned with so few workers. Noteworthy is the absence of the master himself, unless one is meant to assume the man finishing the one marble statue's face is the sculptor himself, seemingly engrossed in his work and unaware of his visitors.

A sharp contrast to the studio as a working space is its function as a showroom. Although the watercolor of Canova's studio has visitors looking at his sculpture, Ditlev Martens's 1830 painting *Pope Leo XII Visiting Thorvaldsen's Studio near the Piazza Barberini, Rome, on St. Luke's Day, 18 October 1826* (fig. 3.5) focuses almost exclusively on the grandeur of the studio as a showroom and less a working space. Thorvaldsen utilized a number of buildings near his main studio at the Palazzo Barberini, and in fact the large showroom in this painting depicts the mews of the Palazzo, which he began renting in 1822 as an extension to his studio.⁴⁸ The large space with high ceilings enabled Thorvaldsen to exhibit his plaster casts to great effect. In the center of the picture, Thorvaldsen escorts the Pope and his entourage through the space, and they gaze upon his large statue of Christ, while just behind them is his statue for the funerary monument of Pope Pius VII, which had only recently been installed in the Vatican. Thus, this painting demonstrates the sculptor's role as a *cicerone* of his own studio, a gentleman artist who gives tours.

Thorvaldsen's array of works dominate the space, not only on the main floor but in reliefs on the walls and in busts on a shelf in another room through the rear doorway. The large warehouse seems like a theater, the curtains drawn to the side making one feel that, at a moment's notice, the studio could be partitioned off, its curtains then drawn open to reveal new works with dramatic effect for the visitors. A number of different people are in the studio as well, including soldiers, an artist with a portfolio, and working-class women with children and a dog. The only studio worker seems to be the young man in the left foreground, but he seems more interested in the young woman who mimics the arm gestures of the statue on which he is working. In contrast to the picture of Canova's studio, which emphasized labor over spectacle, Thorvaldsen's studio is meant to be a showroom first and a working environment second. Indeed, this division of space—which in reality for Thorvaldsen was actually different buildings—became

⁴⁸ Helsted, in Helsted et al., 25.

a standard architectural design for artists later on, where they frequently had separate studios for working and for socializing.

A third image, dating from the early 1860s, is a photograph showing Gibson's pupil Hosmer and her "happy men" (fig. 3.6). The diminutive Hosmer is surrounded by twenty-four Italians as they pose in the garden of her studio. The only evidence of sculpture in this photograph is the statue of a siren on top of a fountain that Hosmer designed for Lady Marian Alford. This image contrasts greatly with another circulated photograph of Hosmer working on the large-scale clay model of her monumental statue of Thomas Hart Benton (fig. 3.7), which instead emphasizes her artistic skills by showing her as a tiny, solitary artist beside a monumental figure. Although the Hosmer-Benton image shows an artist at work, the photograph of Hosmer with her workers is arguably more important as a representation of the studio. Even though it does not actually show a working space or showroom, it conveys a powerful image in which a woman is the manager of her own production center. The image also is significant because the presence of her twenty-four workers quite literally gives faces to the men who worked in the studio, even if they still remain anonymous.⁴⁹ Throughout the 1850s, Hosmer worked in Gibson's studio and shared his studio workers, so it stands to reason that even if this photograph shows her and her staff in her new studio space, some of these men could have worked for Gibson. Even the presence of a garden with a fountain is significant, as this was a prominent feature of Gibson's studio, as will be discussed below.

Images such as these provide useful information about the sculptor's studio and working practices in Rome. However, these three images, respectively documenting studios, works, and workers, also provide a visual understanding of the roles that a nineteenth-century sculptor in Rome had to play. First, the sculptor was a craftsman represented by his works of art. Second, the sculptor was a *cicerone* for visitors to his studio. Third, the sculptor was a manager of a warehouse that employed a number of men in the large-scale production of statues and reliefs.

Considering how popular Gibson was in his day, his studio visited regularly by everyone from aristocrats to working-class models, it is surprising that no paintings or photographs of his studio have

⁴⁹ Both of these photographs of Hosmer could have been a contributing factor in the published speculation over whether or not she had sculpted *Zenobia*. The picture of her with twenty-four workers could have suggested they did all of her work, and the image of her working alone on the Benton monument is seemingly unrealistic in terms of society's expectations of women's abilities in the nineteenth century. The issue of Hosmer's involvement with the making of *Zenobia* will be discussed later in this chapter.

been identified. Fortunately, a few unpublished resources at the Royal Academy help provide some visual sense of the layout and arrangement of his studio, at least in the last few decades of his life. An inventory of the contents of his studio for the posthumous sale that was held on Thursday, 27 February 1868 shows that his studio was made up of seven rooms, with six on the main floor and one upstairs.⁵⁰ In the 1850s this second-floor studio space was used by Hosmer. Of the six rooms on the main floor, the *Studio Grande* was the most important space, and probably the first room in which one entered through the doorway that opened onto Via della Fontanella.

There is also an extant drawing of the *Studio Grande*. This identification of the space can be confirmed by comparing the inventory of plaster and marble statues in this room to a number of the many works that Gibson marked on the sketch in his own hand (fig. 3.8). Drawn in pen and ink over pencil, the sketch is an aerial view of the room, and the number of erasures and overlay of pen over pencil suggests that Gibson was thinking about how his works could be arranged in the space to their best advantage. He recorded the dimensions of the room as 20 x 28 ft. There is a set of double doors along one wall, which presumably opened onto Via della Fontanella. Immediately across from those doors is another doorway which, according to contemporary narratives, led to a garden, two other work rooms, and his private studio space. The room on the next floor was reached from a stairwell off the garden.

The amount of empty space in this drawing suggests that the *Studio Grande* acted both as a reception room and as a working space where his stone carvers possibly prepared marble blocks near the plaster casts that were arranged about the room. Using rectangles to represent pedestals, Gibson labeled them with the names of some of his statues. The positioning of these works suggests his awareness of marketing his best and most popular works. On the left near the center of the room stood his statue of pride, *The Hunter and His Dog* (fig. 1.2). Along the two long walls stood other important works from the early and later years of his career: *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3), *Cupid and the Butterfly* (i.e. *Love Tormenting the Soul*, fig. 3.23), *The Wounded Amazon*, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.1), and so on. There is a rectangle labeled *Venus* which in all likelihood was the plaster version of the *Tinted Venus* (fig. 1.1), as that work was on display in its own location and is discussed further below. Along one of the short walls, Gibson marked space for his portrait statues of

⁵⁰ "Descrizione di tutti gli oggetti esistenti nello studio del fu Signor Giovanni Gibson," GI/4, Gibson Papers.

Robert Peel (fig. 3.9) and William Huskisson (fig. 3.10). Along the other shorter wall was his monument to Queen Victoria accompanied by the allegorical figures *Clemency* and *Justice* for Westminster Palace in the Houses of Parliament (fig. 2.26). The positioning of the Peel monument, completed in 1853, and the allegorical figures installed in Parliament in 1856, suggests that the drawing must date from at least the mid- to late 1850s, and thus their positions in the drawing honor these recent major commissions for public monuments in London.

This drawing provides some insight into Gibson's business acumen. Martina Droth has noted that sculptors' studios in Rome "provided an arena in which sculpture and its processes were staged and performed."⁵¹ Gibson consciously arranged the works in this space so that visitors could enter his studio, browse the products on display, witness the production of marble before them, and then commission a work for themselves. It stands to reason also that in this *Studio Grande* some of these statues could have been finished works in marble, enabling a potential buyer to purchase a work immediately, without having to wait the requisite two-plus years for a new marble replica to be completed.⁵²

Supplementing these archival sources are the accounts of visitors who, in their published and unpublished writings, revealed aspects of Gibson's sculptural practice and his studio. Written over a number of decades, the accounts that discuss Gibson's working methods show that while he was viewed working as a draftsman and a modeler by some, he was almost never seen working as a carver of marble. One can speculate that in the early years Gibson's artistic output was smaller and he had fewer workers; thus, he probably had a more hands-on role in the actual carving and finishing of his figures in marble. However, as his popularity increased and he earned more money to support a large, thriving studio, he left most of the manual production of his sculptures to his workers, enabling him to act more like a gentleman artist and a *cicerone*. The American painter Rembrandt Peale, in his reminiscences

⁵¹ Martina Droth, "The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics c. 1851-1900," *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 3 (2004), 223.

⁵² It is important to note that the production of replicas for marketing purposes was standard practice in sculpture and painting studios during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Modernism's insistence on the primacy of the "original" rejected this standard practice, resulting in a historiographic perception of sculptors such as Gibson as anti-modern. The issue of replicas will be discussed in chapter five on Gibson's interest in reproductive media.

about Rome published in 1855, boldly stated: “The British artist, Gibson, told me that he never touched his marble, nor did Thorwaldsen.”⁵³

In proposing this less hands-on approach to stone carving, I am challenging the modernist insistence prevalent in twentieth-century art and art criticism that a sculptor’s intrinsic value is based solely on his role as a laboring carver, a belief that has distorted the Gibson historiography. Art historian T. S. R. Boase’s account of Gibson literally puts the drill in his hand, as if to suggest that Gibson’s ability as a carver is the only saving grace to his boring statues. Of his works in the Royal Academy, Boase wrote:

There is dullness and sometimes insipidity in their formal elegance, but they are beautifully modeled, and in the marble beautifully carved; for, unlike most English sculptors, Gibson had constantly his chisel in his hand, and he had to a rare degree a sense of the smooth planes, the broad but subtle modulations to which Italian marble lends itself. The surface of his bodies is never dull, whatever vacancy of mind seems to possess them.⁵⁴

Boase had little evidence to support this image of Gibson holding “constantly his chisel in his hand,” but the insistence on perceiving him as such reinforces the modernist need to justify the value of an artist’s oeuvre through the manual labor of the sculptor and a dismissal of the handiwork of his *practiciens*.

Unlike Boase’s assumption about Gibson, nineteenth-century sources suggest he did little of this marble carving. In the 1830s, an account by the writer Henry Noel Humphreys and the engraver William Bernard Cooke notes that Gibson was enjoying his rising success and taking pride in not having to do so much of the manual labor. Like his master Canova, he would complete the figure when he had time and was in the right mood. Humphreys and Cooke were duly impressed by the amount of work being done in Gibson’s studio: “He is overwhelmed with commissions—as many as will require nine or ten years to complete.”⁵⁵ They went on to remark that because of the success of his studio, it was doubtful he would return to England anytime soon. Indeed, they believed that Gibson was able to charge more for his classical works than if he were in London because his residency in Rome gave him an air of mystery—“a peculiar interest over his reputation”—because few even knew what he looked like. Commenting further on Gibson’s production, Humphreys and Cooke wrote:

I admired some monuments executing [*sic*] for Liverpool, his birth-place; one, a sitting figure, was particularly fine; and Gibson, who makes no mystery of the facilities of execution in Rome,

⁵³ Rembrandt Peale, “Reminiscences. Painters and Sculptors,” *The Crayon* 1, no. 11 (14 March 1855), 162.

⁵⁴ T. S. R. Boase, *English Art, 1800-1879* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 144.

⁵⁵ William Bernard Cooke and Henry Noel Humphreys, *Rome and Its Surrounding Scenery* (London: Charles Tilt, 1840), 153.

ingenuously told me that it had not yet received one touch of his chisel. He had placed his clay model, or rather the cast of it, before his workman, who, at the ordinary pay of a mechanic, reduced by rule and compass the block of marble to within the 16th of an inch of what was required; leaving to the master hand, the mere play of finishing off, in some moment of happy leisure, when he felt “in the vein.” This done, the inscription—Gibson fecit, Roma 183 [*sic*]—completes the work, and it is shipped off for Liverpool or London. Thus, sculpture, to a man who has won his way to fame, is now by no means a laborious profession, particularly at Rome.⁵⁶

Their observation tells us that Gibson had mostly a hands-off approach when it came to sculpture, except perhaps toward the end of the process at times. However, even with regard to the finished product, their account suggests a lackadaisical or dismissive attitude on Gibson’s part about when he chose to finish these works.

Later tourists to his studio rarely describe seeing Gibson at work, but instead focus more on their descriptions of his studio space. A visitor from early 1854, identified only as C. P., recorded that the entrance to his studio was through “two large folding-doors, on which is painted the name of Gibson. ... Entering, we found ourselves in a large unfloored room, in which are crowded numerous statues, casts, busts, and basso relievos; whilst the workmen are busy on others.”⁵⁷ This description of men working in the first room is suggestive of the scene shown in the drawing of Canova’s studio, where visitors could watch his studio workers laboring on specific projects. As C. P. and his companion continued, they came upon a small garden “where some large blocks of unwrought marble were lying,” and then reached a second room where Gibson was working on his figure of *Justice* for his monument destined for Westminster Palace.⁵⁸ C. P.’s subsequent discussion about the making of life-sized clay models implies that Gibson was in the stage of modeling the large-scale work from which a plaster cast would be made. C. P.’s article then also reveals an eye-witness account of Gibson working, in this case modeling a larger clay figure in its final stages.

This second room to the right off the garden was Gibson’s private studio space. It was described in more detail by M. M. H., the journalist Matilda Mary Hays, in *The English Woman’s Journal*, where she referred to it as “the sanctum of the master himself” to which “favored visitors, friends, or the friends of friends” were given permission to enter, assuming “that we have some claim for our intrusion upon his

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154. The seated figure was his statue of George Stephenson, the railway magnate, for St. George’s Hall in Liverpool.

⁵⁷ C. P., “A Peep into Artists’ Studios in Rome,” *The New Monthly Magazine* 101, no. 401 (May 1854), 68.

⁵⁸ C. P. goes on to note that the model for the figure was a Roman peasant woman named Louisa, whose portrait bust Gibson had modeled and placed on a shelf nearby to assist him in making the larger figure.

privacy.”⁵⁹ Hays went on to describe Gibson’s private studio as “long and narrow, boarded ... [with] some pretensions to comfort,” noting further that it was “the present fashion in Rome to render the studios, both of painter and sculptor, as comfortable and habitable as possible.” This description implies that, certainly by the 1850s, visiting studios had become such a routine tourist activity that the artists were now expected to make every effort to accommodate visitors. Presumably this worked to their advantage, as the visitors might commission or buy a work of art, or at least send home positive feedback about the sculptor’s works. More importantly, the sculptor’s private workroom was now a public space for welcoming visitors. If we are to believe the accounts of Canova’s private workroom as a space to which very few people ever were given access, then Gibson’s permission of visitors to his private space would seem to be a change from past precedent.⁶⁰

The image of sculptors as *cicerones* of their own studios also is significant for Gibson. This was a role he enjoyed. Indeed, as Gibson did less manual work in his studio, he was able to elevate himself socially to that of a gentleman artist. In this, Gibson arguably was conscious of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Paragone* between sculpture and painting, in which the sculptor is seen as a dirty manual laborer, and his artistic nemesis, the painter, is presented as a genteel intellectual.⁶¹ Although Gibson was not a painter, it is worth recalling that early in his life, he wanted to apprentice in a painter’s studio but his parents could not afford the fees. Furthermore, draftsmanship was always an active component of his artistry, and, as I will discuss in chapter five, Gibson went so far as to reclassify himself as a designer with regard to his works at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Thus, dressing “like a gentleman” and giving tours of his studio, Gibson elevated himself as an artist, and consciously rejected the presentiment of himself as a manual-laboring sculptor.⁶²

One of his most important visitors, whom he proudly led as *cicerone*, was the teenaged Prince of Wales, who traveled to Rome in 1859. After dining with the Prince on 18 February, Gibson gave him a

⁵⁹ M. M. H. [Matilda Mary Hays], “Harriet Hosmer,” *The English Woman’s Journal* 1, no. 5 (1 July 1858), 296.

⁶⁰ Honour, “Canova’s Studio Practice-I. The Early Years,” 147.

⁶¹ Leonardo da Vinci, *Paragone* 36–46, in *Paragone: A Comparison of the Arts by Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. Irma A. Richter (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

⁶² The quotation describing his appearance comes from “A Morning with the Sculptors at Rome,” *Chambers’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 155 (20 December 1856), 386, which will be discussed further.

tour of his studio the next day.⁶³ The afternoon of 11 March, Gibson escorted him on a tour of the studios of other sculptors in Rome.⁶⁴ One newspaper reported on the visit with a cartoon showing Gibson pointing out Hosmer's *Zenobia* to the Prince (fig. 3.11). In this and in other instances, Gibson's standing as a Royal Academician and a cultural ambassador for the Roman school of sculpture was more important than his actual works of art. Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert so respected him as an arbiter of taste that he acted as their agent in commissioning works from other sculptors in Rome, including Tenerani, Wyatt, Lawrence Macdonald, Henry Timbrell, and William Theed the Younger, as well as the cameo maker Tommaso Saulini.

An unidentified visitor in 1856 published an article in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* in which he deemphasized Gibson's role in the making of sculpture in favor of stressing his presence as a gentleman artist. He and his companion passed through the first room and garden, which they described as having a fountain and tree-like camellias, roses, and orange blossoms. They then came upon sheds in which the workers "were busy on statues in every stage of being, from the shapeless block of marble, to the perfect figures they were now cording in the packing-case which was to go to England to-morrow."⁶⁵ Gibson greeted them dressed "like a gentleman," and they noted that "he does not give way to the vagaries of ordinary artists," suggesting that nothing about his appearance implied he was a craftsman. Once again he acted as *cicerone* in his studio, explaining the process of making sculpture. At the marble-carving stage they noted that skilled workers take over with continuous careful measuring and detailed carving. Gibson pointed out one unnamed worker who presumably was carving the details of his monumental statue of Queen Victoria, noting: "He does nothing but the crown and ornaments: he is a very delicate worker."

Now aware of the complexities of making sculpture, these visitors reported: "Thus the finished statue becomes a very costly thing, not only because of the expensiveness of the material, but also from the amount of labour bestowed on it." The issue of cost and profit is significant, despite the impression of

⁶³ "The Prince of Wales at Rome," *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 February 1859, 3.

⁶⁴ Gen. Robert Bruce to John Gibson, 10 March [1859], GI/1/43, Gibson Papers. His acquaintance with the Prince of Wales continued over the years. The Prince returned to Rome and met with Gibson in November 1862, this time with his sister and brother-in-law, the Crown Princess and Crown Prince of Prussia. In 1863, the Prince of Wales recalled Gibson to England to sculpt a portrait bust of Princess Alexandra, his new wife and the future Queen.

⁶⁵ "A Morning with the Sculptors at Rome," 386.

Gibson as an artist who is above such things. Indeed, Lady Eastlake's account of Gibson's memoirs avidly disavows accusations that the sculptor was "fond of money," suggesting even a level of ineptitude about his financial matters.⁶⁶ In doing this, she reinforces her focus on Gibson's genius as a fine artist and disengages him from the manufacturing of art as a commercial artist, a distinction that would have been significant in the industrial age of the Victorians. Nevertheless, his account books reveal some level of competence about deriving an income from his art and properly disseminating funds for expenses in the making of sculpture. In this Gibson was like any other businessman who managed a large warehouse studio with employees.

Although his notes are disorganized and do little to help a researcher create an accurate timeline of his works, he at least provided records of information about the amount of money collected for commissions and the amounts paid for expenses, such as the cost of marble, and for his workers. For instance, his account books show that his marble carver Felice Bains sculpted the replica of *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.1) for Peel, who had commissioned the statue during a trip to Rome in 1834, the same year in which he was elected Prime Minister for the first time.⁶⁷ Gibson's account books show that Peel paid £250 for the commission, and that Bains carved the figure over the course of fifty-four days, for which he was paid £65 4s.⁶⁸ Gibson's other expenses went toward *practiciens* who did the pointing, drilling, and polishing, and to an unnamed specialist who carved the hair and wings. Peel's version of the statue cost Gibson £154 7s 9d, earning him a profit of just under £100.

Early in his career, Gibson had little sense what to charge for a large-scale commission. In March 1819 when the Duke of Devonshire asked him the price for a marble version of *Mars Restrained by Cupid* (fig. 4.3), the inexperienced sculptor replied £500, concerned this might be too much. The Duke immediately commissioned the work, but Gibson lost money in the long run.⁶⁹ Over thirty years later Gibson was able to command five thousand guineas for the British government's commission of a seven-foot portrait statue of the recently deceased Peel for Westminster Abbey (fig. 3.9).⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Eastlake, 6.

⁶⁷ Matthews, 84.

⁶⁸ Personal Account Book 1822-1859, G1/6/2, Gibson Papers. This statue is discussed further in chapter five.

⁶⁹ Matthews, 52. His expenses came to £520. The statue is discussed in more detail in chapter four.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 139. Gibson's decision to represent Peel as an ancient orator in a toga addressing the Senate was not received well by all. *The Art Journal* praised his ability to portray Peel's facial appearance, but

The most vital part of any sculpture studio is the corps of workers who do much of the labor. Despite their importance, only a small number of Gibson's studio workers are identified by name in his account books, with little known about them. It was common for the men to be Italian, their families frequently long-time craftsmen in the sculpture trade. One man named Babboni worked for him as a pointer. Another man named Polini worked as a pointer and carver early in Gibson's studio history, his most important project being *Mars Restrained by Cupid* for Devonshire. A worker named Camillo was named in Hays's article, but this could have been the first name of any of these men in Gibson's studio.

One worker named Moisè did specialized carving, unique detailed work that probably included items such as the wings for any of his Cupid figures, which were attached to the figure afterwards. He is named in Gibson's account books for working on the hair and flowers of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 2.21).⁷¹ Moisè also may have been the unidentified "delicate worker" mentioned above who specialized in the crown and ornamental details in the statue of the Queen. He undoubtedly is related to Filippo Moisè, one of the contributors to *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori*, a short-lived serial which published high-quality engravings after modern works of art produced in Rome. Prints after Gibson's works appeared in all six volumes.⁷²

The most noteworthy of Gibson's sculptors, however, was Felice Bainsi, who worked for him as a carver and finisher, and may in fact have acted at times as his chief foreman. His name appears in the account books beginning with works that date from the mid- to late 1830s, such as the statue for Peel discussed above and Gibson's Royal Academy diploma work *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24). Little personal information is known about Bainsi, not even his birth and death dates. He previously had worked in Thorvaldsen's studio, and while there received commissions for a few public works of art in Rome.⁷³ On

believed a sculptor of mythological subjects was inappropriate for such an important statue. "Minor Topics of the Month," *The Art Journal* (November 1853), 299. Another reviewer expressed concern that a competition should have been held because such a large amount of money had been approved for the commission. "Gibson's Statue of Sir Robert Peel, in Westminster Abbey," *Illustrated London News*, 1 October 1853, 278.

⁷¹ This was probably the version for Prince Torlonia in the 1830s, but it also could be related to the versions for Sir George Beaumont in the 1820s and the version for Czar Alexander II from 1839. Personal Account Book 1822-1859, GI/6/2, Gibson Papers.

⁷² This serial will be discussed further in chapter five on reproductive media.

⁷³ Bertel Thorvaldsen to Felice Bainsi, 19 June 1830, m28 nr.78, and Commissione della Basilica di San Paolo to Bertel Thorvaldsen, 5 November 1833, m18 1833, nr. 7, both Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen, *The Thorvaldsen Letter Archive*, available online: <http://brevarkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/letters> (accessed 8 November 2011).

the Promenade of the Pincio, he was one of a group of sculptors who made the “royal slaves,” replicas of the Dacian prisoners on the Arch of Constantine. On the sculptural staircase that leads down from the observation point to the Piazza del Popolo, he sculpted in the early 1830s the allegorical figure of *Winter* and, with the sculptor Achille Stocchi, a relief of *The Genius of Arts and Commerce*. His most famous statue is that of *Saint Scholastica* (fig. 3.12) made in 1836 for the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome.⁷⁴ Bainsi is not credited with works after this date, and Thorvaldsen returned to Copenhagen in 1838, so it stands to reason that Bainsi may have sought permanent employment with Gibson at this time, rather than depend on commissions or work in Thorvaldsen’s studio without his master. Presumably he was a loyal and skillful sculptor, as he worked for Gibson for the next thirty years until his master’s death in 1866. Receipts for financial settlements from Gibson’s estate were made to Bainsi and other named studio workers such as Domenico Ciani, Pietro Capponi, Filippo Malfieri, and Luigi Menghini, but nothing is known about these men.⁷⁵

It is worth recalling that Gibson’s brother Benjamin also worked for fifteen years in his studio until his death in 1851. He moved to Rome in 1836, probably at his brother’s encouragement after the recent deaths of their parents. He was nicknamed “Mr. Ben” and “Panza” by John, the latter nickname perhaps referring to the literary character Sancho Panza, the constant companion of Don Quixote, because Benjamin and John were so close. According to Lady Eastlake, Benjamin became John’s “classical dictionary,” relating ancient mythology, philosophy, and history to him in his pursuit of Greek idealism.⁷⁶ Indeed, recurring illnesses seemingly inhibited Benjamin’s ability to produce more sculpture later on, as he began a second career as a classicist. He learned Latin and Greek, was often seen reading works by Horace and Homer, and began acting as a *cicerone* for tourists in the catacombs and the Vatican.⁷⁷ He

⁷⁴ Alberta Campitelli, ed., *Green Delights: The Villas, Gardens and Historic Parks Belonging to the City of Rome* (Rome: De Luca, 2005), 51; Alfonso Panzetta, *Nuovo dizionario degli scultori italiani dell’ottocento e del primo novecento: Da Antonio Canova ad Arturo Martini* (Torino: Adarte, 2003), 1:67, 2:116; and Vincenzo Vicario, *Gli scultori italiani dal neoclassicismo al liberty*, 2nd ed. (Lodi: Pomerio, 1994), 1:54.

⁷⁵ These receipts were prepared by the painter Penry Williams and sculptor Benjamin Spence, who were Gibson’s executors, and signed by the painter Joseph Severn, who was then British Consul at Rome. Gibson Estate Papers, GI/4, Gibson Papers.

⁷⁶ Eastlake, 6, 194. As noted in the previous chapter, a few manuscripts in the Gibson Papers show different handwriting, so it seems likely that Benjamin helped John keep business records and transcribed some of the quotations from classical and contemporary texts in his journals.

⁷⁷ R. W. A., “Fragments from the Diary of an English Traveller Through France and in Italy. No. V. The Catacombs of St. Agnese,” *The Child’s Friend and Family Magazine* 25 (1 February 1855), 120-23; George Guy Greville, Earl of Warwick, Journals, 30 December 1841, Osborn d418, Beinecke Library,

also wrote essays on archaeological subjects that were published in journals such as the *Museum of Classical Antiquities*.⁷⁸

Although Benjamin exhibited at the Liverpool Academy during the 1820s and thus had made a number of original works prior to arriving in Rome, little of his oeuvre survives. One portrait bust made by him shortly after his arrival in Rome is a likeness of John (fig. 3.13), and he also made a bust of the poet John Milton.⁷⁹ In an 1841 letter, Benjamin mentions having just finished in marble a statue called *The Shepherd Boy and Dog* (fig. 3.14). This work shows similarities to John's own *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24) and *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3), as well as related pastoral subjects by artists such as Thorvaldsen (fig. 3.15).⁸⁰ The inclusion of the dog, however, also directly links the work to John's *Hunter and His Dog* (fig. 1.2), the plaster model for which had been completed by this time. Because the inclusion of animals in the Gibson studio was rare until this date, it seems likely that Benjamin himself may have been instrumental in bringing this element forward, or they both may have borrowed from the expertise of their neighboring English sculptors Wyatt or Joseph Gott, both of whom had sculpted dogs.

The Art-Union reported in 1848 that Benjamin had "several subjects in hand": a work in marble called *Bacchante Listening to Pan* for Mr. Lousada, "an ingenious and pleasing composition, half life-size"; a "small group" in plaster titled *Minerva Chasing Cupid, Who Runs to Venus for Protection* to be made into marble for Richard Vaughan Yates of Liverpool; a bas-relief of a *Wounded Amazon* taken from John's subject in the round; and a half-life-sized reduction of John's *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*.⁸¹ The fact that Benjamin made reductions, particularly after John's works, is significant in light of the fact that it was also in the 1840s that John authorized the distribution of porcelain statuettes after his works by Copeland in Staffordshire, which is discussed in chapter five on reproductive media. Benjamin also made

Yale University; and Derrick Pritchard Webley, *Cast to the Winds: The Life and Work of Penry Williams (1802-1885)* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1997), 62, 70.

⁷⁸ His last essay, published posthumously, was "On the Marble Statue of an Athlete, and on a Bronze Horse, Discovered in the Trastevere: and on the Frescoes of an Ancient House in the Via Graziosa, at Rome," *Museum of Classical Antiquities* 2, no. 5 (March 1852), 16-26.

⁷⁹ The bust of John, taken "from nature," is inscribed on the back of the support "AD NATURAM / FECIT / B. GIBSON ROMAE," and is thus dated by the Yale Center for British Art to 1837-38, which would be almost immediately upon his arrival in Rome. The Milton bust was sold at auction by Mallam's on 6 September 2005.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Gibson to Edwin Keete, 23 September 1841, location unknown, published as "Letter from B. Gibson, Esq., R.A.," *The Art-Union* (1 November 1841), 184. Benjamin was not a Royal Academician; this editorial error conflates the two brothers.

⁸¹ "Art in Continental States," *The Art-Union* (1 February 1848), 50.

a reduced-sized version of John's *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 3.16), which was another commission by Yates. A reduced-sized interpretation of *The Three Graces* (fig. 3.17) has been attributed to John, but based on the number of reduced-sized works that Benjamin made, it seems likely that this statue probably is an original work by Benjamin, undoubtedly inspired in composition by Thorvaldsen (fig. 3.18).⁸²

Following Benjamin's death on 13 August 1851, John designed a monument in his memory at his burial site in Lucca, with a copy erected in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome. John and his other brother Solomon thereafter donated Benjamin's book collection of Greco-Roman subjects to the Liverpool Royal Institution.⁸³ Fifteen months after Benjamin's death, John welcomed Hosmer into his studio, possibly to replace the void Benjamin's death had left in his life. Although Hosmer was not his only pupil, her time in his studio is well documented and provides insight into Gibson's studio practice in his role as her teacher.

Gibson and Hosmer

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss Hosmer's life and work; rather, I will focus on her relationship with Gibson, specifically her role as his pupil in his studio for about seven years. Indeed, the scholarship on Hosmer to date, while acknowledging Gibson, largely has disengaged her from him in an attempt to emphasize her individuality as the leading American woman sculptor working in Rome. My approach here is to consider Hosmer in the context of Gibson's studio, emphasizing the training she

⁸² The statue, at 42½ in. (107 cm), is undated, although the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, claims it was made ca. 1820, under the assumption that it is an early work by Gibson and inspired by Canova. While Gibson did occasionally make reduced-sized works for patrons, his multi-figure groups were always larger. *Hylas and the Naiades* at the Tate, for instance, measures approximately 63 inches (160 cm) in height. Furthermore, Gibson signed all of his work, and this group of the Graces does not have a signature. The subject is not mentioned in his memoirs or in any of the correspondence I have examined to date. Eastlake does not include it in her checklist of Gibson's works, but Matthews does, because the work was donated to the Walker in 1884 (after Eastlake's book was published) from the estate of Spencer Steers as a work by "Gibson" (no first name).

⁸³ In the introduction to the published catalogue of this collection, Sir G. H. Richards listed 171 books from his library and surmised from these that Benjamin's knowledge of Greek was not advanced, for "almost every Greek has its Latin rendering in parallel." He also noted that "the Greek books were clearly gathered for mythologic or historic reference," suggesting their primary use was related to the production of classical sculpture. *Hand List of Books and Pamphlets of the Liverpool Royal Institution Kept at the Tate Library, University College, Liverpool* (Liverpool: D. Marples & Co., [n.d.]), vii-viii. For an obituary, see "Mr. Benjamin Gibson," *Gentleman's Magazine* (November 1851), 552. For more personal details about John and Benjamin, see James E. Freeman, "Gatherings from an Artist's Portfolio: III. John Gibson," *Appletons' Journal of Literature, Science and Art* 15, no. 355 (8 January 1876), 39-41.

received from Gibson as a reciprocated extension of the training he himself received from Canova, and the influence of Gibson's own work on her in their mutual pursuit of the modern classical body.

The secondary literature on Harriet Hosmer is more extensive than that on Gibson. The rise of feminism and queer/gender studies in art history has led a number of scholars to contextualize her life and work within the larger social framework of women's and same-sex issues in nineteenth-century American and European art.⁸⁴ Hosmer was born and raised in Watertown, Massachusetts, the only surviving child of Hiram Hosmer, a physician. Her father encouraged her pursuit of art, and she eventually moved to St. Louis to study anatomy at Dr. Joseph Nash McDowell's medical school at the University of Missouri. There she became close with Cornelia Crow Carr and her father Wayman Crow, who would become her lifelong patrons and friends, Carr eventually writing her first posthumous biography.

Hosmer and her father arrived in Rome by late November 1852. Their traveling party included the actress Charlotte Cushman and her partner, the aforementioned journalist Matilda Hays, with whom the Hosmers lived in Rome. Gibson was approached during his breakfast at the Caffè Greco by either the British sculptor Shakespeare Wood or the American sculptor William Wetmore Story with Hosmer's anatomical drawings and a daguerreotype of her poetic bust of *Hesper*. He was asked to take Hosmer on as a pupil. Gibson reportedly was hesitant at first, but then complied saying, "Whatever I can teach her, she shall learn."⁸⁵

Hosmer and her father first met Gibson in his studio. After his death, she reported to Lady Eastlake her memory of their first meeting:

⁸⁴ The standard biography is Cornelia Carr, ed., *Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1912). For recent scholarship, see Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900* (London: Routledge, 2000), chapter 4, 101-41; Patricia Cronin, *Harriet Hosmer Lost and Found: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Milan; New York: Charta, 2009); Kate Culkin, *Harriet Hosmer: A Cultural Biography* (Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); Melissa Dabakis, "'The Eccentric Life of a Perfectly Emancipated Female': Harriet Hosmer's Early Years in Rome," in *Perspective on American Sculpture before 1925*, ed. Thayer Tolles (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 24-43; William H. Gerdtz, "Medusa of Harriet Hosmer," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 56, no. 2 (1978), 96-107; Joy S. Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), chapter six, 141-65; Andrea Mariani, "Sleeping and Waking Fauns: Harriet Goodhue Hosmer's Experience of Italy, 1852-1870," in *The Italian Presence in American Art 1760-1860*, ed. Irma B. Jaffe (New York: Fordham University Press; Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1989), 66-81; and Dolly Sherwood, *Harriet Hosmer, American Sculptor, 1830-1908* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991).

⁸⁵ Carr, *Hosmer*, 21.

He was working upon the knee of his Wounded Amazon—finishing it in marble. He laid down his chisel (how well I can see him now!) and received me most kindly—showed me all the statues in his studio. ... Apropos of the knee of the Amazon, I always told him I was more fond of that statue than of any other, from its being connected with my first impression of him. He said I always looked sentimental when I saw it.⁸⁶

In the context of Gibson's studio practice, this passage is significant as it is one of the few, perhaps the only, published eye-witness accounts of him holding a sculpting tool and actually working on marble.

Following traditional studio practice, he was finishing the marble figure.

Gibson showed Hosmer and her father to the room she would use for modeling: "They ... crossed a beautiful little garden, fragrant with orange-trees, and embellished by a fountain that sprinkled ferns in a shady nook; and entering another door, they ascended a steep flight of stairs, which brought them to a small studio lighted by a large arched window."⁸⁷ According to Hosmer, the room at one time had been occupied by Canova and she hoped "inspiration may be drawn from its walls," an intimation of her interest in learning the art of sculpture from Canova through Gibson.⁸⁸ In showing Hosmer the room, Gibson told her that the space was "a little room, but as big as you are yourself."⁸⁹ She believed him at first to have a "peculiar curt manner," but soon came to realize that he "dearly loved a little nonsense" and noted that she "never talked more nonsense with anyone than with the grave, staid Master." Indeed, their personal correspondence reveals a number of private jokes, including their frequent habit of signing off to one another interchangeably as Master or Slave.⁹⁰

During the seven years she modeled in Gibson's studio, his workers assisted her in the creation of the large-scale models, plaster casts, and marble carving of her most famous works. These included busts of *Daphne* and *Medusa*, a funerary monument for Judith Falconnet, and statues of *Oenone* (fig. 3.19), *Beatrice Cenci*, and *Zenobia* (fig. 3.21). Her statue of Shakespeare's impish *Puck* was commissioned numerous times in marble, and by 1857 Hosmer was writing to Crow about her growing business acumen, courtesy of Gibson:

I find my affairs here very satisfactory. Marble exquisite for my work, and my flock of Pucks advancing. Mr. Gibson tells me to-day I must raise my price ... and I am very willing to obey.... [I]t is

⁸⁶ Eastlake, 228.

⁸⁷ Lydia Maria Child, "Harriet E. Hosmer: A Biographical Sketch," *The Ladies' Repository* 21 (1 January 1861), 4-5.

⁸⁸ Carr, *Hosmer*, 22.

⁸⁹ Eastlake, 228.

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Carr, *Hosmer*, 58, 89; and Harriet Hosmer to John Gibson, n.d., GI/1/187, Gibson Papers.

time that I was paid in more glittering currency than “glory.” Glory does not drive the machine, though it makes it glisten, and at this very moment I have far more of the glitter than of the precious metal.⁹¹

Ever the classicist, Gibson encouraged Hosmer to explore Rome’s antiquities and to study both from the antique and from nature. He also gave her access to his own collection of artistic material from which to learn. She wrote to Crow: “He gives me engravings, books, casts, everything he thinks necessary for my studies, and in so kindly, so fatherly a manner that I am convinced Heaven smiled most benignly upon me when it sent me to him.”⁹² Gibson was a strong advocate for Hosmer’s talents and wrote to her father, who had returned to America, to reassure him of her progress. In a letter from 1853 he praised her new bust of *Medusa* as “her best” and went on to inform him of a visit to his studio by the “greatest sculptor of the age,” Christian Daniel Rauch: “Your daughter was absent, but I showed him all she had done, including a small sketch-model for a statue life size. Rauch was much struck and pleased with her works, and expressed his opinion that she would become a clever sculptor.”⁹³

Scholars have attributed much of Hosmer’s work from this time to her own ingenuity and her growing knowledge of classical art. While certainly some of this may be true, surprisingly few have considered the direct influence of Gibson’s own work on Hosmer, or her attempt to pay homage to him as her teacher. For instance, her first life-sized statue depicting *Oenone* (fig. 3.19), the wife of the Trojan Paris who abandoned her to elope with Helen, shows the nymph looking downward in grief, her one arm supporting her torso. The position of her body shares great similarities with Gibson’s own *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24), who gazes downward contemplating his reflection in the water.⁹⁴ Hosmer’s *Sleeping Faun* (fig. 3.20) was likely inspired by *The Marble Faun* in the Capitoline Museum, as well as the Hellenistic *Barberini Faun* in the Glyptothek. However, a related connection is Gibson’s *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3). Although Gibson’s and Hosmer’s figures do not resemble one another exactly, they both share similar subjects and are modern interpretations of ancient works. She modeled this statue after she had moved to her own studio in 1859 at 5 Via Margutta. This was an extension of Via della Fontanella located just

⁹¹ Harriet Hosmer to Wayman Crow, November 1857, in Carr, *Hosmer*, 94.

⁹² Harriet Hosmer to Wayman Crow, 1 December 1852, in Carr, *Hosmer*, 22-23.

⁹³ John Gibson to Hiram Hosmer, 1853, in Carr, *Hosmer*, 24.

⁹⁴ Dabakis, 37. Dabakis also cites a work with the same subject by Gibson, but this is untraced.

across Via del Babuino, and thus nearly adjacent to Gibson's studio. Hosmer experimented with polychromy on this work, adding tinting in imitation of Gibson's own practice at this time.⁹⁵

Gibson's mentorship and public support clearly were an important part of Hosmer's early success, and indeed his dominant position in the art world of Rome and abroad helped establish her international career. However, working as a woman in Gibson's shadow also gave Hosmer great difficulties. Some believed she relied too much on Gibson and had no original ideas of her own. Conscious of this, in 1859, while modeling *Zenobia* (fig. 3.21), she had photographs taken of her work in progress and sent them to Anna Jameson for advice on its appearance. Jameson's own writings on Zenobia, the third-century Palmyran queen, had inspired Hosmer to begin working on the subject at least two years earlier.⁹⁶ In a letter to Hosmer dated 10 October 1859, Jameson reminded her to turn to Gibson for advice because of his skills as a classical sculptor, even if it meant facing rejection by other sculptors because of her dependence on him.

I know the malignant sarcasm of some of your rivals at Rome, as to your having Mr. Gibson "at your elbow" and all that, but, my dear Hatty, I should think lightly of your good sense and your moral courage, if such insinuations, irritating to your self-esteem and offensive to your self-dependence, could prevent your availing yourself of all the advantages you may derive from the kind counsel of your friend. If the subject were a bust, or a Puck, it would be otherwise; but in classic sculpture Gibson is first, and the purity of his taste is to be depended on far more than mine. Do I not know that Gibson himself would take counsel of Thorwaldsen or Canova? ... Your Zenobia is a classical heroine, to be classically treated; therefore when you are in doubt, listen to him and have sufficient dependence on yourself to afford to do this, and to set at naught the gossip of the Caffè Greco.⁹⁷

But the "gossip" from artists at the Caffè Greco was nothing compared to the accusations she received from those who accused her outright of not having done any of her own work. This situation erupted most notably following the premiere of *Zenobia* at the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, where it was shown with Gibson's three polychrome figures of Venus, Cupid, and Pandora. The following year, in an anonymous obituary about the sculptor Alfred Gatley published in a small-press journal entitled *The Queen*, the American sculptor Joseph Mozier wrote scathingly of *Zenobia* that it was "said to be by Miss Hosmer, but really executed by an Italian workman at Rome." This controversial remark might have ended there had *The Art Journal* not inadvertently included this accusation in a reprint of this

⁹⁵ Culkin, 100.

⁹⁶ Anna Jameson, *Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns* (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831), 1:49-60.

⁹⁷ Carr, *Hosmer*, 150-51.

obituary.⁹⁸ Hosmer filed a lawsuit and received support from individuals in Rome and London. Gibson and she co-authored a letter to *The Art Journal* in which they defended her work, citing the long-held tradition that Italian studio workers all collectively worked with and under a sculptor to produce sculpture from clay model to final marble.⁹⁹ The journal followed their letter with a paragraph-length apology and retraction.

Later in 1864 Hosmer published her own account of how sculpture was made, in an attempt to continue to defend her position as an artist and sculptor.¹⁰⁰ She detailed the importance of the artist as thinker, the creator of ideas, and separated this from the craft of carving stone. In writing this essay she detailed the traditions of sculpture production that had been passed down for generations as she would have learned it from Gibson and his studio, and which he in turn had learned from Canova and Thorvaldsen. Hosmer's participation with Gibson in the exhibiting of his polychrome figures in London in 1862, not to mention her own experiments with polychromy afterwards, are significant in the context of Gibson's studio practice. Indeed, it was during the 1850s, when Hosmer was in residence in Gibson's studio, that he fully experimented with tinting his statues. The final section discusses this important aspect of his studio production.

Polychrome Sculpture

Gibson's *Tinted Venus* (fig. 1.1) made its public premiere in London at the International Exhibition of 1862 where it was displayed with three companion statues—tinted versions of *Pandora* (fig. 3.22) and *Love Tormenting the Soul* (fig. 3.23), and Hosmer's untinted *Zenobia*—within four niches painted Pompeian red on each side of a polychrome temple-like structure designed by Owen Jones (fig. 3.24). However, prior to this installation, the *Tinted Venus* had been on display in Gibson's studio in Rome for nearly a decade beforehand, a fact which few, if any, scholars have ever discussed. Published accounts of Gibson's polychrome experiment show that viewers both praised and decried his statue.

⁹⁸ "Mr. Alfred Gatley," *The Art Journal* (September 1863), 181. The original obituary in *The Queen* remains untraced.

⁹⁹ Harriet Hosmer and John Gibson, "Miss Hosmer's 'Zenobia,'" *The Art Journal* (January 1864), 27. For more, see Culkin, 69-77; and Kasson, 141-65.

¹⁰⁰ Harriet Hosmer, "The Process of Sculpture," *Atlantic Monthly* 114, no. 86 (December 1864), 734-37, reprinted in Carr, *Hosmer*, 370-77.

This section will focus on the *Tinted Venus* and other works on which Gibson applied wax-based pigments as a component of his studio practice. Following a brief discussion of the nineteenth-century awareness of ancient polychrome sculpture, as Gibson understood it, this chapter will explore his experiments with coloring his sculptures, particularly his tinted portrait statue of Queen Victoria and the *Tinted Venus*. In addition to the process by which Gibson tinted his statues, I will examine how he displayed these works, and the viewer response from those who saw these works in his studio in Rome and, respectively speaking, in London at the Royal Academy in 1847 and the International Exhibition of 1862. Ultimately I will recontextualize Gibson's polychrome figures in light of this dissertation's overarching discussion of the modern classical body, for in acknowledging that the Greeks and Romans colored their sculptures, Gibson reinvented an ancient practice for a modern audience by focusing on how it harmonized with the decorative interior.

Although art history has both credited and derided Gibson for being the first sculptor to reintroduce polychromy in the nineteenth century, in fact this assumption is not completely true. Canova, for instance, had experimented with color washes and stains on his sculptures, and throughout Europe polychromed medieval and Gothic-style sculpture continued to be produced for ecclesiastical purposes during the nineteenth century. Owen Jones in England and Leo von Klenze in Germany both crafted architectural interiors with colored sculptures set within the architectural spaces. Furthermore, in France sculptors such as Charles Simart and Charles Cordier both used colored marbles and bronzes to create polychrome sculptures. Thus, it is more appropriate to point to Gibson and a number of his contemporaries as collectively being responsible for reintroducing polychrome sculpture during the nineteenth century. However, it is worth noting that in the case of most of these men, they were interested in archaeological restoration. They sought to replicate how the ancient Greeks and Romans experienced sculpture and architecture. Gibson was different in that he used wax-based pigments to highlight aspects of a work; he never painted a statue in its entirety. In tinting a statue, he was more interested in how it could harmonize with the modern decorative interior. Ultimately, in doing this, he challenged the paradigm of white marble's purity of form, which had been the foundation for the "true style" for nearly a century.

In his memoirs, Gibson wrote: “It is not necessary that I should here give quotations from classical authors alluding to the polychromatic practice. All these are published and well known—as also the fact that fragments of fine Greek art have been found with traces of colour.”¹⁰¹ These two sources—ancient texts and art—were critical to Gibson’s understanding of Greco-Roman sculptural polychromy, and clearly suggest to the reader of his memoirs that by the mid-nineteenth century this ancient practice was well known to his contemporaries in the art community, even if polychromy itself was rejected by some because it challenged the purity of form inherent in marble statues. Gibson’s awareness of examples from classical literature came directly from his readings of the ancient authors themselves, as well as from the writings of his contemporaries who quoted them.

In his journals and notebooks, he transcribed a number of passages about this practice from ancient writers, such as, “The painters and gilders of statues are like the actors who give life to the Drama.—Plutarch.”¹⁰² Elsewhere he transcribed the following quotation from Virgil: “Cupid of marble with many colored wings & a painted quiver according to custom.”¹⁰³ Gibson also was familiar with Pliny the Elder’s account of the importance that the fourth-century B.C.E. sculptor Praxiteles placed on the painter Nicias’s contribution to his work: “It is this Nicias of whom Praxiteles used to say, when asked which of his own works in marble he regarded most highly, ‘the ones to which Nicias has set his hand’—so much value did he Assign to his coloring of surfaces.”¹⁰⁴ Gibson wrote about Nicias that he gave sculptures “the last finish,” their “celestial glow, warm, pale, and pure.”¹⁰⁵

In addition to being directly familiar with classical literature, Gibson was aware of their writings through scholarship written by his contemporaries. In these instances, the close relationship between ancient sculpture and architecture is important, as many of these authors who wrote about ancient polychromy were architects. For instance, his notebooks include a number of quotations translated from

¹⁰¹ Eastlake, 212; Matthews, 183.

¹⁰² Notes and Related Materials, G1/3/58, Gibson Papers. This quotation comes from an unidentified nineteenth-century translation of Plutarch, *Morals* 4.25, “On the Glory of the Athenians.”

¹⁰³ Journal, G1/7, Gibson Papers. This quotation comes from an unidentified poem by Virgil translated by Henry Thompson, vicar of Chard. *The Works of P. V. M. From the Text of Heyne and Wagner. With a Biographical Memoir by ... H. Thompson ... Illustrated with Engravings from the Most Authentic Sources*, 8 vols. (London, 1855).

¹⁰⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* 35.133.

¹⁰⁵ Matthews, 76. For a more on these and other ancient authors of polychromy, including Euripides and Plato, see Oliver Primavesi, “Colorful Sculptures in Ancient Literature?: The Textual Evidence Revisited,” in *Gods in Color: Painted Sculpture of Classical Antiquity*, ed. Vinzenz Brinkmann and Raimund Wünsche (Cambridge, MA: Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, 2007), 192-209.

Jacques Ignace Hittorff's *Restitution du temple d'Empédocle à Sélimonte, ou l'architecture polychrome chez les Grecs*.¹⁰⁶ Gibson also would have known the seminal writings on polychrome sculpture by Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy. Although the French scholar was primarily interested in bronze and chryselephantine works, he was the first to speculate that paint was applied to marble sculpture using pigments in a wax-like binder, ultimately creating the effect of light dyes.¹⁰⁷ Gibson also transcribed selections from his future collaborator Jones, who wrote about Winckelmann's awareness of polychrome works discovered in Herculaneum. Jones went on to note, "There are still traces visible of gilding in the hair of statues. Even the Venus de' Medici has such. And the bored ears speak plainly of earrings."¹⁰⁸ From Jones's text, one can surmise that the *Venus de' Medici* provided Gibson with an indirect source of inspiration for his *Tinted Venus*.

Archaeological findings showing traces of color on sculpture and architecture had challenged the assumptions that all ancient marble works had been white. As just noted, Winckelmann was aware of polychrome works being discovered in Herculaneum and Pompeii. James Stuart and Nicholas Revett were two of the first Europeans to observe *in situ* ancient Athenian art and architecture, and in their series *The Antiquities of Athens* they first revealed that polychromy was evident on the Parthenon itself.¹⁰⁹ By the time the Elgin Marbles had arrived at the British Museum, there reportedly was no trace of color on them, but this fact was not accepted by all. An awareness of polychrome sculpture in ancient Greece was gathering momentum. The Aegina marbles installed in the Glyptothek in Munich reportedly had traces of gilding and color on them, and scholars even speculated precious stones had been used to enhance their vibrancy. More important for British audiences, however, was a book issued in 1833 about the Elgin Marbles, in which the author, probably the British Museum's principal librarian, Henry Ellis, wrote:

¹⁰⁶ Jacques Ignace Hittorff, *Restitution du temple d'Empédocle à Sélimonte, ou l'architecture polychrome chez les Grecs* (Paris: Firmin-Didot frères, 1851), transcribed in Notes and Related Materials, GI/3/53-54, Gibson Papers.

¹⁰⁷ Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, *Le Jupiter olympien, ou, l'art de la sculpture antique considéré sous un nouveau point de vue* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1814). For more on his influence on the revival of polychrome sculpture, see Yvonne Luke, *Quatremère de Quincy's Role in the Revival of Polychromy in Sculpture* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ Owen Jones, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace* (London: Crystal Palace Library, 1854), 32, transcribed in Journal, GI/7, Gibson Papers.

¹⁰⁹ James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, 3 vols. (London: Haberkorn: 1762-94).

Indications of colour in the marbles of the Parthenon are apparent in several portions of the sculpture and architecture, after an exposure of more than two thousand years to the inclemencies of the weather. The antient [*sic*] edifices of Egypt furnish abundant examples of this practice; and many of the remains of Grecian architecture, from their first discovery in the earth, show their colours in all their freshness.¹¹⁰

This speculation about polychromy and the Elgin Marbles led in the late 1830s to the establishment of a committee formed by the Institute of Architects to examine them closely.¹¹¹

Scholars and artists continued to argue over ancient polychromy at this time, however, even though evidence continued to surface from other archaeological digs that the Greeks and Romans did indeed paint their marble architecture and sculpture. In emulation of this practice, architects such as Jones and Klenze began recreating polychrome classical architecture. At the reopened Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park, Jones was responsible for the vividly colored courtyards representing ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Pompeii, and he even displayed a painted plaster cast of the Parthenon frieze. These colored pavilions, not surprisingly, were controversial, forcing him to write a defense of his actions, which as noted above Gibson did read. Klenze's Valhalla memorial near Regensburg, Bavaria and the Munich Residenz both incorporated polychrome sculpture and architecture. Art historian Elisabeth Darby has argued convincingly that these recreated polychromed-sculptural classical spaces were in all likelihood a direct source of inspiration for Gibson's first experiments with polychromy with his statue of Queen Victoria, which is discussed below.¹¹² In late May 1846, Gibson visited Munich with Mrs. Huskisson and her nephew to supervise the bronze casting of Gibson's memorial sculpture of her husband by Ferdinand von Miller the Elder at the Royal Foundry. Gibson reported that while in Munich they were given tours of the King of Bavaria's palace and sculpture gallery by "Mr. Clentz" [*sic*], the king's architect, who clearly was Klenze himself.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ *The British Museum: Elgin and Phigaleian Marbles* (London: Charles Knight, 1833), 1:236.

¹¹¹ Gibson transcribed passages from their final report in Notes and Related Materials, GI/3/55, Gibson Papers. Their published report claimed that there was no trace of color on the Elgin Marbles, but recent conservation work suggests that in fact the figures were painted, as Stuart and Revett had claimed. See I. D. Jenkins and A. P. Middleton, "Paint on the Parthenon Sculptures," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 83 (1988), 183-207.

¹¹² Elisabeth S. Darby, "John Gibson, Queen Victoria, and the Idea of Sculptural Polychromy," *Art History* 4, no. 1 (March 1981), 40-41.

¹¹³ John Gibson to Mrs. Margaret Sandbach, 14 June 1846, MS 20566-7E, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. See also John Gibson to Mrs. Rose Lawrence, 23 June 1846, typewritten transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

It is undocumented whether Gibson visited Frankfurt, but if so he also could have witnessed the action performed by visitors who went to see Johann Heinrich von Dannecker's sculpture of *Ariadne on a Panther* installed in Simon Moritz von Bethmann's private museum. Installed on a rotating base, the statue was placed before a curtained window which allowed colored light to flicker upon the statue's surface and seemingly make it appear more lifelike.¹¹⁴ Despite the popularity of this sight, Clara Crowninshield recorded in her journal on 11 April 1836 that the effect was not convincing: "All the light enters through one window. They draw a blind or curtain which sheds a pink light upon the figure. In the first moment one says how pretty, but it is no illusion. The marble still looks like marble and not like flesh and the pure white becomes the stone much better."¹¹⁵

In addition to the textual and archaeological evidence, and the visual exposure to recreated polychrome sites, Gibson also was aware of chromatic surfaces and textures while working in Canova's studio. Indeed, Canova himself was readily familiar with Quatremère de Quincy's ideas on polychromy, as an edition of his essay was translated into Italian in 1817 and dedicated to him. Canova thereafter was known for occasionally incorporating bronze into his marble figures. The best example of this practice was his *Hebe* (fig. 2.17).¹¹⁶ After polishing his statues, Canova also reportedly would stain them to reduce the glare of the white Carrara marble. He used, for instance, a yellow stain made out of soot, or *acqua di rota*, a wash made from the dirty water poured onto a sharpening wheel. Perhaps most noteworthy for Gibson was that Canova was known to have applied a vermilion wax-based pigment on the lips or cheeks of some of his figurative statues. Honour has noted that Canova's use of color was considered to be the most controversial aspect of his production, with patrons such as the Duke of Bedford insisting he leave his commission color-free, although he was then relieved to know the wax-based color could be removed easily with a wet sponge.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ William H. Gerdts, *The Great American Nude: A History in Art* (London: Phaidon, 1974), 83-84. Gerdts claims the glass of the window was multi-colored, but this contradicts Clara Crowninshield's first-hand experience that the light shining through the curtain created the polychrome effect on the statue.

¹¹⁵ Clara Crowninshield, *Diary: A European Tour with Longfellow, 1835-1836*, ed. Andrew Hilen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956), 231.

¹¹⁶ Gibson's *praticien* Felice Bainsi also used marble and bronze in his statue of *Saint Scholastica* (fig. 3.12), and Adamo Tadolini used both in his statue of *Ganymede with the Eagle of Jove* (fig. 4.12).

¹¹⁷ Honour, "Canova's Studio Practice—II. 1792-1822," 219.

In the 1820s Gibson experimented with washes that he inevitably would have learned from Canova. On 2 December 1828, an unidentified British woman and her husband visited Gibson's studio on a rainy day. She reported in her diary about having witnessed Gibson use an unusual stain on a bust:

Went to Gibson's studio where we saw some very pretty things. He likes & practices the method of staining the marble as Canova used to do (I believe) with Iron rust, thinking it much preferable to the cold hue of the marble in its natural state. He showed us a bust the hair of which he had stained in this way. But we thought it no improvement.¹¹⁸

This is the only source identified to date which describes Gibson directly applying color of some sort to a sculpture. Presumably this would have reduced the glare of the marble, but in specifically noting that he had applied the stain to the hair of the figure suggests an early attempt at coloring it with a reddish-brown wash. By the 1830s, he was experimenting with gilt. In his commission for *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* for Prince Torlonia, he gilded parts of the wings and other areas (fig. 3.25). *The Art-Union* expressed caution about this practice.

Gibson, the sculptor, has just executed for Torloni, the famous banker, at Rome, a group of 'Psyche, borne on the shoulders of two youths.' It is, we understand, of surpassing grace and beauty, and is remarkable as a new experiment in sculpture, or rather the revival of an old practice. The artist has introduced gilding into the marble; a narrow gold band is placed round the head of Psyche, and upon her wings there is much of the same material. It is described to us as exceedingly effective; we can, however, scarcely conceive it to be other than a dangerous departure from true art.¹¹⁹

The gilding of the statue is both a "new experiment" and "the revival of an old practice," implying that Gibson is modernizing an aesthetic associated with the ancient Greeks. Despite its potential effectiveness, the author scolds Gibson for departing from the "true style" as it had developed until that time.

Gibson's first full-scale attempt at polychrome tinting did not take place until the mid-1840s. Surprisingly, it was not on a statue of a goddess but of Queen Victoria (fig. 2.25).¹²⁰ In 1844 he was summoned to England for the first time, responding to a commission from Prince Albert for a portrait statue of the Queen in classical dress.¹²¹ This required Gibson to model her portrait, make plaster molds of her arms, and take her measurements, all of which was done at Windsor Castle in the fall of that year.

¹¹⁸ [Diary, 1828 October-1829 February], Osborn d415, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

¹¹⁹ "Chit-Chat," *The Art-Union* (15 July 1839), 106.

¹²⁰ For more detailed information about this commission, see Darby, "John Gibson."

¹²¹ For more on Prince Albert as an arbiter of artistic taste, and Queen Victoria's and his art collecting practices, see Winslow Ames, *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste* (New York: Viking, 1968); Elisabeth Darby and Nicola Smith, *The Cult of the Prince Consort* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); and Jonathan Marsden, ed., *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love* (London: Royal Collection, 2010).

The life-sized model was finished by the first half of 1845 and the marble carving completed one year later.

In late 1846, about six months after his trip to Munich, Gibson decided to tint parts of the statue. His direct motivation behind this decision is still uncertain, but it is clear that it related to his awareness of ancient polychrome sculpture, for in writing about the statue to Margaret Sandbach he composed the phrase for which he has become famous: "Whatever the Greeks did was right."¹²² He went on to note that "my studio has been constantly visited, and it makes a greater impression than the model did."¹²³ Italians and Germans apparently admired it greatly, but the British were shocked that he had tinted their Queen, suggesting both aesthetic and socio-political reasons for their dismay. It may seem surprising from our perspective today that Gibson made this decision without consulting Albert or Victoria because of their powerful position, but Gibson often maintained an insistence on artistic authority. Viewers in Gibson's day equally were surprised that he had not consulted the monarchs; some assumed that the Prince had asked him to do this. Gibson did write to tell the Queen what he had done, but in so doing he asked them to leave the color on for at least one year before making any permanent decisions about it.¹²⁴

The painter Penry Williams, Gibson's close friend, was initially against the idea of experimenting with color, but according to Gibson, after seeing the total effect he was a convert.¹²⁵ Williams reportedly helped him mix the colors that he applied to the Queen's statue. Gibson tinted yellow the decorative dolphins (symbols of British naval power) and the bottom edge of the tiara, as well as the decorative acorns that weighted the robe near the bottom. The embroidered trim of the robe and the details of the rose, shamrock, and thistle (symbols of England, Ireland, and Scotland) were made red and blue.¹²⁶ In a letter written from Rome to the Queen, Lady Canning added, after having seen the tinted statue, that Gibson had painted the sandals yellow, but intended to gild them, the acorn tassels, and tiara, "or rather [inlay] them with thin plates of gold, as used to be done in some of the ancient statues."¹²⁷ A few weeks later *The Roman Advertiser* commented positively on the tinting: "The application of color is so delicate,

¹²² John Gibson to Margaret Sandbach, 17 December 1846, in Eastlake, 128.

¹²³ Eastlake, 127.

¹²⁴ Matthews, 137.

¹²⁵ Eastlake, 128.

¹²⁶ None of this tinting survives.

¹²⁷ Lady Canning to Queen Victoria, 16 December 1846, in Marsden, 72.

the tone so subdued, that no effect of glaring contrast is produced, and the pale purity of the marble does not, as a whole, suffer from the partial tinting.”¹²⁸

Victoria and Albert gave him permission to show the statue at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1847. The statue arrived in June and was installed one month after the opening.¹²⁹ *The Art-Union* declared the form of the statue an “exquisitely beautiful work: composed in the purest taste, and executed with the highest degree of refinement,” then remarked about the tinting: “The sculptor has dared a novelty: colour and gold are introduced upon the marble; in this revival of old custom the artist has proceeded cautiously: it adds little, if at all, to the effect; but it does not in anywise offend the eye: pure taste has been in no degree departed from.”¹³⁰

The *Illustrated London News* responded to it by publishing an engraving, but noted in the text that not everyone was happy about the tinting.¹³¹ Indeed, Gibson wrote in his memoirs that “it proved a fine bone for the writers on art to pick.”¹³² *The Satirist* newspaper was appalled:

Not satisfied with chiselling her Majesty in marble, emblematic of her purity, the sculptor has actually *coloured* some parts of her royal effigies! In artistical phrase he has “*touched her up*”. If this impertinence does not incite Field-Marshal his Royal Highness the Prince Consort to arms against the offender, he must be much slower to move than domestic facts seem to indicate.¹³³

The Prince Consort and the Queen, however, apparently were delighted. After seeing the statue in a private viewing at the Royal Academy, Albert told Gibson in person, “I am happy to say that the Queen is very much pleased with it, and so am I, ... colour and all,” he added with laughter.¹³⁴ They then ordered a replica of the figure, also tinted, for Osborne House.

Commencing the practice of tinting marble statues with that of a portrait statue of a living person may have led inadvertently to the contemporaneous misunderstanding that all of his forthcoming polychrome statues were to be seen as living figures.¹³⁵ But the tinting on the statue of Victoria was merely

¹²⁸ “Mr. Gibson’s Statue of the Queen of England,” *The Roman Advertiser*, 23 January 1847, 108.

¹²⁹ As a late addition, the work was not listed in the RA catalogue for that year.

¹³⁰ “Topics of the Month,” *The Art-Union* (1 August 1847), 301.

¹³¹ “Gibson’s Statue of the Queen,” *Illustrated London News*, 17 July 1847, 48.

¹³² Eastlake, 128; Matthews, 138.

¹³³ “Taking a Liberty!”, *The Satirist; or, the Censor of the Times*, 11 July 1847, 221. The name of this newspaper suggests that the exaggerated tone of the rebuke of Gibson’s work may be intentionally satirical.

¹³⁴ Eastlake, 129; Matthews, 138.

¹³⁵ Gibson also tinted a portrait statue of *The Honourable Mrs. Murray (Later Countess Beauchamp)*. This work was commissioned by the subject, Hon. Catherine Otway-Cave Murray, and her mother, Baroness Braye, in the early 1840s, and the statue was shown at the 1846 Royal Academy exhibition.

decorative. The figure was not enhanced to make the statue seem like an imitation of the Queen. The closest Gibson himself came to expressing this idea of vitality was when he finished tinting his *Venus* and claimed in his memoirs that, on contemplating what he had done, he now saw her as divine, beyond human in her coloration: “Here is a little nearer approach to life—it is therefore more impressive—yes—yes indeed she seems an ethereal being with her blue eyes fixed upon me!”¹³⁶ Denoting the tinted figure was just “a little nearer approach to life”—but not actually alive—recalls a review that later would appear in the *Cornhill Magazine*, where the author noted the work was “suggestive of life ... not imitation.”¹³⁷ Had Gibson desired to make the Queen or Venus appear as if either were alive, he would have added a more natural skin tone and other attributes.

Certainly other sculptors by the 1860s were interested in using polychromy to imitate (not mimic) life. The French sculptor Cordier began using multi-colored marbles and bronzes to convey the features of his busts marketed as ethnographic studies, such as that of his Jewish woman from Algiers (fig. 3.26).¹³⁸ The use of multimedia in those busts, however, reflects more an interest in the decorative effects of sculpture and thus arguably make the figures appear more culturally emblematic rather than naturalistically ethnographic. More true-to-life was the collaborative project of the Italian-born sculptor Carlo Marochetti and the painter William H. Millais (brother of the Pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais). Working in London in 1855, Marochetti modeled and carved a portrait bust of the Princess Gouramma of Coorg, India (fig. 3.27), which Millais then painted from life, using watercolors and gilding to emphasize her coloring rather than leave the features of her bust in white marble.¹³⁹ In both the Cordier and Marochetti/Millais examples, the exoticism of the people portrayed warranted the use of polychromy in order to more accurately represent their racial features.

After marrying in 1850 her second husband, the Earl Beauchamp, the former Mrs. Murray (now Countess) asked Gibson to tint her portrait statue after having heard about his work on the *Tinted Venus*. He complied, doing this on a visit during the mid-1850s, probably at her house in London. For more, see Eastlake, 220; Mrs. Catherine Murray to John Gibson, 11 September [1846?], G1/1/12/1, and John Gibson to Lady Beauchamp, [ca. 1854], G1/1/12/2, Gibson Papers. No evidence of tinting remains on this statue, which is still owned by the descendants of the family and is at present installed at Stanford Hall in Northamptonshire, England.

¹³⁶ Eastlake, 211; Matthews, 182-83.

¹³⁷ “Our Survey of Literature, Science, and Art,” *Cornhill Magazine* 6, no. 32 (August 1862), 280.

¹³⁸ On Cordier, see Laure de Margerie and Edouard Papet, *Facing the Other: Charles Cordier (1827-1905)*, *Ethnographic Sculptor* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004).

¹³⁹ For more on Marochetti’s/Millais’s bust, see Marsden, 162.

From this perspective, neither the statue of Queen Victoria nor the *Tinted Venus* were intended to be seen as living individuals. Rather, Gibson was focusing on two other ideas: reinterpretation of an ancient practice and modern decorative taste. In the case of the Venus in particular, Gibson used polychromy to give her the appearance of an ancient Greco-Roman ivory statue, a fact which viewers then misunderstood. Lady Eastlake reported on the poor reception the statue received at the International Exhibition, blaming the viewing public for their ignorance about Gibson's aesthetic intent:

For every young lady at dinner-table or in ball-room in that London season of 1862 felt herself called upon to tell her partner what she thought of 'Gibson's coloured Venus,' while the facility with which judgment was pronounced on these occasions was almost enviable to those who had greater difficulty or diffidence in delivering an opinion. In truth the question lay totally beyond the English public, who at best have scarcely advanced, even as regards pictorial art, beyond the lowest step of the aesthetic ladder—the estimate of a subject.¹⁴⁰

But Gibson's London audience was not alone in its misunderstanding of his intent. Indeed, the confusion about the *Tinted Venus* being made to seem like a living person has led some art historians to perpetuate this same false trajectory. As a result, recent art-historical scholarship has argued that the statue can be seen as a marker for the nineteenth-century social politics of issues such as misogyny, nationalism, nudity, and racism.¹⁴¹

The remainder of this section then will focus on the *Tinted Venus* as a product of Gibson's studio practice and discuss its display both in his Roman studio and in London at the International Exhibition of 1862. I will elucidate polychromy as one (albeit major) component of Gibson's studio practice during the 1850s, and reevaluate the critical reception of his infamous statue that ultimately condemned him to being seen in art history as anti-modern. Indeed, it is worth noting that although scholars have discussed the *Tinted Venus* at the International Exhibition, few, if any, have considered it in the context of Gibson's studio.

As just stated, Gibson used polychromy to give his statue of the goddess of love the appearance of an ancient Greco-Roman ivory figure. One of his important literary and visual sources of reference for

¹⁴⁰ Eastlake, 221-22.

¹⁴¹ For examples of this art-historical discourse, see the following: on misogyny, Cherry, 105-19; on nationalism, Alison Yarrington, "Made in Italy: Sculpture and the Staging of National Identities at the International Exhibition of 1862," in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008), 75-99; on nudity, Michael Hatt, "Thoughts and Things: Sculpture and the Victorian Nude," in *Exposed: The Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2002), 36-49; and on racism, Charmaine A. Nelson, *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 59-69.

this practice was the aforementioned work by Quatremère de Quincy, in which the French art and architectural historian discussed bronze and chryselephantine works and also speculated that paint had been applied to marble statues using pigments in a wax-like binder. The hand-colored frontispiece of the Olympian Jupiter (fig. 3.28) that accompanied his essay provided Gibson with at least one example of how he could decorate his Venus.¹⁴² In writing about his statue in his memoirs, Gibson stated clearly that he had polychromed it as ivory: “I tinted the flesh like warm ivory—scarcely red.”¹⁴³ The author of one guide to the International Exhibition also noted Gibson was referencing the Greco-Roman use of ivory: “It is erroneously supposed that Mr. Gibson has tinted his statues to represent life, whereas he has only endeavoured by colour to soften the general effect, and to give the appearance of ivory, a material much used by the ancients.”¹⁴⁴ And at least one review of the statue at the Exhibition noted: “Contrary to the report circulated some years since ... the statue has not been heightened in its effect by any flesh tint. A creamy coating, as of ivory, has been delicately laid over the fair form, and the effect to the eye is admirable.”¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, viewers then, and now, mistook the ivory tone of her body to be flesh.

In addition to modernizing ancient sculpture with the look of ivory, Gibson was interested in how polychromy could work with decorative taste. More specifically, he was conscientious of the aesthetics of installation, how sculpture appeared within the decorative interior. He came to believe that tinting a statue made it harmonize better with the color scheme of the space in which the figure was displayed.

The warm glow is agreeable to the eye, and so is the variety obtained by it. The flesh is of one tone, the hair of another; the colouring of the eyes gives animation, and the ornaments on the drapery are distinctly seen. All these are great advantages. The moderns, being less refined than the Greeks in matters of art, are from long and stupid custom reconciled to the white statue. The flesh is white, the hair is white, the eyes are white, and the drapery white—this monotonous cold object is out of harmony with everything that surrounds it.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² The French sculptor Simart exhibited at the 1855 Exposition Universelle a chryselephantine statue of *Athena Parthenos*, also taken from Quatremère de Quincy’s writings on these ancient polychrome works. See Andreas Blühm, “In Living Colour: A Short History of Colour and Sculpture in the 19th Century,” in *The Colour of Sculpture, 1840-1910*, ed. Andreas Blühm (Zwolle: Waanders, 1996), 22-23; and Meredith Shedd, “Phidias at the Universal Exposition of 1855: The Duc de Luynes and the *Athena Parthenos*,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (October 1986), 123-34.

¹⁴³ Eastlake, 211; Matthews, 182.

¹⁴⁴ George Frederick Pardon, ed., *A Guide to the International Exhibition: With Plans of the Building, an Account of Its Rise, Progress and Completion and Notices of Its Principal Contents* (London: Routledge, Warne, & Routledge, 1862), 168.

¹⁴⁵ “Notes of the Week,” *Literary Gazette* 8, no. 199 (19 April 1862), 379.

¹⁴⁶ Eastlake, 212; Matthews, 183.

Tinting challenged classical sculpture's "true style" and purity of form, but Gibson was determined to introduce this practice for modern aesthetic taste. In viewing the polychrome temple and Gibson's tinted statues at the International Exhibition, the author of one guide noted how the harmonizing of the colors of the figures and their architectural environment now seemed so obvious: "The unpainted statue proves the position negatively, by appearing in the same juxta-position [*sic*] an utter impossibility in art."¹⁴⁷ A reviewer for *St. James's Magazine* similarly acknowledged that Gibson's practice clearly proved a heretofore misunderstood perspective, using Hosmer's untinted *Zenobia* to prove his point: "The white statue ... amidst the tinted details of the architecture is so harsh, that it becomes palpable the susceptible taste of the Greeks could never have tolerated it, whereas the coloured figures ... are blended into a harmonious whole with the surrounding parts of the edifice."¹⁴⁸

Following the 1851 Great Exhibition, there had been a conscious emphasis on educating artists and designers about color and decoration. Men such as Jones, Henry Cole, and others sought to teach a new generation of British artists and designers how to improve skills and taste with the goal of asserting that good design generated a sense of well-being. In this sense, then, Gibson was following in their footsteps, attempting to alter what he saw as a lack of harmony in how white marble appeared within colored interiors. Gibson, then, arguably is part of the generation of modern designers who impacted the Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts Movements in Britain, and not a stalwart classicist whose sculptures were anti-modern.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Gibson's interest in the effects of polychrome sculpture with architecture and interior design amounted to a classical *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The German painter Philipp Otto Runge earlier in the century had envisioned his *Times of Day* series similarly installed in a polychromed Gothic interior, and his works accompanied by music and poetry.¹⁵⁰ Although Gibson did not go as far as Runge in his grand design, he at least shared with Jones an interest in the effects of polychrome sculpture and architecture, albeit for a harmonic, modern decorative effect. This discussion on Gibson's interest in the

¹⁴⁷ *Campbell's Visitors' Guide to the International Exhibition, and Handy-Book of London* (London, 1862), 29.

¹⁴⁸ "The International Exhibition of 1862," *St. James's Magazine* (May 1862), 242.

¹⁴⁹ For more on these movements, in particular their relationship to the decorative interior, see Stephen Calloway, et al., eds., *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011); Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publications, 2010); Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996); and Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, eds., *International Arts and Crafts* (London: V&A Publications, 2005).

¹⁵⁰ On Runge and his *Times of Day* series as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 49-53.

decorative interior will continue below, and the connection between Gibson and the new Aesthetic/Arts and Crafts art movements in Britain will be discussed in the final chapter.

Returning to the *Tinted Venus* itself, it is worth noting that it was not always a tinted statue. Gibson first modeled a Venus holding the apple in the 1830s, and it was commissioned in marble by Joseph Neeld (fig. 3.29). Neeld had received it by early March 1839 and agreed to have it exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition that year.¹⁵¹ It was shown as *Venus Verticordia* (no. 1303) and exhibited with a replica of *Love Tormenting the Soul* (no. 1297; fig. 3.23) and a bas-relief of *Venus and Cupid* (no. 1298). Neeld's *Venus* was described by *The Art-Union* as "a glorious and perfect woman," and all three subjects were praised as "noble and exquisite works, [that] largely assist in rescuing this 'chamber' from the character of insipidity."¹⁵²

The Liverpool-based mechanical engineer Robert Berthon Preston and his wife Eleanor visited Rome shortly after their marriage and commissioned their replica of *Venus* from Gibson in 1851. Of this commission, Gibson claimed it was the "most laboured work" he had ever done, adding that "it is superior to the first; the outlines I have endeavoured to purify up to the highest ideal."¹⁵³ When it was finished in March 1853, he decided to tint it. Much like with his statue of Queen Victoria, he does not seem to have consulted his patrons about this.¹⁵⁴ It is unknown whether he himself applied the tinting to this statue or his other works, since no visitor to his studio reported having seen him do this. However, since his account books do not specify payment to any of his workers for tinting, as they do occasionally for polishing or finishing, it seems very likely that Gibson did apply these wax-based pigments himself. As noted earlier, Williams had helped Gibson mix the colors he utilized for tinting his statue of the Queen, and presumably he used these same pigments with *Venus* and his other tinted statues.

¹⁵¹ Joseph Neeld to John Gibson, 4 March 1839, GI/1/259, Gibson Papers.

¹⁵² "The Royal Academy," *The Art-Union* (15 June 1839), 85.

¹⁵³ Matthews, 180; Eastlake, 209. The *Tinted Venus* was sold after Eleanor Preston's death in 1891 to Thomas Barrett, and sold again in 1916 to J. W. Dearden and passed by descent to his son. The statue was auctioned at Sotheby's on 27 October 1971 and purchased by the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, for £2400. Other versions of Gibson's *Venus* included: a tinted replica for the Marquis of Sligo (now owned by Stewart and Lynda Resnick); an untinted replica for M. Uzzelli, Esq. (probably the version now installed at Drapers' Hall in London; my thanks to Claire Jones for sharing her information about this repetition with me); a reduced polychrome version commissioned by the Prince of Wales and probably still in the Royal Collection; and a reduced untinted version now in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, that may have been commissioned by Judge Josephson. A plaster cast from Gibson's studio is at the Royal Academy, and a plaster version was installed at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park.

¹⁵⁴ "Italy," *Critic* 12, no. 292 (1 June 1853), 295.

Upon seeing the Prestons' statue, the Duke of Northumberland said to Gibson, "If you keep the Venus in Rome for a considerable time, she would be visited by travellers of different nations, and they would spread her fame for you."¹⁵⁵ Gibson followed Northumberland's advice, asking the Prestons if he could keep the statue in his studio to show visitors, and the Duke's prediction proved true. The statue made Gibson more famous and helped him sell more sculpture. But in showcasing his important new polychrome sculpture, Gibson also was playing to a potential market of buyers through the art of spectacle. Visitors were shown to chairs, as if at the theater. The statue was hidden under a veil, which an assistant removed on cue. Displaying his masterpiece on a rotating dais, Gibson was able to show his visitors every angle of it. More about this viewing experience will be discussed below.

Gibson's success at marketing his statue as a spectacle in his studio, however, became problematic. He kept the Prestons' statue for nearly eight years, and ultimately incited outrage on their part. As correspondence with Gibson shows, by early 1857 Mrs. Preston felt he was taking advantage of their generosity, and they demanded the statue for which they had paid.¹⁵⁶ Even Hosmer wrote in a letter that "Mrs. P. is becoming very much disturbed and vexed at his withholding the Venus, but the days of Pygmalion are returning, and I am sure until the Venus wanders over to Liverpool herself, she will never get beyond the precincts of the studio."¹⁵⁷ Why Gibson did not make a replica right away is unknown; perhaps he simply was proud of this particular replica of the polychrome Venus.¹⁵⁸

Hosmer's letter suggests, however, that Gibson had transformed into a Pygmalion-like figure with his statue. The most popular version of the myth of Pygmalion comes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and recounts the story of the sculptor who fell in love with his statue.¹⁵⁹ He prayed for her to come to life, and Venus granted his wish. The tale may relate in part to the fourth-century B.C.E. sculptor Praxiteles, who was in love with Phryne, the model for his famous *Aphrodite of Knidos*. The myth itself was a popular

¹⁵⁵ Matthews, 184.

¹⁵⁶ See, for instance, Mrs. Eleanor L. Preston to John Gibson, 18 February 1857, GI/1/288, Gibson Papers. He acknowledged that he was "using [her] abominably ill." Eastlake, 213; Matthews, 185. Once he shipped the statue, they were friends again. Preston died in 1860, but his wife agreed to loan the work to the International Exhibition of 1862, and on his visit to London that year Gibson accompanied her numerous times to see the work on display.

¹⁵⁷ Harriet Hosmer to Anne Dundas, 13 January 1861 [*sic*], in Carr, *Hosmer*, 169. Carr incorrectly dated this letter to 1861, as the statue was shipped to the Prestons in 1859.

¹⁵⁸ After shipping the statue to the Prestons, he subsequently made a replica for the Marquis of Sligo, which he also displayed in his studio for a time.

¹⁵⁹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.244-96.

subject in all of the arts, including sculptures by Etienne-Maurice Falconet and Auguste Rodin, paintings by Anne-Louis Girodet and Edward Burne-Jones, and both paintings and sculptures by Jean-Léon Gérôme.¹⁶⁰ For Gibson, however, his Pygmalion-like state was not just because he had made a beautiful statue, but because he had colored her. In adapting this persona Gibson more than likely predetermined for visitors the expectations of living flesh from his Venus. The author known as Florentia wrote of Gibson: “Specially did he hang over his favourite work, the coloured Venus, like a second Pigmalion [*sic*], enamoured of his deity; and the sweet statue did look just bursting into life—but a life of pure, unsullied ideality, spotless as the ocean’s foam that gave the goddess birth!”¹⁶¹

In one of the earliest published reports about the tinting of Venus, an unidentified author noted that it was the “farthest” Gibson had gone to date in his color experimentation.

I had scarcely expected to be so much pleased with the effect of this colouring, as I found was the case: for it is not, in fact, an imitation of the hues of nature approaching to the brilliancy with which the oil-painter combines his materials, still less to the vulgarity of wax-work; but a conventional representation, suggesting the *idea* of colour, a softened shadow of reality, just within a few degrees nearer than the cold lustre of marble-whiteness to the aspects of reality.¹⁶²

One month later, the same British journal reported: “The majority of visitors to the studio appears to be favourable to the tint, as it certainly contrasts strongly with the coldness of the surrounding marbles.”¹⁶³

By the following winter, it was the talk of Rome among tourists:

“*Have* you been to see the coloured Venus yet?” is the question everybody asks you at the tea-fights.

“Well, and tell me what *did* you think of it?” and then you immediately plunge into a long and interesting discussion as to whether the Greeks coloured *their* statues—whether colour is applicable to some subjects and not others; and you talk away till you begin to think yourself quite a man of taste, and extremely learned on art. Not one of the least of the merits of this statue is the inexhaustible fund of conversation which it has supplied for these agreeable little reunions, which are sometimes apt to get rather heavy unless there *is* something of this kind to fall back upon.¹⁶⁴

The author of this passage was the unidentified C. P. discussed earlier in this chapter, who had visited Gibson’s studio in early 1854 and described both its layout and the sculptor’s works. His article continues with his own thoughts after seeing the *Tinted Venus* for the first time, suggesting that Gibson was well aware of the sculpture’s power as a form of theater. The statue stood in a showroom beside

¹⁶⁰ For more on Pygmalion and the arts, see Victor I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹⁶¹ Florentia, “Diary of a First Winter in Rome—1854,” *New Monthly Magazine* 103, no. 410 (February 1855), 191.

¹⁶² “Italy,” *Critic*, 295. The reference to waxworks will be discussed below.

¹⁶³ “Talk of the Studios,” *Critic* 12, no. 294 (1 July 1853), 355.

¹⁶⁴ C. P., 67.

other works but was hidden “under [a] thin gauze veil which the attendant dexterously whips off.” Opposite the figure were chairs, “where you may sit and admire at your leisure.”¹⁶⁵ C. P. wrote that the skin was “tinged rather than coloured with the most delicate yellowish pink. ... The face has just the faintest blush of colour in the cheeks, the eyes as faintly tinged with blue.”¹⁶⁶ He described her coloring and contour in more detail, noting in particular that it was best to look from a short distance, for then “the expression is soft, feminine and tender.” Writing favorably about the statue, the author also pointed out that one had to see it for oneself before passing judgment, which many people seemed to do, assuming it was going to look like a real woman. But C. P. also noted that this wasn’t a work one liked instinctively. It required contemplation, and gradually one would learn to appreciate its beauty. An untinted version of the same subject was in the room and C. P. declared that when the two were seen together, everyone “was decidedly in favour of the ‘painted lady.’”

The unnamed *Chambers’s* visitor to Gibson’s studio, also discussed above, reported on his experience of seeing Venus in the main showroom. In this instance, Gibson displayed her on a base that he could rotate so one could appreciate her in entirety. The use of a rotating dais was not uncommon for some sculptors. Canova inserted handles into the bases of some of his sculptures to enable full rotation, and Dannecker’s *Ariadne on a Panther* was reportedly installed on a rotating dais to enhance the effect on the marble’s surface of light coming through a colored curtain. The unnamed *Chambers’s* visitor wrote:

The colouring is very, very slight—a faint flesh-tint; a suspicion of gold in the hair, and tinge of red in the lips; the eyes are blue. It is undeniably an improvement there, for it gives life to the eye. Of course, it approaches nearer to life than the pure white we are accustomed to see; but there is something strange and unearthly in it. Gibson turned it round on the pedestal for us to see. ... Before we went, we had heard most exaggerated accounts of the Venus, and I was strongly prejudiced against it, imagining we were going to see something in the style of Madame Tussaud. The reality was so different, and in its peculiar line so beautiful, that I was almost converted; still, I am convinced that the colouring ought to be of the faintest, and should be used by the greatest artists alone.¹⁶⁷

This visitor still echoes the thought that there is a living quality to the subject, which suggests that regardless what Gibson may have told him, he could not help but rely on his instinct that the statue looked alive. His remark about thinking the statue would be “in the style of Madame Tussaud” is

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 69.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 70.

¹⁶⁷ “Morning with the Sculptors at Rome,” 386.

significant here as well, because of the overall effect of color, but also because Gibson had used wax pigments.

This was something the *Critic* had commented on as well, noting Venus looked nothing like the “vulgarity of wax-work” that one would expect.¹⁶⁸ Wax figures had become a popular form of entertainment for the masses, due largely to Madame Tussaud, who began showing her waxworks in London in 1802. Noted for lifelike representations of famous and infamous people, wax figures provided the public with a popular form of entertainment. As such, they were eschewed by the art establishment in favor of plaster casts and marble statues that instead abstracted the human form and maintained idealism over naturalistic representation. Indeed, as will be seen below, some of the criticism weighed against Gibson noted that his experiment was challenging the “true style” which emphasized abstract form. Alison Yarrington has noted that Gibson’s statue was not the first polychromed Venus to appear in nineteenth-century London. At least three other wax Venuses had been put on public display, although “these were firmly within the realm of the popular and educational entertainments and had very little to do with ‘airy fancies in which genius was rife.’”¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the *Tinted Venus* potentially blurred the fine line between high art and popular culture, which did not sit well with some fine art enthusiasts. Although the writers for the *Critic* and *Chambers’s* both declared Gibson’s work to look nothing like waxworks, clearly there was also some expectation of this in the minds of viewers, including those in London in 1862.

A number of other individuals wrote about their experience in seeing the *Tinted Venus* in Gibson’s studio, although some of these accounts were not published until many years afterwards. Charlotte Williams-Wynn saw it during that first winter of 1853-54. She noted that like many others she expected to dislike it: “But, greatly to my surprise, the more I gazed the more I admired. It is the loveliest thing I ever saw, and the wonderful art of the sculptor has thrown over the whole figure a purity and modesty which I never remember in any other Venus.”¹⁷⁰ The American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne saw the statue in the spring of 1858 and wrote in his journal that “there was something fascinating and delectable in the

¹⁶⁸ “Italy,” 295.

¹⁶⁹ Alison Yarrington, “Under the Spell of Madame Tussaud: Aspects of ‘High’ and ‘Low’ in 19th-Century Polychromed Sculpture,” in Blühm, 89. Yarrington quotes Gibson referring to how the ancients perceived polychromy; Matthews, 182.

¹⁷⁰ Charlotte Williams-Wynn, *Memorials of Charlotte Williams-Wynn*, ed. Harriot H. Lindesay, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1878), 187.

warm, yet delicate tint,” but in true Puritanical fashion, which other conservative-minded people shared with him, he quickly realized that coloring the statue led to impure thoughts: “This lascivious warmth of hue quite demoralizes the chastity of the marble, and makes one feel ashamed to look at the naked limbs in the company of women.”¹⁷¹ The American sculptor Hiram Powers, based in Florence, was adamantly opposed to polychromy. For him it not only broke away from the purity of form but degraded the spirituality inherent in sculpture:

Now, all expression, ... depends on form, not color. Intellectual energy—physical action, must be described by form alone, color can never give it; but color will humanize, and *mortalize*, and pull down to earth the spiritual portion of humanity that you have been trying to separate from its grosser parts and to exalt. Color, in short, represents the animal man;—Form, the intellectual, the spiritual. ... The moral influences of humanized, or colored, statuary, ... would be positively bad. No father could then take his daughter to the artist’s studio. The animal man would be all in all:—the Ideal man would be lost.¹⁷²

More detrimental than Hawthorne’s lascivious perception, coloring a statue releases its animalistic nature, according to Powers. In so doing, it has the power to corrupt any person who enters, presumably, Gibson’s studio.

Hawthorne mentioned Gibson by name in his 1860 novel *The Marble Faun*, and, not surprisingly, criticized him for how color had degraded his sculptures. Deriding his statues as being stained with tobacco juice—implying another layer of impurity in that they had been spat on—he declared that Gibson had “robbed the marble of its chastity, by giving it an artificial warmth of hue. Thus it became a sin and shame to look at his nude goddesses ... bedaubed with buff colour, [standing] forth to the eyes of the profane in the guise of naked women.”¹⁷³ In response to Hawthorne, the Rev. Edward Everett Hale disregarded the novelist’s prudish concerns and instead focused on aesthetics, declaring how an untinted statue may look “exquisite” but it was in fact “blue or cold,” whereas the tinted version was “ruddy and warm” and stood “triumphant with her gold apple.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks*, ed. Thomas Woodson, The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne Vol. 14 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), 157. Hawthorne’s wife had seen the statue before him and recorded in her journal that although she found it “beautiful and captivating,” she “inveighed against the coloring of the pure marble most emphatically, as profanation.” Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, *Notes in England and Italy* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Son, 1869), 266.

¹⁷² [Untitled], *The Crayon* 1, no. 10 (7 March 1855), 149.

¹⁷³ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun: or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne Vol. 4 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 123, 134-35.

¹⁷⁴ Edward E. Hale, *Ninety Days’ Worth of Europe* (Boston: Walker, Wise, and Co., 1861), 149.

Hale's defense, however, seemed to fall on deaf ears. Hawthorne's popular novel, in tandem with other published reports about the tinting, prejudiced viewers before they even had the opportunity to stand in front of the polychrome temple and see Venus for herself at the International Exhibition of 1862. Because Gibson was unable to act as a personal *cicerone* and explain his art on display in London, as he had done with calculated theatricality in his studio in Rome, viewers inevitably failed to understand his aesthetic intent of reinventing an ancient artistic practice for modern decorative taste. Furthermore, despite his best artistic intentions, Gibson's experiment was misinterpreted by most viewers. Seeing it as painted and naked like a woman, rather than white and nude in the fine art tradition, some viewers believed his tinted goddess blurred the boundaries between marble and flesh and inevitably left them uncertain what to make of the statue. The masses at the exhibition, many of whom were likely from the working classes and thus uneducated about art, did not have Gibson present to explain himself, and thus they saw Venus as an attempt at a living person. In a cartoon in *Punch*, a working class woman named Sarah Jane was shown shouting out to her companion, "Lawks! Why it's Hexact like our Hemmer!" (fig. 3.30). Although this cartoon serves to ridicule the uneducated, working-class Sarah Jane, it draws attention to the misunderstanding perpetuated by Gibson's statue.

The installation of the *Tinted Venus* at the International Exhibition of 1862 in London was intended for maximum exposure and sensation, echoing the similarly theatrical installation of Powers's *Greek Slave* in the American pavilion at the 1851 Great Exhibition. The polychrome statue of Venus with her three companions—tinted versions of *Pandora* and *Love Tormenting the Soul* (called *Cupid* by viewers), and Hosmer's untinted *Zenobia*—were displayed within four niches painted Pompeian red, each located on one side of a polychrome temple-like structure designed by Jones. The temple probably was not intended to survive after the exhibition, and there are no reports of what happened to it, but photographs and Jones's watercolor designs show what the structure looked like (figs. 3.24, 3.31, and 3.32).¹⁷⁵ Inscribed along the pediment of the temple in Latin were the following phrases: "Without colour there is neither life, nor health, nor beauty, nor youth"; and "The sweet variety of colours enhances the dark form

¹⁷⁵ Jones's plan for the rear elevation of the temple incorrectly shows a polychromed version of Hosmer's *Zenobia*.

of things, differentiates what is confused and ornaments everything.”¹⁷⁶ The temple structure was installed outside the Rome pavilion in the transept near the south entrance of the exhibition hall, ensuring that everyone who entered inevitably encountered it.

Although Gibson and Jones had high art on their mind with this project, the more popular spectacle of the exhibition, and the different social classes who visited, led inevitably to a wide range of opinions about their project. Following up on her dismissal of uneducated young ladies debating the aesthetics of Gibson’s statue, Lady Eastlake commented:

It may be safely asserted that, but for the novelty and catchword of the colour, these exquisite works of art would have been passed over with utter indifference by nine-tenths of those who crowded to stare at them. At the same time there is no doubt that among those who hung silently and long over the rail which protected the temple from the pressure of the multitude, there were a few who imbibed new and elevating impressions of which they could perhaps give little account to themselves, and still less to others.¹⁷⁷

Eastlake’s account suggests, then, that although the “coloured Venus” was generally not received well, this response was based on a misunderstanding of Gibson’s aesthetic intent. Nevertheless, a wider reading of the criticism by Gibson’s contemporaries shows that a number of reviewers appreciated and even praised Gibson’s experiment. Although it is beyond the scope of this section to consider every review in detail, it is worth looking briefly at some of them, since most of these reviews never before have been cited by scholars, and they help contextualize the different reasons why the statue was liked or disliked. Indeed, it is worth noting that even in the reviews that were not in favor of the tinting there was still a great appreciation for the statue itself as a Gibson masterpiece.

One of the most glowing reviews came from *Cornhill Magazine*. The unknown author opened his essay by boldly stating, “Gibson is right. His tinted ‘Venus’ is a success: a far greater success than our prejudices yet allow us to think.”¹⁷⁸ He called the figure a “sensation statue” due to the throngs of people who saw it and debated whether it had too much or not enough tinting. Ultimately this reviewer recognized that the tinting was meant to be “suggestive of life ... not imitation,” and therefore declared the

¹⁷⁶ The phrases as written in Latin were: NEC VITA NEC SANITAS NEC PVLCRITVDO NEC SINE COLORE JVVENTVS and FORMAS RERVM OBSCVRAS ILLVSTRAT CONFVSAS DISTINGVIT OMNES ORNAT COLORVM DIVERSITAS SVAVIS. Wolfgang Drost, “Colour, Sculpture, Mimesis: A 19th-Century Debate,” in Blühm, 65.

¹⁷⁷ Eastlake, 222.

¹⁷⁸ “Our Survey,” 279.

work “by far the greatest statue of the age.”¹⁷⁹ Similar positive sentiments were repeated in *Dublin University Magazine*, the *Illustrated Times*, and *St. James’s Magazine*.¹⁸⁰

In sharp contrast, one of the most negative reviews came from the *Examiner*, which stated outright, “We do not greatly care for Mr. Gibson’s tinted *Venus* as a statue.”¹⁸¹ The reviewer argued that sculptures “as true works of art” needed “purely and singly to put mind into form,” unlike “furniture” which was intended to be colored and decorative. He also warned that for others to follow Gibson’s example inevitably would make “English art ... sink into decay.” *The Art Journal*, a long-time supporter of Gibson’s career, respectfully expressed dismay over the tinting. Recalling the sentiments overheard in the exhibition hall and reported in *Cornhill Magazine*, this reviewer’s problem was uncertainty over what exactly Gibson had done: “It has either been carried too far, or not far enough; it is neither flesh nor marble.”¹⁸² He expressed concern over what he called “too palpable flesh,” meaning that Gibson had denigrated the art of sculpture, ignoring its essence of idealizing and abstracting the body, and resorting instead to naturalism. As noted above, this was not Gibson’s intention at all.

In a subsequent article for *The Art Journal* published later that year, J. Beavington Atkinson offered a more positive take on Gibson’s work. He attempted to contextualize the experiment based on current understandings of practices from both the past and present:

The Greeks coloured many even of their most renowned statues; and it is difficult to suppose them guilty of error in a matter so vital. Furthermore, marble of unmitigated white is admitted on all hands to be crude, and a certain toning down or warming up pleases the eye, adds to harmony, and may enhance expression. Still more, the question of whether white shall be abandoned, and colour adopted, is already virtually surrendered, in the use of bronze or other metals, by almost every nation upon earth. Colour upon statues, in some degree or kind, indeed, we believe is no longer an abstract problem to be decided absolutely in the affirmative or the negative, but a mere matter of detail and degree, of fitness, circumstance, and good taste.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁸⁰ “The Art-Show at the Great Exhibition,” *Dublin University Magazine* 60, no. 356 (August 1862), 142-43; “Gibson’s Tinted Venus,” *Illustrated Times*, 16 August 1862, 255-56; “International Exhibition of 1862,” *St. James’s*, 242. A more detailed study of the history of and audiences for these journals would provide a broader context in which to understand the reviews, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

¹⁸¹ “The International Exhibition,” *Examiner* 2856 (25 October 1862), 681.

¹⁸² “Notabilia of the International Exhibition. Tinted Sculpture,” *The Art Journal* (July 1862), 161. This uncertainty over whether he had gone too far or not far enough was shared by critics in the *Athenaeum* and the *Illustrated London News*. “International Exhibition. British Sculpture,” *Athenaeum* 1808 (21 June 1862), 826; “Venus.’ Marble Statue, Coloured. Sculptured by J. Gibson, R.A.,” *Illustrated London News*, 7 June 1862, 594.

¹⁸³ J. Beavington Atkinson, “International Exhibition, 1862. No. VII—English and American Sculpture,” *The Art Journal* (December 1862), 230.

Atkinson intuitively pointed out to his readers that polychrome sculpture shouldn't be judged in absolute "black-or-white" terms. It should be appreciated and judged based on the individual circumstances surrounding the sculpture itself. William Michael Rossetti, the brother of the painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti and an avid supporter of the rising Aesthetic Movement, argued a similar point in his review for *Fraser's Magazine*. One had to appreciate Gibson's experiment for what it was, not based on a presupposed judgment of what sculpture was supposed to be.

[Gibson's] coloured statuary ... cannot fairly be decried as a failure. It appears to us to be a highly interesting attempt carried out with undeniable charm of no mean order; a legitimate phase of sculpture, capable of much variety of experiment (of which one method only is here exemplified), and having a separate beauty of its own, which need not be allowed to interfere with, nor yet to be obscured by, the separate beauty of colourless sculpture. The art is wide enough for both; and the adherents of white marble may be content to constitute an immense majority with every prospect of so remaining, without seeking to expunge the exiguous minority.¹⁸⁴

Although Atkinson and Rossetti were both in favor of Gibson's experiment, they did express caution over some aspects of the *Tinted Venus* itself. Atkinson felt that Gibson had gone too far by coloring the figure's eyes and hair, implying concerns over naturalism, and Rossetti was unhappy with the addition of ornamentation in the gold earrings, suggesting a cross-over into the decorative arts.¹⁸⁵

In truth, Gibson may have problematized the reception of his work by adding the gold earrings that he had had designed by Castellani, the Rome-based jewelry maker.¹⁸⁶ In his own mind he was surely referencing the *Venus de' Medici*, as Jones had written about her with bored holes for earrings, but for viewers unaware of this the earrings made her tawdry. As a naked woman wearing little else but dangling gold earrings, it was inevitable that some felt the statue was a glorified prostitute. The earrings, however, also to some extent crossed the aesthetic boundary between sculpture as a high art and jewelry as a decorative art. One might expect, in a setting like the International Exhibition, which still held as its focus a celebration of design and the industrial arts, that this juxtaposition of high and decorative arts would have been appreciated. Indeed, sculpture at this time often was repurposed and displayed as items like

¹⁸⁴ William Michael Rossetti, "The Fine Art of the International Exhibition," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 66 (July 1862), 195.

¹⁸⁵ Reviewers for *Good Words* and *The London Review*, in more neutral reviews of the statue, also expressed concerns over these aspects. Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman" [Dinah Maria Craik], "Five Shillings' Worth of the Great World's Fair," *Good Words* 3 (December 1862), 325; "Ancient and Modern Sculpture," *The London Review* 4, no. 102 (14 June 1862), 544.

¹⁸⁶ These were added after he had tinted the statue and displayed her in his studio for a few years. The *Illustrated London News* was among the first to report: "We hear he has recently bored the ears of his goddess to attach earrings, besides presenting her with other trinkets." "Exhibition of the Royal Academy," *Illustrated London News*, 20 June 1857, 608.

chandeliers and dishes to demonstrate ways in which it could be incorporated into the domestic sphere. But the use of jewelry crossed boundaries in the hierarchy of the arts in such a way that even those critics who appreciated the statue, like Rossetti, thought the earrings “were best omitted.”¹⁸⁷ The *Examiner* berated Gibson for the earrings: “If gold earrings, why not kid boots and silk stockings? What law of art defines the limit of an innovation that defies the very first principle of the art it desecrates?”¹⁸⁸ Whether these criticisms of the earrings related to its enhancement of naturalism in the figure, or the crossing of boundaries between fine and decorative arts, what is perhaps more significant in the history of nineteenth-century sculpture is that in utilizing mixed media, Gibson came to anticipate the work of future sculptors who worked in this fashion. This arguably included individuals as diverse as Cordier with his ethnographic busts, Gérôme with his Tanagra figures, busts, and statuettes, Edgar Degas with his *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, and New Sculpture artists like Edward Onslow Ford and Alfred Gilbert with their polychrome, mixed-media statuettes.¹⁸⁹

Despite its popularity and infamy, the *Tinted Venus* was not Gibson’s only polychrome sculpture. As discussed earlier, he had tinted his portrait statue of Queen Victoria, and he displayed with the Venus two other tinted subjects. One of these was *Love Tormenting the Soul, or Cupid* (fig. 3.23), which had been commissioned in 1848 by Robert Stayner Holford, M.P. According to an article in the *Critic*, Gibson had tinted *Cupid* by early 1855; no traces of tinting remain on the statue today.¹⁹⁰ This statue of a youthful Cupid caressing and about to torture a butterfly is the only male subject which Gibson tinted. This distinction suggests that gender and sexuality also were relevant for Gibson, and this practice will be discussed further in the next chapter on the homoerotic body. Gibson erroneously claimed in his memoirs that *Pandora* (fig. 3.22) was his third polychromed statue, but this is only true in the context of his classical subjects that he tinted in his studio during the 1850s.¹⁹¹ Initially commissioned by the 2nd

¹⁸⁷ Rossetti, 195.

¹⁸⁸ “International Exhibition,” *Examiner*, 681.

¹⁸⁹ On these sculptors, see: Laure de Margerie and Edouard Papet, *Facing the Other: Charles Cordier (1827-1905), Ethnographic Sculptor* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004); Edouard Papet, “‘Father Polychrome’: The Sculpture of Jean-Léon Gérôme,” in *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904)*, ed. Laurence des Cars et al. (Milan: Skira, 2010), 290-329; Joseph S. Czeszochowski and Anne Pingeot, eds., *Degas Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Bronzes* (Memphis, TN: Torch Press and International Arts, 2002); and Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

¹⁹⁰ “Italy,” *Critic* 14, no. 337 (16 April 1855), 189.

¹⁹¹ Matthews, 192.

Duke of Wellington in 1856, *Pandora* was later rejected and subsequently purchased by Lady Marian Alford. This figure retains traces of its original colors.¹⁹² Gibson also tinted a statue of *Hebe* in the early 1860s, but the version owned by the Royal Academy no longer has color on it.

Gibson's experiments with polychromy became an important part of his studio practice during the 1850s. But as discussed elsewhere in this chapter tinting was but one of many activities that took place in his studio in Rome over the course of nearly fifty years. Although this section has reconsidered the *Tinted Venus* and other polychrome sculptures within the context of his studio, it is important to remember that this practice took place only during the last twenty years of his career. For nearly thirty years prior, from the time he first arrived in Rome, he participated in the standard art of the "true style." One way he did this was in his readings of Winckelmann and in his observations of modern classical works by Canova and Thorvaldsen that revealed a homoerotic sense of the male body. Later in his career, as taste changed, he became interested in modern reproductive technologies as a way to disseminate his classical designs. These discussions on the homoerotic body and reproductive media form the basis for the next two chapters of this dissertation.

¹⁹² For more on the commission of *Pandora*, see *British Sculpture in the Lady Lever Art Gallery*, ed. Andrew Clay et al. (Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1999), 35-40.

Chapter 4. Gibson as Winckelmannian Aesthete: The Homoerotic Classical Body

In this chapter I will consider some of Gibson's sculptures of male deities and demi-gods as part of the "true style" appropriation of the nude male body as the *beau idéal*, and by extension an aspect of same-sex passion based on the model of ancient Greek pederasty. Gibson and other artists of his day were inspired by the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who emphasized the idealism of Greek art through the physical attributes of ancient Greek men depicted in extant sculpture like the *Apollo Belvedere*. Gibson sought to emulate these works through a reading of Winckelmannian aesthetics, whereby he emphasized the sensual nude male body as an object both of admiration and of desire.

Upon arriving in Rome, Gibson also was influenced by the sculpture of Antonio Canova. Although twentieth-century discourse has criticized Canova's work as the "erotic frigidaire," during his lifetime his work was known for its sensuality, as directly evidenced by the reception of British men who interacted with it, which will be discussed below.¹ That same sensuality diminished Canova's reputation for mid-Victorians, who saw his work as suffering from "affectation and other vices."² More recently art historian Alex Potts has argued that the sensuality inherent in Canova's statues created a visual dialogue between the work of art and the viewer, a trait he contends made them modern.³ Following the visual example of Canova, then, in tandem with an understanding of Winckelmannian aesthetics, Gibson refashioned the male body with works such as *Mars Restrained by Cupid* and *Love Tormenting the Soul*. These were figures that could be read as sexualized objects for private delectation, while preserving their integrity for public taste as modern classics. As aesthetics changed for the rising middle classes, however, Gibson self-censored his work to minimize the homoerotic potential of his subjects, as will be demonstrated in the

¹ Mario Praz, "Canova, or the Erotic Frigidaire," *ARTnews* 56, no. 7 (November 1957), 24-27, 53-54. Editor Thomas Hess, not Praz, was responsible for giving the article this title. Praz, in fact, concluded that Canova's work was sensual for its time, although he argued it was best appreciated as a form of Romantic Classicism comparable to the poetry of John Keats. See also Mario Praz, "Canova and Beauty," in his *On Neoclassicism*, trans. Angus Davidson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 130-52.

² Henry Weeks was describing Gibson's later work as being "of a purer kind" when compared to that of Canova. *Lectures on Art, Delivered at the Royal Academy, London* (London: Bickers and Son, 1880), 157.

³ Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 38-59. See the first chapter for a detailed discussion of Potts's argument.

changes he made to a bas-relief entitled *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe in the Presence of Celestial Love*.

Gibson's Sexuality

In addressing the issue of homoeroticism and same-sex passion in the classical art of Gibson, one might begin with an obvious question: was Gibson a homosexual? Considering the period of time in which he lived, the answer is complex. As James M. Saslow and other scholars have pointed out, throughout the history of art, there have been artists such as the Renaissance master Michelangelo whose homosexuality always has been known and arguably is self-evident in his art and poetry, even if this information was purposely closeted at certain times in scholarship due to social mores or homophobia.⁴ A resurgence of interest in Michelangelo's homosexuality and its relationship to his art began in the late Victorian period with the scholarship of men such as Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds. These men struggled with their own sexuality at a time when the very notion of having a homosexual identity was just emerging, and thus they sought to find artistic heroes from the past who shared their sexual passions.⁵ On the other hand, the development of queer theory has opened up a wider range of inquiry, whereby scholars such as Jason Edwards have shown that assumed heterosexual artists such as the British sculptor Alfred Gilbert could have their work interpreted today as queer, not because of the artist's own sexuality, but because of the culture that flourished during a particular period of time, in this case the Aesthetic Movement, which allowed for the commercial dissemination of art that depicted alternative sexual passions and behaviors.⁶

⁴ James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999), 87, 96-97.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 184-85. Károly Mária Kertbeny is credited with inventing the term "homosexual" in 1869, arguing that people's sexual practices were part of their born nature and not a choice. The first known recording of the term homosexual in English was in an 1895 translation from German of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). For more on the history of homosexuality, in particular as it relates to this chapter, see Robert Aldrich, ed., *Gay Life and Culture: A World History* (New York: Universe, 2006); Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain, from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 1977).

⁶ Jason Edwards, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Aesthete: Alfred Gilbert's *Perseus Arming* (1882) and the Question of 'Aesthetic' Sculpture in Late-Victorian Britain," in *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, ca. 1880-1930*, ed. David Getsy (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), 11-38; and

To answer the question about Gibson's sexuality then, one's first task might be to define homosexuality itself, citing Michel Foucault and positioning oneself on either side of the essentialist/existentialist debate over the homosexual as a conscious identity before and/or after the mid-1800s.⁷ One's second step might be to provide evidence showing Gibson interacting sexually with other men as proof of his homosexuality. Rather than follow this paradigm of scholarship, however, I contend that Gibson was not homosexual, heterosexual, or even bisexual, but asexual, by which I mean that regardless of how Gibson may have expressed himself, in feeling or in action, no evidence has come to light to determine which way congenitally or to whom selectively he turned for sexual gratification, if he pursued sex at all.

In urban parlance today, the acronym LGBTQIA has come to stand for an all-encompassing scope of sexual identities, in which individuals can define themselves broadly as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersexual, and/or asexual. Among these identities, the most recent addition has been asexuality, an acknowledgement that sexual identity can be defined by its potential negation of sexual desire or action. Whether or not asexuality denotes a biological construct, a psychological state of being, or a choice, is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is relevant, however, is that asexuality is now recognized as a potential form of sexual identity and is debated and discussed in the social sciences and queer theory.⁸ In the context of Gibson, I propose that, after a close study of his memoirs and extant correspondence, as well as nineteenth-century publications about him, there is little evidence to suggest that he had sexual relationships with men or women. Gibson was not the only artist working in Rome who might be seen in the same light. His mentors Canova and Thorvaldsen, as well as his British colleagues and friends Richard James Wyatt and Penry Williams, were arguably all equally asexual in that none of them married and to date little evidence confirms whether or not they had sexual relations with men or women. The heteronormative response to the lack of evidence of any form of

Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006).

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990).

⁸ For more on asexuality, see Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks, "New Orientations: Asexuality and Its Implications for Theory and Practice," *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2010), 650-64; and C. J. De Luzio Chasin, "Theoretical Issues in the Study of Asexuality," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 40, no. 4 (August 2011), 713-23.

sexuality would be to assume Gibson and these men were heterosexual. I argue instead that Gibson was asexual.

This is not to say that Gibson never had sex, or that he was ignorant of sexuality and its implications for interpersonal relationships and art. On the contrary, in an unpublished letter from Rome written seven months after his arrival, he wrote about Canova's *Fountain Nymph* for the British Prince Regent, later George IV, noting particularly its sexual effects on one viewer:

She is lying on a Lion's skin—quite naked. An English Gentleman, whose admiration seemed to increase the longer he gazed on this naked Girl—young, beautiful, her cheeks faintly tinged with red as if blooming gradually into life—at last exclaimed involuntarily “damn the little bitch I wish she were alive.” What will His Highness say?⁹

This passage reveals Gibson's awareness of figurative sculpture's power to entice the viewer sexually, in this case perhaps even violently, certainly misogynistically, by reporting on the Gentleman's reference to the nymph as a “bitch.” In some ways this passage calls to mind another famous example of a sexual response to a work of art, as recorded by Pliny. The Roman historian wrote about an ancient Greek who so desired Praxiteles's *Aphrodite of Knidos*—modeled by the sculptor's courtesan lover, the renown beauty Phryne—that he “hid in the temple at night and embraced it intimately; a stain bears witness to his lust.”¹⁰ The Gentleman's response to the reclining nymph in Gibson's letter and the Greek lover of Aphrodite seemingly challenge the assumed traditional concepts of purity of form and abstraction in the sculpted white marble body. Indeed, the sensuality and vitality that encouraged interaction between viewer and object in Canova's sculptures—and by extension those of his pupil Gibson—was part of their modernity, their ability to cross the boundaries of art and life, as Potts has argued.¹¹

Gibson rarely if ever made any other such direct statements about sex in his extant writings, so it is left to the art historian and biographer to read through the veil of Gibson's life, seeing how his words, actions, and art can be interpreted from multiple perspectives. In doing so, we can better sense how he functioned as a modern artist in a cultural milieu where aspects of sexuality, in particular homoeroticism and same-sex passion, were common themes in “true style” art. Consider, for instance, the vague last

⁹ John Gibson to “Sir” [Mr. Abercromby?], 1 March 1818, Huntington Library, San Marino, typed transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

¹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 36.21, trans. John F. Healy (London: Penguin, 1991). See also Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art: From Greece to Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 128-29.

¹¹ Potts, *Sculptural*, 38-59.

sentence in the above passage: “What will His Highness say?” This can be read in multiple ways. On one hand, the Prince Regent was notorious for his sexual liaisons, and Gibson’s question suggests that the Prince might respond with the same level of pleasure toward the nymph, or perhaps be jealous that this Gentleman had responded to her before him. Alternatively, the phrase could imply shock on Gibson’s part, feigned or genuine. This sense of morality may be real, for as a working-class Briton arriving in free-spirited Rome, it is certainly possible that he would have been startled by the sexual directness of some people, especially wealthy men on the Grand Tour. His friends, such as Lady Eastlake in her edition of his memoirs, commented frequently on Gibson’s moral virtue, but of course this would be expected from the upper-middle-class wife of the Keeper of the National Gallery and President of the Royal Academy, and it is doubtful Gibson ever would have shared the sexual side of his life with her. However, if he had actually lived a notoriously sexual life, the universality of gossip would have generated at least some report of his activities somewhere.

Eastlake also described Gibson as having a childlike demeanor, which could be seen as charming or insulting, but she noted in particular his devotion to and association with his art:

He was habitually serene in temperament, like his own statues in repose; though there was fire and passion beneath, as some of his works might also exemplify. But though capable of ardent affection, his love for his art asserted its supremacy, and (not altogether perhaps without an occasional struggle) took the place of all other sources of happiness.¹²

This passage suggests then that Gibson sacrificed a sexual life for his art, and that at times it was not easy for him. Indeed, Gibson himself commented, after he had been in Rome for almost seven years: “If my soul was not riveted to the arts the inexpressible charms of these girls [in Rome] with their beautiful language would get the better of me.”¹³ In truth, however, it was not uncommon in the Victorian period for the artist to be seen as a Romantic who has sacrificed a personal life for his art. Frederic, Lord Leighton, served as President of the Royal Academy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, during which time he produced some of his most noteworthy classical subjects, but it was reported in the press how he lived an austere life and he slept in a simple bedroom nestled within his highly-ornamental, Aesthetic-style

¹² Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 4.

¹³ John Gibson to John B. Crouchley, 27 August 1824, MS 4914D-30, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, transcribed online, No. 2915, *The Thorvaldsens Museum Archives*, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen, <http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en> (accessed 7 February 2013).

home. Leighton is acknowledged by most scholars today as a homosexual.¹⁴ Gibson's own pupil Harriet Hosmer was seen by contemporaries as having given up her chances of happiness as a wife and mother in choosing to be an artist. She herself regularly socialized with a group of women that Henry James dubbed the "white marmorean flock" in Rome. These women, most of whom now are regarded as lesbians, included the actress Charlotte Cushman, the sculptor Emma Stebbins, and the journalist Matilda Mary Hays.¹⁵

The fact is, Gibson never married nor had children (as far as we know), but he maintained close friendships with both married and single women and men. Among these women were the sisters Emily Robinson and Rose Lawrence, both of whom took an active interest in Gibson's career, and the writer Margaret Sandbach, granddaughter of his first patron William Roscoe, who assisted him with the early draft of his autobiography. Among these men were Sir Charles Eastlake, with whom he was close during their early years in Rome (and whose wife edited his memoirs), and the Welsh-born Rome-based painter Penry Williams, who was Gibson's constant companion, frequently traveling with him, and later the executor of his estate. Gibson's correspondence with Hosmer in the years she was his pupil even reveal a dark comedic side in which they wrote exaggerated love letters to one another that border on the sado-masochistic in their tone.¹⁶

Gibson's own memories of his early years in Liverpool reveal an intriguing anecdote that can be read sexually in different ways. Like most sculptors of his day, Gibson desired to go to Rome to study firsthand the ancient works there and to improve his craft. He went so far as to describe his desire as a

¹⁴ Saslow, *Pictures*, 178-79. On Leighton and masculinity, see Jongwoo Jeremy Kim, *Painted Men in Britain, 1868-1918: Royal Academicians and Masculinities* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), chapter one. On Leighton and his association with Leighton House, see Martina Droth, "Leighton's House: Art in and Beyond the Studio," *Journal of Design History* 24, no. 4 (December 2011), 339-58.

¹⁵ On Hosmer's lesbianism and her circle of friends, see Patricia Cronin, *Harriet Hosmer Lost and Found: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Milan; New York: Charta, 2009); and Kate Culkin, *Harriet Hosmer: A Cultural Biography* (Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010). For more about lesbianism in the nineteenth century, see Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), part 2, 145-294; and Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

¹⁶ See, for instance, Hosmer's undated letter to Gibson in which she greets him as "My Beloved" and signs off as "Your affectionate & dutiful Slave (as women should be)." Harriet Hosmer to John Gibson, n.d. [1854?], GI/1/187, John Gibson, RA, Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (hereafter cited as Gibson Papers).

recurring dream that haunted him. He told his mother (who apparently could interpret dreams) what it was:

I dreamt that I was wandering in solitary meditation when a colossal eagle darted down upon me, and took me up in the air. Higher and higher he flew with me, over towns and rivers, till at last I lost sight of the earth, and saw nothing but clouds; fear was upon me, when the earth began to reappear and I felt myself descending. I saw below me a very large town. The eagle alighted with me in the middle of this great town and flew away; people crowded around me with wonder. I cried out aloud, 'Where am I? where am I?' and the people shouted, 'This is Rome!' 'Oh, Rome! Rome! Rome!' cried I aloud.¹⁷

While this is a charming tale of his great desire to go to Rome, what is significant is the role of an eagle taking him to a better land, an Olympus if you will. This is the myth of Ganymede, the beautiful Trojan prince kidnapped by Zeus in the form of an eagle and carried off to the heavens to be his cupbearer and lover.¹⁸ Gibson's dream of going to Rome took place at the same time that he was interacting regularly with the antiquarian and historian William Roscoe, as discussed in chapter two. Roscoe was nearly forty years Gibson's senior at this time, educating him in classical art, and organizing a fund among wealthy Liverpool merchants to pay his way to Rome. At the same time, Robinson also was an active supporter of his career and participated in helping raise funds for his trip. Soon after Gibson arrived in Rome, she even traveled there to see him. It is also worth noting the etymological similarity between Robinson's maiden name (D'Aguilar) and that of the Spanish word for eagle (*àguila*), and of course that the ancient Roman military standard was the eagle (*Aquila* in Latin).

My point is that this anecdote could allude to Roscoe, Robinson, ancient Rome, or all three, but more important is its inherent meaning: that Gibson saw himself as a Ganymede-like youth being carried off by an eagle and, as I will discuss at the end of this chapter, the symbolism of the Ganymede story was so apparent to him that it led to self-censorship over the artistic representation of Zeus's beloved youth in his oeuvre. Therefore, whether iconographic or metaphoric, Gibson's referencing of Ganymede ties his dream of Rome and classical sculpture to the pederastic traditions of ancient Greece. This link is further reinforced by the awareness at the time that Rome was a *locus classicus*, and as a warm, Mediterranean

¹⁷ Thomas Matthews, ed., *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: W. Heinemann, 1911), 28-29.

¹⁸ On Ganymede and his association with homosexuality in Renaissance art, see James M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

climate it was also a libertine city where one could pursue erotic desires.¹⁹ This anecdote, then, is an example of the multi-layering one must peel away to understand how Gibson was conscious of the homoerotics of classicism. To see how he applied this to his art, however, one also must consider the influence of Winckelmann, not only on Gibson, but on the “true style.”

Winckelmann and the Homoerotic in Classical Art

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the so-called father of art history, is now considered by most scholars to have been what we would call today a homosexual. His correspondence is the most apparent manifestation of this claim. While his writings on art express same-sex passion through suggestion and innuendo, his personal letters to young men such as his pupil F. W. P. Lamprecht and the Latvian nobleman Friedrich Rheinhold von Berg, as well as his letters to others about his sexual encounters with Florentine and Roman adolescents, leave little doubt that he was a homosexual.²⁰ In his essay on Winckelmann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe openly acknowledged the art historian’s sexual interest in young men and, more importantly, connected this passion directly with Winckelmann’s writings on idealized beauty.²¹ Winckelmann’s death also has led to speculation as to whether the young man who stabbed him, Francesco Arcangeli, had merely botched a robbery or was reacting violently to a sexual invitation by the scholar.²² In addition, Winckelmann’s near-blind devotion to ancient art emphasizing male beauty and homoerotic subjects was so well known that his friends, the artists Giovanni Casanova and Anton Raphael Mengs, fooled him with a modern-day invention of a painting of Zeus caressing

¹⁹ On Rome as a city of erotic desire, see Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993), especially chapters 1 and 3, 13-40, 69-100; and Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century*, pbk. ed. (Thrupp, England: Sutton Publishing, 2003), chapter 9, 202-29.

²⁰ Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, pbk. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 182-88, 201-16. Some of Winckelmann’s letters were published soon after he died, including those which revealed his passionate love for young men, so readers of the day would have been aware of this fact about him.

²¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert (1805)*, in *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey, trans. Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest H. von Nardroff (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1986), 102-04.

²² Potts, *Flesh*, 17-18. Potts doubts that Winckelmann’s death was the result of a sexual encounter gone wrong, but he does acknowledge that in reading the trial transcripts “innuendos of supposed sexual immorality” unclear to readers today certainly are possible.

Ganymede, passing it off as an ancient work of art.²³ In terms of art historiography and aesthetics, however, it is his writings that are most important. His extended essay *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst (Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, 1755)* first established his idea of *edle Einfalt und stille Größe* (noble simplicity and quiet grandeur) with regard to the *Laocoön*. This idea was expanded in his book *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums (History of the Art of Antiquity, 1764)*, in which he attempted to establish the first schema for the historical development of ancient Greek art, emphasizing in particular the “high” style and the “beautiful” style, but also offering a very personal response to ancient art by highlighting the male nude body as the height of idealized beauty, *die idealische Schönheit* as Winckelmann called it, or the *beau idéal* as it became known in contemporary French art.²⁴

One frequently quoted example of the homoeroticism inherent in his writing is his response to the *Apollo Belvedere* (fig. 4.1). This sculpture was cited by connoisseurs as the exemplar of idealized beauty from as early as its discovery in Rome during the 1480s, so Winckelmann was not the first to acknowledge its importance.²⁵ However, according to Potts, Winckelmann was the first to make the sculpture “the focus for quite overt fantasies of erotic desire, while still retaining its significance as the model of a manly elevation that precluded it from being seen as a simple object of delectation.”²⁶

Winckelmann wrote about the sculpture:

His build is elevated above the human, and his stance bears witness to the fullness of his grandeur. An eternal springtime, like that of the blissful Elysian Fields, clothes the alluring virility of mature years with a pleasing youth and plays with soft tenderness upon the lofty structure of his limbs. ... A brow of Jupiter, gravid with the goddess of wisdom, and eyebrows whose motions declare his will; eyes of the queen of the gods, arched with grandeur, and a mouth whose shape infused desire in the beloved Branchos. ... In gazing upon this masterpiece of art, I forget all else, and I myself adopt an elevated stance, in order to be worthy of gazing upon it. My chest seems to expand with veneration and to heave like those I have seen swollen as if by the spirit of prophecy, and I feel myself transported to Delos and to the Lycian groves, places Apollo honored with his presence—for my figure seems to take on life and movement, like Pygmalion’s beauty.²⁷

²³ Thomas Pelzel, “Winckelmann, Mengs and Casanova: A Reappraisal of a Famous Eighteenth-Century Forgery,” *The Art Bulletin* 54, no. 3 (September 1972), 300-15.

²⁴ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 196, 198-203.

²⁵ Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 148-51.

²⁶ Potts, *Flesh*, 118.

²⁷ Winckelmann, 333-34.

Winckelmann's description of Apollo's body suggests a close attention to fragmented body parts, the classical ideal being a montage of the most beautiful features from various individuals to create the perfect form. This was best exemplified in the story of the Greek painter Zeuxis, who used many women to paint a perfect picture of Helen of Troy. In describing the figure this way, Winckelmann creates a series of opposites that blend to make a whole. Apollo is "mature" yet also a "youth." He has both "soft tenderness" and "lofty structure" in his limbs. He is both masculine and feminine, carrying the brow of his father Jupiter, but burdened as if pregnant with the traits of his half-sister Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, and the eyes of Juno, the queen of the gods. But Winckelmann also boldly explores the homoerotics of Greek culture by pointing to Apollo's mouth as being so desirous that the youth Branchos fell in love with him. It is from this reference to same-sex passion that Winckelmann begins to respond physically to the sculpture, elevating himself, heaving and swelling with veneration, so as to be closer to this manifestation of idealized male beauty. He also writes in this effusive mode about other examples of male figures, including the *Genius* from the Villa Borghese, and two important depictions of the youthful lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian, the *Belvedere Antinous* and the Villa Albani bas-relief of *Antinous*.²⁸

Winckelmann's appreciation for ancient Greek art is predicated on representations of the male body and by extension same-sex passion on the part of the viewer and/or the subject. At the same time, the *Apollo Belvedere* is posed victorious after having vanquished the Python, and thus stands as a hero to be admired. As Potts has suggested, "the most visibly striking aspect of his writing on Greek art" is

the unapologetically sensuous homoeroticism of his reading of the Greek male nude. ... The ideal erotic figure for him is not a feminine object offered up for delectation and domination of a male gaze. It is rather a finely formed male body. As such it becomes for the male viewer both an object of desire and an ideal subject with which to identify.²⁹

Thus, Winckelmann's writings provide a set of instructions for the (assumed male) viewer to appreciate the male nude body for its sensual allure, both as a sexual object to be looked upon "for delectation and domination," and as a hero with which the viewer could identify and aspire. The degree to which male

²⁸ Ibid., 200, 341. On the homoerotics of Antinous, see Sarah Waters, "'The Most Famous Fairy in History': Antinous and Homosexual Fantasy," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 2 (October 1995), 194-230.

²⁹ Potts, *Flesh*, 5.

viewers felt either way or both equally would have been determined by their own particular internal sexual inclinations.³⁰

This interchange between his effusive homoerotic language and his coding of desire shows us, then, how Winckelmann influenced contemporary European art by men such as Jacques-Louis David, Anne-Louis Girodet, Canova, Thorvaldsen, Gibson, and others. In depicting sensual male bodies and subjects of male-male passion, these artists were able to follow Winckelmann's lead in celebrating the idealized male form as both erotic and heroic, but in a way that did not necessarily have to point to the label of sodomite on the part of the artist, patron, or viewer. These artistic representations of the *beau idéal* also were safe because unlike a beautiful living youth who might arouse the artist/patron/viewer sexually, these sculptures and paintings were self-absorbed and unable to reciprocate desire. As Potts suggests, Winckelmann's writings inspired "responses ... in which the viewer identifies with the figure's imagined state of narcissistic oneness or admires its beauty from a 'safe' distance."³¹

Feminism, gay studies, and queer theory have helped make revised readings of Winckelmann more common in art-historical literature today. As a result, a number of recent studies have been published that consider the homoerotics of Neoclassical art. Because the role of the Academy in Rome was critical to the development of classicism in French art (and because French art still dominates modern art-historical literature), these studies have focused almost exclusively on the circle of artists around David, Girodet, and J.-A.-D. Ingres.³² Among these, the most influential may be Thomas Crow's work, which argues that the School of David produced a homosocial, fraternal bond among the artists who in turn

³⁰ Potts adds that Winckelmann's writing also reveals purposefully coded self-censorship that in retrospect reflects how revolutionary he was in his day. His texts shined a light not only on ancient art and practices, but also eighteenth-century homosexual politics, by drawing attention to active participation in same-sex passion and to violently punitive actions against what was legally sodomy. Potts, *Flesh*, 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

³² In contrast little has been written on homoeroticism in British Neoclassical painting and sculpture. One reason may be because art historians have focused more on social politics and Britain's insularity during its wars with America and France, thus creating an art scene based largely on current events, nationalism, and naturalism. See, for instance, Holger Hoock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750-1850* (London: Profile Books, 2010). Despite this, tradition dictates that the British were the proponents of the Grand Tour and that many British artists who traveled to Rome to study from the antique were directly responsible for the flourishing of what is now called Neoclassicism, most particularly in sculpture. See, for instance, David Irwin, *English Neoclassical Art: Studies in Inspiration and Taste* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1966); and H. W. Janson, *19th-Century Sculpture* (New York: Abrams, 1985). One of the only historians of British art to engage with masculinity and sexuality in the art of this period is Martin Myrone in his *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

reacted to David and the French Revolution with a classicism that favored effeminate forms as opposed to the overt masculine subjects of their teacher.³³ Crow points to the Academy in Rome, not Paris, as the *locus classicus* for the inspiration and dissemination of alternative classical subjects based on the teachings of Winckelmann. The most influential of these was Girodet's *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791 (fig. 4.2), which succeeded in overthrowing the paradigm of the Davidian *exemplum virtutis* of masculine virility by emphasizing the Winckelmannian appreciation of the sensual male beauty as the *beau idéal*. Crow also shows how David himself, after the success of *The Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, experimented with Greek subjects that incorporated homoerotic themes, such as *The Death of Socrates*, 1787, in which the philosopher receives in one hand from a Ganymede-like cupbearer the hemlock that will kill him while pointing with the other hand to the heavens to convey the lesson to resist physical passion in favor of spirituality.³⁴

Abigail Solomon-Godeau has shown how lesser-known artists associated with the *Barbus* group, such as Jean Broc and Jean-Pierre Granger, created a close-knit homosocial group who consciously excluded the presence of women and female forms in their art because of the association of the sensual feminine with the *ancien régime*, thereby replacing the feminine with a sensual form of masculinity.³⁵ Carol Ockman has argued that Ingres's 1801 Prix de Rome painting, *Achilles Receiving the Ambassadors of Agamemnon*, appropriated Greek same-sex passion in the pairing of Achilles with his lover Patroclus, the archetypal same-sex couple from ancient Greece. Their intermingled serpentine forms in Ingres's painting provide the needed feminine presence to balance out the masculinity of Agamemnon, Ajax, and Odysseus to the right of the picture.³⁶ Most recently, Satish Padiyar has revisited David's late painting *Leonidas at the Pass of Thermopylae*, 1799-1814, identifying how the scenes of same-sex passion

³³ Thomas Crow, "A Male Republic: Bonds Between Men in the Art and Life of Jacques-Louis David," in *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture*, ed. Gillian Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 204-18; and Thomas Crow, *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

³⁴ Crow, *Emulation*, 98.

³⁵ Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "The Other Side of *Vertu*: Alternative Masculinities in the Crucible of Revolution," *Art Journal* 56, no. 2 (Summer 1997), 55-61; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997).

³⁶ Carol Ockman, "Profiling Homoeroticism: Ingres's *Achilles Receiving the Ambassadors of Agamemnon*," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (June 1993), 259-74, republished as the first chapter in her book *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies: Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

throughout the picture acted as codes for David's political commentary on Napoleon's imperialism.³⁷

More important for this chapter, Padiyar is one of the first to link the idea of skin in David's classical bodies with the sensuality inherent in the polished surfaces of Canova's sculptures.

Indeed, Canova's patronage by Napoleon and his family became the direct link between French art and the Roman school of sculpture at this time.³⁸ Because of this political association, he would have had working knowledge of David and his followers both in Paris and at the Academy in Rome. Furthermore, through his friends, the art historians Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy and Leopoldo Cicognara, Canova would have been aware of Winckelmann's work.³⁹ By extension then, Gibson, upon entering Canova's studio in 1817, would have become more aware of the thriving activities around this Winckelmannian interpretation of classical art as it was practiced in Rome at this time.

Of course Gibson also would have been exposed to Winckelmann's writings in England. The German scholar's work was well known there; it was even brought into the discussions over whether Parliament should purchase the Elgin Marbles. As discussed earlier in the biographical chapter, Gibson's exposure to Greek art came from Roscoe and it was through him that Gibson was made aware of the art of Henry Fuseli. This awareness might have included reading Fuseli's 1765 English translation of Winckelmann's *Gedanken*. Fuseli himself might have encouraged Gibson to read the work during his time in London. Winckelmann's *Geschichte*, however, was not translated into English until the mid-1800s. An Italian translation was published as early as 1783, and a popular French version was available by the early 1790s.⁴⁰ Gibson did not know French and knew only a small amount of German, but he did learn Italian upon arriving in Rome, so he could have read the Italian version. Even if Gibson had not read the texts themselves, certainly by the early 1800s Winckelmann's writings were well known throughout European art circles, and Gibson would have been aware of his teachings about ancient art simply by being a follower of the "true style."

³⁷ Satish Padiyar, *Chains: David, Canova, and the Fall of the Public Hero in Postrevolutionary France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

³⁸ Christopher M. S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

³⁹ Canova also had a selection of Winckelmann's works in his personal library. See Giuseppe Pavanello, *La Biblioteca di Antonio Canova* (Verona: Cierre, 2007). My thanks to Christina Ferando for this information.

⁴⁰ On these translations of the *Geschichte*, see Potts, *Flesh*, 256-57, n. 4.

The evidence of Gibson's knowledge of Winckelmann comes directly from him. One finds, for instance, in an unpaginated journal of passages and quotations written in his own hand, quotations in English taken from Winckelmann, as well as Gottfried Lessing discussing Winckelmann's work.⁴¹ References to Winckelmann also appear in his published memoirs. For instance, in giving his own literary tour of ancient marbles in Roman museums, he points out many of the same works Winckelmann highlighted in the *Geschichte*, such as the *Belvedere Antinous* and the *Borghese Warrior*, and at times even follows Winckelmann's errors, declaring the *Dying Gladiator* to be an original work by a master, not a copy. On the relief of Antinous at the Villa Albani, he writes: "it is perfectly beautiful, and I think that Winckelmann considered it equal to the Apollo for style; the execution of the hair is perfect."⁴² On the *Apollo Belvedere* he echoes Winckelmann's effusive language, declaring the work to be "the finest and most sublime of all the Greek productions of ideal art," and goes on to note "The swelling of the nostrils, and the disdain on the lips is so delicately touched that the beauty of his divine countenance is undisturbed."⁴³ Equally devoted to the idealized beauty of Greek art, Gibson encouraged sculptors to maintain the lessons established by the Greeks and not to experiment as sculptors as Michelangelo and Bernini had done: "Winckelmann is our modern guide in sculpture, but the attempts to produce something new have frequently led artists away from the path which Winckelmann has pointed out in his most valuable work."⁴⁴

One passage by Gibson is of particular interest because he not only credits Winckelmann but alludes to the *Geschichte* as well. Describing Winckelmann's principles of sculpture as a lesson to others, he writes:

Sculpture is the delight of my soul, because it is more elevating than any of the other departments of the arts; its highest aim is the sublime and the purest beauty. To arrive at this lofty degree is the great difficulty. There is only one straight road to perfection and this path has been already pointed out clearly by Winckelmann; the young Sculptor should assiduously study him. The Greeks carried sculpture to the highest possible degree of perfection.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Journal, GI/7, Gibson Papers. Gottfried Lessing's *Laokoon, oder, Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1766) was translated into English by William C. Ross and published as *Laocoon: or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting* (London: J. Ridgway & Sons, 1836), so Gibson's transcriptions probably came from this version.

⁴² Matthews, 166.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

This passage not only instructs the sculptor to read Winckelmann, but in veiled language uses words that are similar to later translations from his writings. His use of the word “lofty” suggests the bodily description of the *Apollo Belvedere* and “elevating” calls to mind Winckelmann’s raising of himself to become one with the statue. Furthermore, his referencing of the sublime and the beautiful directly connects to Winckelmann’s principles about the *Laocoön* and other works.⁴⁶

Gibson’s comfortable familiarity with Winckelmann, through written texts and visual representation of classical subjects by artists who celebrated Winckelmannian aesthetics of the *beau idéal* and subjects of same-sex passion, demonstrates his own evident participation in the homoerotics of classical art as it was crafted in Rome at this time by many artists. As will be discussed below, some of his earliest commissions, such as *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, *Love Tormenting the Soul*, and other works, clearly show his active participation in this modern appreciation for the male body in classical art.

Mars Restrained by Cupid

The first work modeled in clay by Gibson under the tutelage of Canova was a sleeping shepherd boy, undoubtedly the model for the work he eventually made for Lord George Cavendish in 1824. A life-sized version of this work (fig. 3.3) was completed in early 1818, as Gibson mentions the completed model in a letter to Roscoe dated May of that year.⁴⁷ Gibson was then “haunted” to try a “higher subject,” a group sculpture, and despite Canova’s advice for him to wait until he had “more knowledge of style, and experience in form,” he made a small clay model of the gods Mars and Cupid, of which Canova approved and instructed him to make it on a larger scale.⁴⁸ Ultimately, *Mars Restrained by Cupid* (fig. 4.3) became one of his unique works; his first major commission in marble, it was never replicated. It also was one of the largest works in his oeuvre, with the plaster model measuring seven feet and the marble version just over eight feet high.⁴⁹ Following the advice of Canova to study both nature and the idealized antique, Gibson used “fine living models” for the two gods, but also examined closely Greek sculptures, drawing

⁴⁶ On Winckelmann’s ideas of the beautiful and the sublime, see Potts, *Flesh*, chapter four, 113-44.

⁴⁷ Matthews, 51.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁴⁹ In the inventory of Gibson’s studio following his death, the plaster model *Marte e amore gruppo colossale* is listed as being on display in his *Studio Grande*. Gibson Estate Papers, GI/4, Gibson Papers. This work probably was sent to the Royal Academy along with his other models, but may have been one of the many plaster works that were damaged en route to London as it is no longer known to exist.

“outlines from them in order to learn the beauty and delicacy of their lines, also drawing legs, arms, and torsos separately and rather large.”⁵⁰

In March 1819, the 6th Duke of Devonshire, William Spencer Cavendish, visited Gibson’s studio at the advice of Canova. The sculptor’s immediate impression of the Duke was that he was “a tall fine-looking young man.”⁵¹ The Duke’s surprise visit unnerved Gibson, but he noted “when I was calmed down I got on well with His Grace.”⁵² Admiring the nearly-finished model, Devonshire asked Gibson to name his price for a marble version. Caught off guard and inexperienced in the business of commissions, Gibson replied £500, fearing that this was too much. The Duke surprised him by immediately commissioning the work. Excited, Gibson ran to tell his master, but Canova was disappointed that he had not consulted with him first and asked for more, knowing he would lose money because of the cost of marble and paying studio assistants. In the end, the sculpture cost Gibson £520 to make, but still he was proud of it because it was his first commission in Rome.⁵³

Gibson recorded in his memoirs that he spent nine months on the clay model and “some months in finishing the marble,” suggesting the standard sculptural practice of the day that he only worked on the concept and the finished product.⁵⁴ Gibson’s account books reveal that a carver by the name of Polini did the pointing and much of the carving, with another unnamed carver working on the ornamentation for Mars’s helmet.⁵⁵ Surprisingly, the statue took over six years to complete. This may be because the Duke’s commission led to Gibson receiving other commissions from British patrons, including statues of a *Nymph* and *Paris* for George Watson Taylor, *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* for Sir George Beaumont, the aforementioned *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* for Cavendish, as well as portrait busts and other works. In a letter from Beaumont to Gibson, the Duke reportedly was not concerned about the delay and was willing to allow Gibson to postpone progress on his statue so he could finish these other commissions.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Matthews, 52.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* The Duke and Gibson were the same age, both having been born in 1790.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ According to his account books, Gibson’s expenses included 220 louis for the block of marble, 80 crowns to transport it to his studio, and over 700 crowns to workmen for pointing and carving. Personal Account Books, 1823-1842, GI/6/1, and 1822-1859, GI/6/2, Gibson Papers.

⁵⁴ Matthews, 53.

⁵⁵ Personal Account Books, 1823-1842, GI/6/1, Gibson Papers.

⁵⁶ Sir George Beaumont to John Gibson, 10 May 1824, in Matthews, 60.

Considering the vast number of works Devonshire had ordered for his gallery at Chatsworth, then under construction, he was apparently in no rush for the statue to arrive.

However, Gibson also had problems with the deceptions of the quarrymen in Carrara over prices and services, and he had difficulties finding a piece of marble without any flaws, a common problem for sculptors. Gibson discarded two blocks before finally securing the one he did use for the sculpture. This final block was shipped from Carrara to Rome by sea and arrived by September 1821. It was so heavy that it required twenty buffaloes to pull the cart from the port of Ripa Grande to his studio. When Thorvaldsen saw the marble, he is reported to have exclaimed, "*Bello! Bello! Bello!*"⁵⁷ In a letter to Robinson, Gibson wrote about the commission:

It is only now that I am able to make use of the tools which you so generously sent me to cut the Duke's group. For two years I have been perplexed for a block of marble. I made two journies to Carrara, and at last have purchased one which has cost me £220. The difficulty is to get a large block free from spots. Although this one which I have purchased is good externally, it may be filled internally with stripes and spots—such are the difficulties respecting marble for statues. ... I hear that the Duke will be here shortly, and I feel great pleasure in telling you that his Grace will see his work going on. If the marble turns out well I shall fancy myself taller than the Mars....

After modelling the Nymph which I am to execute for Mr. Taylor, I have modelled a figure of Paris, as large as life. Several artists here tell me it is the best of my works; but it shall not be so; for I have great improvements to make in the Mars, and am determined to take the utmost pains, and though the price which I charged—£500—will pay no more than the expenses, still when the work is completed I shall feel more joy in placing it in the Duke's Gallery than if I had received ten thousand pounds.⁵⁸

The following month, Devonshire wrote to Gibson: "I congratulate you on the arrival of your block of marble from Carrara, I trust that it will prove as fine within as it appears externally."⁵⁹

Carving continued over the next few years and the finished sculpture was finally delivered to the duke in 1825. Knowing the importance to his career of having the work publicly exhibited, Gibson wrote to Devonshire in May of that year requesting that it be displayed at his London home, Devonshire House, before its transfer to Chatsworth, as had been done successfully with Canova's *Endymion*, but

⁵⁷ John Gibson to the 6th Duke of Devonshire, 10 October 1821, f.115, Sculpture Accounts of the 6th Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth, England, transcribed online, No. 2361, *The Thorvaldsens Museum Archives*, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen, <http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en> (accessed 7 February 2013).

⁵⁸ John Gibson to "Madam" [Mrs. Emily d'Aguilar Robinson], 27 September 1821, typewritten transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool. The use of British pounds for the price of the marble (£220) may be an error in the transcription, as his account books clearly show the amount paid in louis.

⁵⁹ 6th Duke of Devonshire to John Gibson, 17 October 1821, GI/1/94, Gibson Papers.

unfortunately for Gibson this did not happen.⁶⁰ *Mars Restrained by Cupid* was installed in the Hall of Chatsworth beneath the double-staircase, a significant location for all those who visited and saw this impressive work by an up-and-coming British artist displayed alongside other modern marble sculptures and crowned by the enormous ceiling fresco showing scenes from the life of Julius Caesar by the French-born Baroque painter Louis Laguerre. An 1827 watercolor by William Henry Hunt (fig. 4.4) shows the work proudly displayed in the Hall.⁶¹ By 1834, however, the sculpture gallery itself was completed and Gibson's sculpture was moved into this new space, an important issue that will be discussed in more detail below.

Standing over 8 feet (2.54 meters) in height without the base, *Mars Restrained by Cupid* shows the Roman god of war as an idealized male nude wearing a helmet and holding by the hilt his sword which is raised under his forearm. He is accompanied by the epebic god of love, also nude, who gently holds back the warrior's arm and sword. Pairing Mars with Cupid was highly unusual, as Mars typically is accompanied by Venus, an important distinction which will be discussed below. Allegorically the subject represents the end of war, specifically here the end of the Napoleonic Wars. With peace restored in Europe, the Grand Tour to Rome was once again available for British artists and tourists, Gibson being among the very first to make the trip, and Canova began the task of overseeing the repatriation back to Rome of ancient art such as the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Laocoön* that had been taken as war booty and exhibited in the Musée Napoléon. These historic events surely could have been on Gibson's mind when he made this sculpture.

But Gibson's decision to pair Mars with Cupid is unusual because there was little precedent in classical art for this grouping. Indeed, the only ancient sculpture to show the pair together was the *Ludovisi Mars* (fig. 4.5). This work was in Rome but only exhibited publicly in the early nineteenth century at the Ludovisi estate. However, it was well known in London and Rome as a statuette, although

⁶⁰ Alison Yarrington, "'Under Italian skies,' the 6th Duke of Devonshire, Canova and the Formation of the Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth House," *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* 10 (2009), 57.

⁶¹ Rose Lawrence wrote to Gibson of a recent visit to Chatsworth and noted how his statue was among "the most valued and the most beautiful works of modern art. I assure you it has quite the place of honor: - it is in the centre of the lofty hall; a magnificent staircase branches off on either side of it. - The *Notte & the Giorno* of Thorwalsen are near: - and there is the bust of Amour by himself (the lips apart) and the Duke's own bust, by the same mighty hand, -- with many other beautiful works of art." Mrs. Rose d'Aguilar Lawrence to John Gibson, 18 December 1829, GI/1/215, Gibson Papers.

curiously the *putto* Cupid seen in the sculpture today frequently was omitted from these reproductions as it was (and still is) considered a later addition by Bernini.⁶² The work was documented by Winckelmann as being one of the few ideal representations of the god of war: "One of the three most beautiful figures of him is in the Villa Ludovisi at life-size, seated and with Love at his feet; on this figure, as with all divine figures, none of the nerves or veins is visible. ... Mars is depicted as an adolescent and in a quiet posture and action...."⁶³ Despite the association with an idealized youth, compositionally Gibson's Mars shares little with this seated figure. Thorvaldsen had made a version of the subject entitled *Mars and Cupid*, ca. 1810 (fig. 4.6), the plaster cast of which Gibson would have seen in Thorvaldsen's studio. But even this figure seems unlikely to have influenced Gibson, unless it was to create a work that looked quite different. While Thorvaldsen's Mars stands tall, he is exaggerated in his musculature, and his body position calls to mind Canova's statue of *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1802-06 (fig. 4.7). Thorvaldsen's Mars has a monumentality and awe that so terrifies Cupid at his feet that the god of love cowers before him. This duo shares nothing with the more interconnected male figures in Gibson's work.

More common in the history of art is the pairing of Venus with Mars, a tradition that reaches back to ancient art but was popular in Renaissance and Baroque painting, from Botticelli to Rubens, and would continue to resonate as a theme with classical artists in the nineteenth century, such as in David's *Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Three Graces*, 1824. I contend that this was the theme that inspired Gibson, as it was more popular and, based on one contemporary example, something readily available for him to see. When Gibson entered Canova's atelier, the Italian was working on a sculpture entitled *Venus and Mars*, 1816-22 (fig. 4.8), a commission from the British Prince Regent.⁶⁴ Comparing the two statues by Canova and Gibson, the similarities of their subjects cannot be coincidental, for Gibson was training with Canova at this time and he would have seen this work first in clay or in plaster and watched it evolve into the finished marble figure, all while he was working on his own version for the Duke starting in 1819. The two figures of Mars as idealized nude warriors are nearly identical, with both looking toward their left at a

⁶² Haskell and Penny, 260. The authors do not state from what date on it was believed the Cupid was by Bernini, nor is it known if Winckelmann was aware of this belief.

⁶³ Winckelmann, 201.

⁶⁴ Although this work probably was a modification of his earlier *Venus and Adonis*, Canova also might have seen a similar subject made by the Austrian artist Leopold Kiesling, whose *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, made in Rome from 1808-10, was a commission by Franz I to celebrate the wedding of his daughter to Napoleon and is very similar in appearance to Canova's *Venus and Mars*.

second figure, although there are noted differences in the poses of the males. Their *contrapposto* stances shift in opposite directions, with Canova's Mars placing one leg out to his right.⁶⁵ Gibson's Mars does not hold a spear; rather, his arms are more relaxed. Their helmets are different as well. Finally, Canova's figure wears a (presumably removable) fig leaf and has pubic hair. Gibson's Mars, in contrast, has no pubic hair and is shown fully nude, reinforcing his youthfulness and idealized beauty. It is worth noting that Gibson made changes in the position of Mars's leg and helmet from the model to the marble, and reported to the Duke that Canova was pleased with these changes.⁶⁶ These alterations reinforce the notion that Gibson was inspired by Canova's Mars, but sought to make his version different, thus following Canova's instructions "not to imitate his style, nor to study his works too much."⁶⁷

If Gibson's *Mars Restrained by Cupid* is based on Canova's *Venus and Mars*, then Cupid is a substitution for Venus. Indeed, a closer look at the gaze between Mars and Cupid shows that it mirrors the gaze shared by Mars and Venus. It is a loving, sensual gaze meant to disarm the god of war, and in so doing champions love over war. The heavy polish of the marble in both of these works adds a sheen to the stone, creating a slick, glossy surface that reinforces the emotional sentiment in that gaze. But whereas Canova's pair represents heteronormativity, the pairing of the two nude males in Gibson's work reinforces the homoeroticism inherent in art of the "true style" and references Winckelmann's homoerotic appreciation of Greek male beauty.

Cupid places his hand on Mars's arm, which covers the semi-erect sword beneath it. The warrior in turn gently fingers the sword's phallic-headed hilt, visually positioned directly beside his own genitals. This mirroring of the phallus with two hands on the shaft thus serves as coded sexuality between the two male figures. What compounds the homoerotic interpretation of this union is that the sword is in the hand of peace, the left hand (the "sinister" hand), not the right, the traditional hand of action and perceived

⁶⁵ Fred Licht has argued that the open leg suggests Mars is turning away from Venus and thus the work when compared to his earlier *Venus and Adonis* is "far less intimate and more overtly rhetorical." I would suggest the opposite: that the open leg provides visual strength and reinforces Mars's presence as a warrior distracted by the goddess of love. Fred Licht, *Canova* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983), 219.

⁶⁶ John Kenworthy-Browne, "A Ducal Patron of Sculptors," *Apollo* 96, no. 128 (October 1972), 325.

⁶⁷ Matthews, 50.

normalcy. Recent studies have suggested a connection between left-handedness and homosexuality.⁶⁸ This is not to say that Gibson would have known of this biological connection; however, he chose the left hand to emphasize the peaceful union of Mars with Cupid. Indeed, Mars's left-handedness, coupled with Cupid's left-handed overlay, reinforces the alternative, homoerotic nature of this sculpture.⁶⁹ The positioning of their bodies, in conjunction with their suggestive gaze, points directly to same-sex passion, more specifically the pederastic traditions of ancient Greece. Indeed, their interaction calls to mind representations from ancient vase paintings, such as that of the Brygos Painter (fig. 4.9), that scholars have argued show these pederastic relationships as part of the normal socio-political structure of ancient Greek society. In this sense then, Mars is the elder *erastes* and Cupid his younger *eromenos* in the eroticized courtship rituals of Athens, or they represent the sexualized *eispnelas/aitas* relationship for the rearing of youths in militaristic Sparta.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage in the essentialist/existentialist debate over whether ancient Greek pederasty can be considered part of the history of homosexual identity or not.⁷⁰ However, what is relevant to this discussion is the knowledge of Greek love—i.e. same-sex passion in ancient Athens and Sparta—as it was understood by writers and artists of Gibson's day. As Louis Crompton has argued regarding these educated audiences:

The phrase [Greek love] would have brought immediately to mind such poetic or historical traditions as the legends of Ganymede and Hyacinth, the exploits of Aristogiton and Harmodius, and the story

⁶⁸ See, for instance, Martin L. Lalumière, Ray Blanchard, and Kenneth J. Zucker, "Sexual Orientation and Handedness in Men and Women: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 126, no. 4 (July 2000), 575-92.

⁶⁹ A visual survey of male warrior sculptures made during this time period show that all of them carry a sword in their right hand. The most noteworthy example is Canova's *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (fig. 4.20), modeled ca. 1800. An unfired clay model of Mars by Mathieu Kessels, probably made in Rome during the early 1820s, shows the god holding by the hilt his sword at rest. He holds the sword in his right hand, reinforcing that Gibson's use of the left hand was unique. For more on Kessels's model, see James David Draper and Guilhem Scherf, *Playing with Fire: European Terracotta Models, 1740-1840* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 215-16.

⁷⁰ The foundational text for the study of homosexuality in ancient Greece is K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), but the subsequent essentialist/existentialist debates and interpretations of his work and newer areas of inquiry have produced numerous texts arguing various points. See, for instance, James Davidson, "Dover, Foucault and Greek Homosexuality: Penetration and the Truth of Sex," *Past & Present* 170 (2001), 3-51; David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Thomas K. Hubbard, ed., *Greek Love Reconsidered* (New York: Wallace Hamilton Press, 2000).

of Antinous ... the classical tradition of male love as it was reflected in the Latin of Catullus, Horace, Virgil and Petronius.⁷¹

Thus, following in the spirit of Winckelmannian aesthetics, Gibson's *Mars Restrained by Cupid* was part of the artistic milieu that crafted alternative versions of heteronormative subjects for specific audiences who had an interest in these themes. Admittedly, one could argue that Mars and Cupid here also could be seen as a father and son, thus making their gaze seem less sexual, but in fact even that interpretation arguably has associations with Athenian and Spartan modes of same-sex passion in which an older male nurtured a younger male.⁷² My point here is that "true style" subjects such as this one could have been interpreted in various ways, depending on the intentions of the artist, patron, and viewer. The (homo)erotics of classicism and Winckelmannian aesthetics were such that they could be read both ways. In the case of the Gibson commission, this interpretation seems even more likely when one considers the role of patronage and display.

William Spencer Cavendish, the 6th Duke of Devonshire, was born in 1790, the same year as Gibson, but as the heir to a large fortune and numerous estates, this patron and this sculptor could have mixed only in an environment such as Rome. The Duke's mother was the famous Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and although the boy's birth was much welcomed after two daughters and sixteen tumultuous years of marriage, his father was still disappointed because the boy was weak and partially deaf. Like Gibson, the Duke never married. His biographer, James Lees-Milne, navigates the issue of the Duke's sexuality by treading carefully through his affairs. He points out female love interests, such as Napoleon's sister Pauline Borghese and a longtime unidentified mistress named Eliza, but he also discusses Devonshire's romantic friendships with men, such as an adolescent affair with Francis Tavistock, later the 7th Duke of Bedford, and an infatuation with the Grand Duke of Russia, later Czar Nicholas I. Regarding the latter's visit to Chatsworth in 1816, Lees-Milne writes that it "was certainly the highlight of a romantic friendship between two congenial young spirits comparatively unmolested by

⁷¹ Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 11.

⁷² For more on the discussion of "father and son" imagery as a form of Greek pederasty in art of this period, see Padiyar, 42-44.

hangers-on and free to follow their own devices.”⁷³ Devonshire’s feelings for Nicholas were so apparent that one observer drew a sentimental picture of them holding hands during the Russian Grand Duke’s visit (fig. 4.10). Amanda Foreman, in her biography of Devonshire’s mother, goes on to note that he “formed a lifelong attachment to the gardener and architect Joseph Paxton” and that their relationship “provoked comment but not scandal” at the time.⁷⁴ Considering the Romantic Regency period in which Devonshire was raised and his position of aristocratic privilege, his attachments to men and women would suggest that he would be described today as bisexual.⁷⁵

The Duke’s role as an art collector and patron of contemporary artists arguably is connected to his sexuality. Whitney Davis has proposed that private collections of classical art at this time were based on Winckelmann’s principles of beauty and, by extension, led to the first art collections having a conscious homoerotic quality to them:

Following Winckelmann, the inaugural or primitive judgement of artistic beauty *to be* universalized was already specified as homoerotic; it was itself understood to be a transference of a judgement of erotic beauty—and given the classical Greek art history in view, a specifically pederastic judgement.⁷⁶

Thus, men who shared Winckelmann’s personal (sexual) response to these figures actively began to collect more works like them to reinforce their interest in collecting. Davis further has argued that “Winckelmannian taste became a cultural norm. . . . In Kant’s terms, an *interested* judgment of taste had been succeeded by a *canonical* judgment.”⁷⁷

What Davis suggests is that Winckelmann’s own particular appreciation of beauty as described in the *Geschichte*—his homoerotically-derived interest in the male beauty—in turn taught others how to think and respond to beauty itself in art. Winckelmann’s writings ultimately encouraged a two-fold nature to collecting: one in which public display focused on purity of form in the “true style,” and another in which private delectation guided the collector’s decisions in what sensual works he preferred. Regarding the

⁷³ James Lees-Milne, *The Bachelor Duke: A Life of William Spencer Cavendish 6th Duke of Devonshire 1790-1858* (London: John Murray, 1991), 33.

⁷⁴ Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire*, pbk. ed. (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 381.

⁷⁵ Devonshire’s parents notoriously had sexual dalliances, including a *ménage à trois* with the woman who later became the second 5th Duchess. Both of his parents also had children outside their marriage. Although the acts of his parents are unlikely to have been a direct influence on Devonshire’s sexuality, they reinforce ideas about sexual openness among the aristocracy in Devonshire’s day.

⁷⁶ Whitney Davis, “Homoerotic Art Collection from 1750 to 1920,” *Art History* 24, no. 2 (April 2001), 251.

⁷⁷ Whitney Davis, *Queer Beauty: Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 37.

first, the sexual significance of these works became less important and the works served simply as idealized recreations of classical beauty. Therefore, statues of Venuses and nymphs could be and were collected as part of this canon of classical beauty. But Winckelmannian aesthetics also enabled male collectors to respond to works based on their own sexual interest, and for those who shared Winckelmann's homoerotic interest in male beauty, the collecting of these figures were possible without anyone questioning their motivation or intent.

When his father died in 1811, the 6th Duke inherited his title and, shortly thereafter, began renovating his estates. Among his projects at Chatsworth were the layout of new gardens and the construction of a large conservatory and fountains designed by Paxton, later the mastermind behind the Crystal Palace for the 1851 Great Exhibition. One of the Duke's personal ambitions for Chatsworth, however, was the creation of a gallery that would house contemporary sculpture. He went on his first Grand Tour to Rome in 1819 with the intent to commission and purchase sculpture for this gallery, and returned frequently over the next few years in what Alison Yarrington has called his "orgy of sculpture buying."⁷⁸ As Kenworthy-Browne has noted, Devonshire preferred modern over ancient sculpture, in part because of his interest in the artist behind the work and his relationship with that individual: "His sculptures were references to living personalities, or else were associated with his experiences, interests and friends."⁷⁹

His first stop was Canova's studio. He had a great appreciation for this sculptor, probably having seen the display of his work at the 1817 Royal Academy exhibition and having heard him spoken of with great admiration by his step-mother, the Dowager Duchess, who lived in Rome and knew him. The Duke commissioned from Canova an original design for a sculpture, the *Endymion*, 1819-22 (fig. 4.11). In his *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick*, the Duke highlighted it as his favorite work in the gallery, noting how when he saw it completed in Canova's studio after the sculptor's death in 1822, "it was with mingled feelings of grief and exultation, of boundless admiration and recent bereavement, that I first saw my group in the well-known studio, where I had passed so many happy hours with the most talented, the most simple, and most noble-minded of mankind."⁸⁰ When it was exhibited publicly at Devonshire House in

⁷⁸ Yarrington, "Under," 47.

⁷⁹ Kenworthy-Browne, "Ducal," 322.

⁸⁰ William Spencer Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick* (London: Privately Printed, [1845]), 105.

London in 1823, for both day and torch-lit night tours, the sculpture was so adored by those who saw it that the politician George Tierney reported that the dandies of Mayfair would lie on sofas and position themselves swooning in imitation of the beautiful, sculpted youth, an act that now seems like queer camp.⁸¹

As discussed above, it was Canova who recommended that the Duke visit Gibson. On this same trip, he also met the German sculptor Rudolf Schadow, from whom he commissioned reliefs of the Greek twins Castor and Pollux, and Thorvaldsen, from whom he ordered a *Venus*. Devonshire returned to Rome in late 1822, following the death of Canova, in large part to ensure that his *Endymion* was near completion. It was on this trip, and that of the following year in 1823, that the Duke ordered the largest number of works for his gallery.⁸² Significantly, they were all by former students or followers of Canova. These included: *Ganymede with the Eagle of Jove*, 1822-23, by Adamo Tadolini (fig. 4.12); *Wounded Achilles*, 1823-25, by Filippo Albacini (fig. 4.13); and *Discobolus*, 1823-28, by Mathieu Kessels (fig. 4.14).⁸³ As Yarrington convincingly has argued, Devonshire's sculpture gallery quickly evolved to become a showplace to honor Canova through the *Endymion* and other works by him, as well as through the sculptural accomplishments of his former students.⁸⁴

The 2009 reinstallation of the sculpture gallery reflects the Duke's original plan as to how he wanted the works to be seen. Thus, it is not accidental that upon entering the sculpture gallery from the main entrance, both in the 1830s and today, the first works the visitor encountered were all nude males. The Duke's own surviving notes show that he sought to arrange the space first by gender and then by how the figures were physically arranged: standing, sitting, or lying.⁸⁵ Considering the Duke's sexual interests, his art collecting practices based on Winckelmannian aesthetics, and his devotion to Canova's sensual style of sculpture, the entrance to his sculpture hall can be classified today as a "queer space." Aaron Betsky's

⁸¹ Lees-Milne, 60.

⁸² For more detailed information about all of Devonshire's sculpture purchases from 1819 to the late 1820s, see Kenworthy-Browne, "Ducal."

⁸³ Devonshire also commissioned in December 1822 a statue of *Cupid with a Butterfly* by Carlo Finelli, showing an ephobic Cupid holding a butterfly that he has captured in his hands. It is unknown where this statue was installed at Chatsworth, so I have excluded it from the discussion at this time. Its subject, however, is significant with regard to Gibson's *Love Tormenting the Soul*, which I discuss in the next section.

⁸⁴ See Yarrington, "Under."

⁸⁵ Charles Noble and Alison Yarrington, "'Like a Poet's Dreams': The Redisplay of the 6th Duke of Devonshire's Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth," *Apollo* 170 (November 2009), 48.

definition of a queer space is “a useless, amoral, and sensual space that lives only in and for experience. It is a space of spectacle, consumption, dance, and obscenity.”⁸⁶ Despite its potential anachronism, the entrance to Devonshire’s gallery, an environment designed for personal delectation and public exhibition, seems appropriately described as a queer space that celebrated the classical *beau idéal* and by extension Greek love. Standing amidst Canova’s *Endymion* (on whom one was meant to gaze), a wounded nude Achilles (separated from his lover Patroclus), a Ganymede (embracing Zeus in the guise of an eagle), a nude athlete (suggesting the presence of other nude athletes at the gymnasium), and Gibson’s pederastically suggestive *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, a visitor to the Duke’s sculpture gallery entered a space that clearly foregrounded a homoerotic appreciation for the nude male body.⁸⁷ Devonshire did collect female statues as well, but none of these were displayed at the entrance. Their presence in his gallery helped underscore the public exhibition of all the works in his gallery as pure, idealized visions of classical beauty. But it was the absence of these same female figures from the entrance that reinforced that section of the gallery as a space for private delectation, a queer space which for Devonshire allowed him to showcase works that were pure in form and homoerotic.

The relationship between Gibson and Devonshire was friendly through the rest of their lives. The Duke later commissioned a bas-relief of *Hero and Leander*, and Gibson was invited to Chatsworth to oversee its installation in September 1844 and stayed there more than a week as the Duke’s guest. In turn, on visits to Rome, the Duke and Gibson toured the studios of other sculptors whom Gibson, as Canova’s protégé, admired. The connection between the sculptor and the Duke was forged because of Canova. It was the mutual devotion each had for him—Gibson as his pupil, Devonshire as his patron—that established the homosocial bond shared by them. The term homosocial is appropriate in this

⁸⁶ Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1997), 5. Betsky’s emphasis is on twentieth-century architectural spaces, following the development of a conscious post-World War II socio-political gay identity. Betsky argues that queer spaces originated in nineteenth-century urban environments inhabited by the working classes as a retreat away from the wealthy, but the entrance to Devonshire’s gallery clearly demonstrates that queer spaces based on aesthetics could have existed in palatial homes as well. My thanks to Paul Ranogajec for this reference.

⁸⁷ One could argue that Gibson’s own studio might be seen as a queer space at this time as well. Certainly in his early years in Rome, his large-scale subjects were almost all of male figures, including not only *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, but also *Paris*, *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (i.e. an *Endymion* figure), and the twin Zephyrs in *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*. However, by the mid-1820s, Gibson was crafting nymphs too, with versions going to the Earl of Yarborough and George Watson Taylor. Thus, if Gibson’s studio is to be seen as a queer space, it would for a short period of time and as an ever-changing space with new work being crafted it would have less permanence in its design as such for visitors.

context, for it refers to the writings of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, whose theoretical work on triangulated relationships posited new ways of examining male-male relations based on a common interest or goal, usually female in nature, as the apex of the triangle.⁸⁸ Here, however, it is another male who is the object of their devotion, and rather than compete against one another, their homosocial bond becomes a shared experience. Taken to its logical conclusion, then, the sculpture *Mars Restrained by Cupid* becomes a permanent, tangible signifier for Canova himself. For both Gibson as its creator and Devonshire as its owner, this sculpture served to honor Canova, who died in 1822, while the artist worked on the statue and the patron designed its future home at Chatsworth. Through the work's subject, patronage, and display, *Mars Restrained by Cupid* becomes a homosocial homage to Canova.

Although in 1844 Gibson saw the sculpture gallery with its homosocial homage to Canova, he probably was never fully aware of Devonshire's intent. Of all the statues in Devonshire's gallery, and of all the early works in Gibson's oeuvre, *Mars Restrained by Cupid* is the most visible celebration of Greek love with its representation of two male figures engaged with one another. In fact, it is worth noting that Gibson never crafted another statue where two males appeared by themselves in this way. Aware of the obvious homoerotic implications of the work, he may have intentionally censored himself, determined not to reproduce imagery that could be seen as so blatantly homoerotic. Evidence of his practice of self-censorship will be discussed later in this chapter. However, this does not mean Gibson completely avoided homoerotic subjects. Rather, he turned to representations of Greek love that were even more coded than in *Mars Restrained by Cupid*. He focused on the individual male nude as an object of beauty, as in the work *Love Tormenting the Soul*.

Love Tormenting the Soul

After *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, Gibson's further explorations within the Winckelmannian *beau idéal* focused exclusively on the nude ephebe represented alone. These subjects, such as Eros/Cupid, Endymion, and Narcissus, were taken from Greek mythology and reflected sensual modes of male beauty. Of these, Eros/Cupid became Gibson's favored subject. As discussed above, the innovative

⁸⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

pairing of Cupid with Mars in Devonshire's sculpture gave him the opportunity to substitute for the more common representation of Venus that of her son Cupid, and in so doing shifted the subject into one of pederastic desire. Conscious of the dominant heteronormative, Romantic market, however, Gibson instead focused on Cupid's mythological marriage to Psyche. Examples of this theme include: a freestanding statue entitled *Psyche Borne by the Zephyrs*, 1822-27, for Sir George Beaumont; a bas-relief of *The Marriage of Psyche and Celestial Love*, ca. 1844, for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; and his line engraved illustrations to Elizabeth Strutt's book *The Story of Psyche with a Classical Enquiry into the Signification and Origin of the Fable* (London, 1852). His interpretations added to the international glut which included paintings by David and his followers, as well as two well-known sculptures by Canova. However, when choosing to depict the god Cupid alone, Gibson fell in line with Winckelmann's homoerotic principles of idealized beauty based on the ancient Greek nude male body.

Love Tormenting the Soul (fig. 3.23) is one such example, a sculpture that Gibson boldly declared to be "one of my best works," presumably because of its unique design and the quality of the finished product. He was first inspired to make the subject after having an attractive youth model for him.

There appeared in Rome a boy of twelve years old of most extraordinary beauty of face and figure, and whilst painters and sculptors were copying him I felt very desirous to avail myself of a model so unusually beautiful. I conceived the design of a statue of Cupid naked. I represented Eros caressing a butterfly upon his breast, while with his right hand he is drawing an arrow to pierce it. I called it "Love tormenting the soul." I spent three months upon the clay model, working at it almost constantly.⁸⁹

Two surviving sketches at the Royal Academy, showing left and right side views of a boy taken from life, probably represent this model (figs. 4.15 and 4.16). In the drawings, the boy stands with his left leg forward and right leg back and holds his right hand upright staring intently at it. The other hand grasps a cylindrical block commonly used by models as a substitution for a spear or other heavy object, thus allowing them to hold a position for a lengthy period of time. The boy shown in the drawing is rigid, almost statue-like. This could be because the boy was inexperienced as a model or because Gibson was attempting to capture tension in the model's demeanor. In one of the drawings, the calf of the forward leg has hatch marking to suggest volume in the muscle, and his stern facial expression conveys concentration or anger. The boy's stiff, modeled pose is incongruous with the delicate refinement of the

⁸⁹ Matthews, 106.

finished sculpture, and arguably these drawings could be for a different work, but a closer examination of the sculpture and drawings show that in fact the sculpture is an inversion of the boy's position in the drawing. In the finished sculpture, he stands with his right leg forward as if the foot has just touched the ground, and his left foot rises as if he is about to take another step forward. His left hand holds the butterfly gently while he reaches slowly downward with his right hand to pull an arrow from his quiver.

Gibson does not provide a date for when this boy modeled for him, nor do we know the other artists for whom he posed, but based on information regarding the date of the first commissioned marble version of the work, Gibson probably drew these sketches and designed the figure in clay around 1835. A plaster version then would have been made and exhibited in his studio, and it was from this that the 3rd Baron Selsey, Captain Henry John Peachey, ordered a marble edition of the work.⁹⁰ According to Gibson's account books, Selsey paid £300 for the sculpture. Gibson's *praticien* Felice Bains did the carving of the marble, taking approximately two months to complete it. Other unnamed carvers worked separately on the wings and quiver of arrows.⁹¹ Gibson listed his total expenses for the project at £65, leaving a profit of £235. He does not mention the price paid for the block of marble itself, which could mean he already had blocks of marble previously acquired on hand for this and other projects.

The actual date of this commission is unknown, but probably took place no later than 1837. Since Lord Selsey died in Florence in March 1838, leaving a childless widow, we must assume that Lady Selsey continued her husband's commission and thereafter kept the work herself.⁹² Gibson made replicas of the subject for other patrons, both at the same price of £300. One, commissioned in the early 1840s, was for Richard Vaughan Yates, a Liverpool iron merchant and nail manufacturer.⁹³ The third replica was commissioned in 1848 by Robert Stayner Holford, M.P. for East Gloucestershire, and displayed at

⁹⁰ Eastlake correctly named Gibson's patron as Lord Selsey, but Matthews later misidentified him as Lord Saye and Sele. Eastlake, 76; Matthews, 106.

⁹¹ Personal Account Books, 1823-1842, G1/6/1, and 1822-1859, G1/6/2, Gibson Papers.

⁹² Lady Selsey died in 1870, but it is unknown whether she sold the work during her lifetime or if it was sold after her death. It was acquired by either the 3rd or 4th Earl and Countess of Harewood and is at present still part of the collection at Harewood House. Heather Griffiths, Curator of Modern Collections, Harewood House Trust, e-mail message to the author, 17 June 2008.

⁹³ Yates also commissioned the reduced version of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* by Benjamin Gibson. By 1870, Eastlake noted that the Yates version of *Love Tormenting the Soul* was owned by Michael Belcher, Esq., Holmestead House, Liverpool. Eastlake, 250. The work passed on by descent, and in 1916 both this and the *Psyche* were donated by Col. Belcher to the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

Dorchester House on Park Lane in London. Holford's version was tinted by Gibson in the mid-1850s, which will be discussed below.⁹⁴ The Royal Academy has in its collection another replica in marble that probably was made on spec by Gibson in order to show off to visitors in Rome his "best work."⁹⁵ Finally, a plaster version of the subject, called *Cupid with a Butterfly*, was on permanent display from the mid-1850s in the Crystal Palace when it was reconstructed at Sydenham Park.⁹⁶

Upon completion of the Selsey commission in 1839, Gibson submitted it to the Royal Academy annual exhibition where it was displayed with the title *Love Cherishing the Soul While Preparing to Torment it* (no. 1297). He also exhibited that year two other works: *Venus and Cupid; a basso-relievo in marble* (no. 1298), and *Venus Verticordia* (no. 1303; fig. 3.29). The last of these was the earlier version of the subject which Gibson would repeat tinted with wax-based pigments. As discussed in the previous chapter, the new version of this statue was the *Tinted Venus*, which Gibson exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition in London accompanied by Holford's tinted version of *Love Tormenting the Soul*. Thus, this exhibition of these two subjects for a second time, now tinted, reinforced their importance in his oeuvre.

An unnamed reviewer for *The Art-Union* praised Gibson's work on display in 1839. Neither Francis Chantrey nor Richard Westmacott, the two leading London-based British sculptors at this time, had submitted anything that year, which the author lamented, but Gibson's submissions helped restore value in the production of British sculpture.

The sculptor who ranks next to Westmacott is undoubtedly J. Gibson, R.A. He abides in Rome; but his country receives, from year to year, such proofs of his genius as to justify our national pride in him. We trust that his works obtain purchasers as well as admirers among the wealthy of England; that his "patrons" are not exclusively foreign; and that, hereafter, when we search for the wonders of his chisel, we may not be compelled to go far or often from home. He exhibits, this year, a basso-relievo, in marble, of 'Venus and Cupid,' and two statues—'Venus Verticordia' (No. 1303), and 'Love cherishing the soul while preparing to torment it' (No. 1297); the first is that of a glorious and perfect woman; the second, that of a boy who presses a butterfly to his heart, while he takes from his quiver the arrow with which he is about to torture it. They are noble and exquisite works, and largely assist in rescuing this "chamber" from the character of insipidity.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ This work eventually was acquired by Lady Agnes Dixon Hartland who in 1939 donated it to the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, where it is still part of the collection. No tinting remains on it.

⁹⁵ This version currently is on long-term loan to Bodelywyddan Castle in Rhyl, Wales. According to the curatorial files at the Royal Academy, this work also may have had tinting at some point, but it has since faded or was removed.

⁹⁶ Anna Jameson, *A Hand-Book to the Courts of Modern Sculpture* (London: Crystal Palace Library; Bradbury & Evans, 1854), 22. This version presumably was destroyed in the fire of 1936.

⁹⁷ "The Royal Academy," *The Art-Union* (15 June 1839), 85.

This review is of interest too because it suggests that although Gibson is perceived as a British sculptor, for which the nation should be proud, the fact that he was based in Rome had spawned a xenophobic response that his work was not being appreciated or patronized enough in Britain.⁹⁸ The author seems to suggest that the potential loss of Gibson in the international school of Rome could threaten the state of British sculpture itself. It is perhaps noteworthy in this context to point out that Chantrey died soon afterwards in 1841 and that Westmacott after his knighthood in 1837 essentially retired from making new sculpture.

Each repetition of *Love Tormenting the Soul* is approximately 51 inches (129.5 cm) high. Standing life-sized to the height of a youth, and representing him moving in slow motion as he stops walking and reaches carefully for an arrow so as not to disturb the butterfly, the figure epitomizes Canova's directive to design sculpture based on the observation of everyday life. At the same time, the boy is idealized in the late classical style of ancient Greek sculpture, his hair and features little resembling those of the boy seen in the preliminary sketches, no matter how extraordinary his beauty was. With a slick polished surface, Gibson's Cupid falls in line with the sensual works inspired by his master Canova. It was not his first Cupid, however. As discussed above, he had designed a similar-looking, but more youthful god of love in *Mars Restrained by Cupid*. He also had made a model of a Cupid drawing his bow, which was commissioned in marble during the winter of 1826 by Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 5th Baronet and Member of Parliament for Denbighshire, Wales.⁹⁹ This latter work was directly inspired by the late-fourth-century B.C.E. sculpture in the Capitoline Museum showing a similar theme.

Love Tormenting the Soul, however, was different in its design in that Gibson paired the god with a butterfly.¹⁰⁰ In writing about the plaster version at the Crystal Palace, Anna Jameson briefly explained its symbolism: "This subject may have been suggested by the myth of Psyche, whose emblem was the

⁹⁸ As discussed in chapter two, the controversy over Gibson's election to the RA, despite being a permanent resident outside of England, still troubled the minds of those who had been against his election.

⁹⁹ Matthews, 66-67. This work most recently was sold at auction by Sotheby's London on 5 December 2007 for £35,300, and is now in an unidentified private collection.

¹⁰⁰ The subject wasn't without precedent. As noted above, the Duke of Devonshire had commissioned in December 1822 a statue of *Cupid with a Butterfly* by Finelli, although this statue shows a childlike Cupid holding a butterfly that he has captured in his hands. In the early 1790s, Canova had made a statue of *Psyche* in which she caresses a butterfly in her hands.

butterfly; but the statue properly represents Eros—divine love, and the butterfly is here the spirit, the human soul.”¹⁰¹ This ambiguity does generate more questions than answers, for why is divine love tormenting the human soul? Like Gibson’s *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, this statue of Cupid reveals a dual nature in subject, one part of which can be seen as homoerotic. The connection between torment and the homoerotic will be considered in more detail below.

Love Tormenting the Soul stylistically is based on the works of the fourth-century B.C.E. sculptor Praxiteles, a figure Winckelmann classified as his paragon of the “beautiful” style. In his textual walking tour of sculpture in Rome, Gibson highlighted in the Vatican Museums a fragmented work called *Il Genio del Vaticano*, also known as the *Eros of Centocelle* (fig. 4.17).

One of my greatest delights is to contemplate this fragment. It is impossible to imagine a countenance more lovely, pure, serene and spiritually beautiful. How luxuriant are his waving locks round his soft neck! and the inclined position of the head is graceful and chaste. I have no doubt that this statue represents celestial Cupid, and Visconti believes it to be after Praxiteles.¹⁰²

The smooth youthful musculature and the head inclined forward suggest it could be one source of inspiration for Gibson’s Cupid. Another source of inspiration, however, could be the *Borghese Genius* (fig. 4.18), also in the Praxitelean style. Although this Roman copy of a fourth-century B.C.E. statue was by the time of Gibson’s arrival in Rome then in the Louvre, the work was well-known in prints and in copies, displayed with the addition of reconstructed arms and wings. Winckelmann had written of this work:

Here I wish I could find the words to describe a beauty that scarcely seems to have been wrought by human hands—namely, a winged Genius in the Villa Borghese, whose stature is that of a well-made youth. If an imagination filled with the individual beauties of nature and absorbed in the contemplation of the beauty flowing from and leading to God could dream the vision of an angel, its countenance illuminated by divine light, with an appearance that seems to emanate from the source of the highest unity—in such a shape the reader should imagine this beautiful statue.¹⁰³

Winckelmann’s comments seem to be reinterpreted quite literally by Gibson in his memoirs. After having completed his new sculpture *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.1), which will be discussed further in the next chapter, Gibson began to meditate on it: “that pure divine beauty which

¹⁰¹ Jameson, *Courts*, 22.

¹⁰² Matthews, 157. The reference to Visconti probably refers to Giovanni B. A. Visconti and Enno Quirino Visconti, *Il museo Pio-Clementino illustrato e descritto*, 7 vols. (Milan, 1818-22).

¹⁰³ Winckelmann, 200.

enchants my soul, my imagination, began to soar up to the God himself.”¹⁰⁴ He prays to Cupid for his approval of the new creation, noting in particular how he has created “ambrosial locks which wave luxuriantly round thy feminine shoulders.” Cupid, in turn, speaks to him and blesses the work, commenting on one physical feature, the top-knot which the Graces and his mother Aphrodite make him wear, and noting in particular the importance of his androgyny: “No sculptor should presume to represent me without being aware of the peculiarity of my nature and form, which is androgynous, the passion of love which my power inspires being equally divided between the two sexes.”¹⁰⁵ Here Cupid petitions Gibson to paint him, because to leave him in the state of white marble would make him appear cold. He reminds Gibson that Praxiteles had Nicias paint his statue of Cupid, and because the gods feed upon nectar and ambrosia, “therefore give me my celestial glow, warm, pale, and pure.”¹⁰⁶ Cupid ends his spiritual visit by noting that he must leave because “I have promised to meet Ganymede in the gardens of Zeus and play at osselets.”¹⁰⁷

This imagined conversation with the god of love reinforces how Gibson’s representations of this deity can be seen as part of the Winckelmannian aesthetic that focused on the homoerotics of the male body. The naming of Ganymede at play with Cupid also reminds the reader of the pederastic traditions of ancient Greece. The subject of a relief depicting these two, on which Gibson was working at this time, will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter. Perhaps most significantly for Gibson is the inclusion of Cupid’s desire to be painted, as this relates to the gendering of polychrome sculpture itself.

Although both male and female statues from ancient Greece had some form of polychromy, Gibson was interested only in tinting females and epebes, suggesting the femininity inherent in polychromy itself. Indeed, in surveying polychrome sculptures of the nineteenth century, male figures do not appear

¹⁰⁴ Matthews, 76. Although this and the subsequent passages appear after Gibson’s discussion of *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, they seem to relate more to *Love Tormenting the Soul*. In the former work Cupid’s head is covered by a hat and the top-knot cannot be seen, so clearly Gibson must be referring to *Love Tormenting the Soul*, where his head is bare and the top-knot visible. Furthermore, the discussion of color is relevant as he tinted Holford’s replica of the statue, and there is no evidence that he tinted *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*.

¹⁰⁵ Matthews, 77.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 77. Osselets was a Greco-Roman version of dice or jacks. In 1831 Thorvaldsen designed a bas-relief titled *Cupid and Ganymede* showing them playing dice, so Gibson may have drawn on this subject for his imaginary encounter with Eros. Thorvaldsen’s relief was later made into a cameo by Tommaso Saulini. See Malcolm Stuart Carr, “Tommaso and Luigi Saulini,” *The Connoisseur* 190 (November 1975), 172-73.

in tinted forms until very late in the nineteenth century with sculptors such as Alfred Gilbert, William Reynolds-Stephens, and Gilbert Bayes, when the New Sculpture movement had made decorative, polychrome statues and statuettes acceptable.¹⁰⁸ The critic J. Beavington Atkinson, writing in *The Art Journal*, noted particularly that Gibson rejected “the tinting of all forms or figures indiscriminately. A Venus or a Cupid may borrow charm and witchery from ardent tones; a Hercules might spurn such spell of fascination.”¹⁰⁹ The idea that a figure of Hercules should not have color, but one of Venus could, clearly reveals the gendering inherent in the art-historical battle between line and color. This was discourse that reached back to Giorgio Vasari, who favored Florentine/Roman Renaissance artists for their masculine *disegno* over the feminine *colore* of Venetian painters, and continued into the nineteenth century with Neoclassicists emphasizing contour over Romantic color. It might be tempting to claim that Gibson’s polychrome experiments were a form of “Romantic Classicism,” but doing so forces his work into the trap of stylistic labels, categories that are fraught with dissent in art history today.

Gibson in fact did tint *Love Tormenting the Soul*, specifically the version commissioned by Robert Stayner Holford, M.P., in 1848. Gibson tinted this statue in his studio by early 1855, following his experiment with the *Tinted Venus*, and it was received rather well, in particular as a companion to the Venus:

The very delicate tinting—in fact, but a distant approach to anything like flesh colour—and the auburn yellow given to the wings and hair, have, I think, an effect more in harmony with the nature of the subject than is the case in the other statue. The graceful vivacity and *naïve* playfulness of the archer-boy are exquisitely combined with high ideal beauty; and the two statues might be regarded, in companionship, as among the most perfect reproductions of Mythologic art, of the antique feeling, that modern genius has produced.¹¹⁰

Gibson exhibited this tinted version of *Love Tormenting the Soul* at the International Exhibition of 1862 with *Venus* and *Pandora* in the polychrome temple structure designed by Owen Jones. As such it harmonized with the overall decorative interior and its companion statues, and the figure’s gender seemed not to be an issue with viewers with regard to polychromy.

Cupid’s self-described “peculiarity of ... nature and form, which is androgynous, the passion of love which my power inspires being equally divided between the two sexes,” is worth repeating in the context

¹⁰⁸ See Andreas Blühm, *The Colour of Sculpture, 1840-1910* (Zwolle, Waanders, 1996).

¹⁰⁹ J. Beavington Atkinson, “International Exhibition, 1862. No. VII—English and American Sculpture,” *The Art-Journal* (December 1862), 230.

¹¹⁰ “Italy,” *Critic* 14, no. 337 (16 April 1855), 189.

of polychromy, for in tinting this figure, his only colored male subject, Gibson emphasized the god's androgynous—and by extension sensual and effeminate—nature.¹¹¹ This androgyny is underscored by a commission that Gibson received in 1856 from Lord Londonderry for a statue of Bacchus (fig. 4.19). Gibson used both male and female models for the statue, “so as to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the Greek idea, that Apollo, Dionysos and Eros are androgynous,” and he described the god's face as tranquil and sweet, his eyelids “a little swelled, which gives softness and a slight touch of dreamy voluptuousness to his feminine countenance.”¹¹² When *Bacchus* was completed, Gibson decided to tint the statue, which resulted in Londonderry rejecting the commission because he did not want a polychrome male statue.¹¹³ In fact, Gibson never did tint the figure, but his plans to do so demonstrate that for him sensual, androgynous (but not heroic, masculine) males could share in the feminizing of color that he applied to figures of Venus, Pandora, and Hebe.

In addition to color as a component of androgyny, Cupid speaks to Gibson in the day dream about his top-knot. This feature is significant because it connects the god of love with ancient and contemporaneous sculptural representations of the god Apollo, whom as just noted Gibson also saw as androgynous. Considering Gibson's oeuvre of classical deities, it is surprising that he never sculpted the subject of Apollo, especially because this god was so important to Winckelmann. Yet, I would contend that Cupid in *Love Tormenting the Soul* is meant to be seen as Gibson's ephebic reinterpretation of the *Apollo Belvedere*.

The *Apollo Belvedere* (fig. 4.1), as discussed earlier, was the most prized example of the idealized male form in the Winckelmannian aesthetic. His heroism and beauty was emulated by artists who used the recognizable pose to suggest an *exemplum virtutis* on the part of their own subjects. The pose is recognizable in Grand Tour portraits like Pompeo Batoni's *Lord Thomas Dundas* and sculptures such as Canova's *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (fig. 4.20).¹¹⁴ Looking at the *Apollo Belvedere* beside *Love*

¹¹¹ Matthews, 77.

¹¹² Matthews, 215; Eastlake, 218.

¹¹³ For more on this commission, see Hans Fletcher, “John Gibson's Polychromy and Lord Londonderry's Bacchus,” *The Connoisseur* 187 (September 1974), 2-5.

¹¹⁴ The *Apollo Belvedere* appears in the background of Batoni's painting, allowing the viewer to make the visual connection between Lord Dundas and the god. Canova's sculpture was a commission by the Vatican to replace the ancient work that had been looted by Napoleon and was seen as a modern reinterpretation of the *Apollo Belvedere*.

Tormenting the Soul, the two works seem dissimilar because of the noticeable difference in age between the subjects. However, on closer examination, one can see that both figures stand in the exact same position, with their right leg forward and left foot rising behind them to take a step. The tree trunk to their right is used as a base to stabilize the subject, but their right arms reach downward toward the trunk with the same graceful sway. Both also wear the top-knot in their hair, reinforcing the androgynous appearance of each figure.

The *Apollo Belvedere*'s subject was believed to be his vanquishing of the Pythian serpent, having just released the deadly arrow from his bow and stepping forward in victory. In *Love Tormenting the Soul*, Cupid is about to pull the arrow from a quiver that he will use to torture the butterfly. Both subjects show a form of action, Cupid before, Apollo after, and thus each can be said to reflect physically, in their respective ephebic and youthful appearances, different stages of life. Indeed, the subject of a related ancient sculpture, the *Apollo Sauroktonos* (fig. 4.21), also attributed to Praxiteles, clearly shows a similar idea.¹¹⁵ In this work Apollo appears as an ephebe—notably one who resembles Gibson's Eros even more—preparing to kill a lizard on a tree trunk. The lizard and his planned kill foreshadow his adult vanquishing of the Pythian serpent. Gibson, then, in his sculpture, successfully references not just one but two ancient statues of Apollo by drawing on their combined appreciation for beauty and action as an ephebe and idealized hero.

Winckelmann's personal eroticized interest in the *Apollo Belvedere*, and Gibson's own subsequent mirroring of this appreciation, has been discussed above, but of course they were not the only "true style" artists to note the statue's importance. In examining writings from the eighteenth century, Potts has argued that there was a recurring belief that the *Apollo Belvedere* was unique because of "its unusually vivid ambiguity, its potential to be the focus of competing fantasies of unyielding domination and exquisite desirability," even going so far for some as to see the work's power based on "the violent release of the deadly arrow effectively giving way to suggestions of a pleasurable relaxation of tension after sexual discharge."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Gibson described the *Apollo Sauroktonos* as "most beautiful and graceful" and "refined to the highest degree of beauty and delicacy ... in accordance with the laws of art, which laws we learn from the Greeks." Matthews, 157.

¹¹⁶ Potts, *Flesh*, 118, 123.

Thus, as discussed earlier, the power of the *Apollo Belvedere* was based on two things: first, on its action, its ability to have (male) viewers admire the heroism of the god; and second, on its appearance, its ability to have (male) viewers desire the statue's ideal beauty. If Gibson sought to emulate this aspect of the *Apollo Belvedere* in *Love Tormenting the Soul*, then it seems he may have failed, for in shifting his focus to beauty first and action second, he quite literally thrust the homoeroticism of the work into the viewer's space. By leaning the statue's torso backward and pushing his hips and genitalia forward, he forces the (male) viewer to engage with the figure as an object of ancient Greek pederastic desire. In this sense, *Love Tormenting the Soul* shares more with the *Apollo Sauroktonos*, with its nude ephebe and the presence of a lizard, a doubled phallogocentric symbolism that suggests Greek love.

Cupid, however, is about to torture a butterfly, an admittedly confusing symbol in this scenario, considering butterflies usually are symbols of spring and rebirth, and also Psyche herself. This caressing-tormenting effect thus creates ambiguity in the sculpture's meaning. It suggests a love-hate, even sado-masochistic sentiment at work. Cupid's arrows had the ability to make people fall in love, but according to mythological tradition two arrows were needed: one to be fired at each partner for true love. Cupid also could shoot arrows that repelled advances. Such was the story of Apollo and Daphne, whereby Apollo bragged to Cupid that his use of arrows to destroy the Pythian serpent was more useful than Cupid's arrows were for love. Cupid responded by firing one arrow of passion at Apollo and one of revulsion at the nymph Daphne. Apollo pursued her, she ran and prayed for help, and she was transformed into the laurel tree.¹¹⁷ This was but one story of how Love's arrows could lead to a tragic end.

In this sculpture Cupid is both caressing and torturing the butterfly by enflaming it with unrequited desire. If, according to Jameson, Cupid (or, in his Greek origin, Eros) is divine love and the butterfly/Psyche is the human soul, then the butterfly arguably represents the viewer, the (male) Winckelmannian aesthete who idolizes the ephebe as an eroticized object of beauty, and who suffers at his hand as a result of this desire because it must be silenced and cannot be reciprocated.¹¹⁸ As Potts

¹¹⁷ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1:451-567.

¹¹⁸ For other interpretations of Cupid and Psyche, particularly during Gibson's day, see Maria Grazia Bernardini and Marina Mattei, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche: Myth in Art from Antiquity to Canova* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2012); Sonia Cavicchioli, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche: An Illustrated History* (New York: George Braziller, 2002); Dorothy Johnson, "Desire Demythologized: David's *L'Amour quittant Psyché*," *Art History* 9, no. 4 (December 1986), 450-70; and Robert Rosenblum, "Benjamin

has so aptly pointed out, despite our knowledge of Winckelmann's homosexual practices and our understandings of his homoerotic aesthetic principles, he was very much restrained by the laws of his own society in what he could actually say and do. Despite his desire to be "free" as he perceived ancient Greeks were, laws punishing sodomy with imprisonment or death were still widespread in Europe, and it was in truth largely impossible for Winckelmann—and all men who practiced same-sex passion—to live their lives openly with impunity.¹¹⁹ While it is true that in a libertine city such as Rome, Winckelmann was able to encourage others through his writings to gaze safely with sexual desire at statues of Cupid, Apollo, and numerous other nude males, the self-absorption of these statues served only to torture these men because their desire could not be reciprocated. *Love Tormenting the Soul* ultimately exemplifies a state of homoeroticized panic experienced by men like Winckelmann whose unrequited love for other men always ended in misery.

This sculpture then, with its love-hate message of caressing-tormenting, can be seen not only as homoerotic in its subject, but also as a warning to potential Winckelmannian aesthetes about the expression of this desire. The fact that Gibson crafted his self-declared "best work" in the 1830s and 1840s is significant, for it was at this time that one sees in his oeuvre a transition from the Winckelmannian homoeroticized male to nude females and genre scenes, changes in taste that were reflected in painting and sculpture generally, as driven by the rising bourgeoisie. The old days of the aristocratic Grand Tourist, whose tastes followed more in line with Winckelmannian, homoerotic aesthetics, were now challenged by the rising middle classes. These individuals were bound by more traditional family values, and had less classical education. As such, they preferred subjects that focused on females and genre scenes. This transition from the homoerotic to the heteronormative, and Gibson's decision to censor himself through a conscious change in subject matter, can best be seen in his bas-relief *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe in the Presence of Celestial Love*, in which the original subject depicted Ganymede, not Hebe.

West's *Eagle Bringing the Cup of Water to Psyche: A Document of Romantic Classicism*," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 19, no. 1 (1960), 66-75.

¹¹⁹ Potts sees this sexual freedom as the core of Winckelmann's *Geschichte*, but extends this desire for freedom to his economic status, his social class, and his religious values as well. Potts, *Flesh*, 182-221.

From Ganymede to Hebe

Mars Restrained by Cupid and Love Tormenting the Soul are not the only works by Gibson that convey the homoerotics of Winckelmannian aesthetics. *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.1) was his most popular work based on the number of repetitions produced, which will be discussed in the next chapter. In the context of homoerotic subjects, however, this *Cupid* arguably can be seen as an object of same-sex desire. Because he wears a hat and a shepherd's cloak that masks his wings and quiver of arrows, his true nature is hidden from the viewer but apparent to those who understand the importance of keeping their same-sex passions to themselves. The fact that patrons of this work ranged from the conservative Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel to Czar Alexander II reinforces the notion that this subject could have appealed to those who appreciated genre subjects or "true style" works in the Winckelmannian tradition of the *beau idéal*.

This same dual interpretation can be applied to another work, Gibson's *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24). This sculpture was his RA diploma work and afterwards was reproduced (wearing a fig leaf) as a Parian miniature by Copeland for the Art Union of London. According to his memoirs, Gibson came upon the idea for this work after he stumbled upon a beautiful Roman youth sitting on a fountain outside the Villa Medici.¹²⁰ Recounting the myth of the youth who was so beautiful that he fell in love with his own reflection in the water, the subject of Narcissus came to be seen iconographically and psychologically as the mirroring of passion between men and a masturbatory form of self-love.¹²¹ Represented as a nude youth sitting on a rock, the polished marble skin of Gibson's figure gleams like flesh as he leans forward to look into the water, contemplating his own beauty in a reenactment of how the viewer admires him.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of Gibson's first works modeled in clay under the tutelage of Canova was a sleeping boy, a life-sized version of which he completed by May 1818.¹²² This work became the statue *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3) and was first commissioned in marble

¹²⁰ Matthews, 82-83.

¹²¹ For more on Narcissus and narcissism as it applies to homosexuality and art, see my essay "Subjects of the Visual Arts: Narcissus," in *The Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts*, ed. Claude J. Summers (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2004), 304-05. For the Freudian aspects of narcissism, homosexuality, and art, see Whitney Davis's essays "The Aesthetogenesis of Sex: 'Narcissism' in Freudian Theory and Homosexualist Culture, I" and "Love All the Same: 'Narcissism' in Freudian Theory and Homosexualist Culture, II," in his *Queer Beauty*, 187-241.

¹²² Matthews, 51.

in 1824 by Lord George Cavendish, Devonshire's uncle.¹²³ Its naturalism reveals a close study of the model who posed in his studio for the work, but it too has a classical pedigree: the story of Endymion, the sleeping shepherd who was loved by Selena, the goddess of the moon. Much as in Girodet's popular painting (fig. 4.2) and Canova's *Endymion* for Devonshire (fig. 4.11)—and by association, if not subject, Thorvaldsen's *Shepherd Boy*, 1817 (fig. 3.15), whose legs are provocatively spread for the viewer's delectation—Gibson isolates the male figure in the Winckelmannian tradition, accentuating his beauty and inviting the viewer to see the youth as the goddess did, an object of beauty to be desired, in this case, homoerotically by the assumed male viewer.¹²⁴ Even the presence of the phallic lizard on the back of the tree stump recalls the *Apollo Sauroktonos* and reminds the viewer of the work's association with the classical *beau idéal*.

Because he crafted an Endymion, a Narcissus, numerous Cupids (and Apollo by association), as well as an idealized warrior in Mars, it is surprising that the one example of the *beau idéal* from classical mythology that Gibson did not carve was Ganymede, the cupbearer and lover of Zeus/Jupiter. Indeed, the popularity of Ganymede in contemporary sculpture at this time would have made it an obvious choice of subject. For instance, Westmacott had submitted as his RA diploma work a bas-relief of *Jupiter and Ganymede*, 1812 (fig. 4.22), taken from a drawing by Michelangelo, and Devonshire had commissioned *Ganymede with the Eagle of Jove*, 1822-23 (fig. 4.12), from Tadolini in Rome. But the most prevalent maker of Ganymede figures in sculpture at this time was Thorvaldsen, who had in his studio in Rome at least four different plaster versions of the ephebe on display: *Ganymede Offering the Cup*, 1804; *Ganymede Filling the Cup*, 1814; *Ganymede with Jupiter's Eagle*, 1817 (fig. 4.23); and a relief of *Cupid*

¹²³ For a discussion of the history of *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, see Timothy Stevens, "John Gibson's 'The Sleeping Shepherd Boy,'" in *Patronage & Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, ed. Penelope Curtis (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1989), 57-59. The first Cavendish version was held by Chelminski Gallery in London as of 2002. A second version for the Duke of Northumberland was eventually purchased at auction in 1988 by the Walker Art Gallery and is at present still part of the collections of the National Museums Liverpool. A third version was commissioned by James Lenox of New York and was until at least 1950 part of the collection at The New York Public Library, at which point it passed on to a private collector. The work more recently was sold at auction by Sotheby's New York on 23 May 1990 for \$220,000, and is now presumably in an unidentified private collection.

¹²⁴ Present-day literature on the homoerotics of Endymion in art is surprisingly extensive and highly polemical, with most of it on issues associated with Girodet's painting as a representation of same-sex passion. See, for instance, Crow, *Emulation*, 133-38; Saslow, *Pictures*, 171-72; and, perhaps the most vitriolic, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Is Endymion Gay?: Historical Interpretation and Sexual Identities," in Sylvain Bellenger, *Girodet 1767-1824*, English ed. (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2006), 81-95. On Thorvaldsen's *Shepherd*, see Potts, *Sculptural*, 56-59.

and *Ganymede*, 1831.¹²⁵ One might attempt to argue that Gibson chose not to sculpt a Ganymede because he believed there were too many of this subject in existence, but this argument would be unfounded. Academic training in classical art dictated to artists the notion of imitation, not original creation. Unlike the modernist, anti-classical trajectory in art historiography that favors the creation of unique works of art, excellence in the “true style” was judged on the quality of imitation after antiquity. This did not mean directly copying ancient art but rather following, according to Hugh Honour, “a rigorous process of extraction and distillation” that led to an interpretation inspired by Greek sculpture.¹²⁶

Gibson certainly was aware of the Ganymede myth, most notably in his dream of flying to Rome in the clutches of an eagle, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Gibson’s decision not to sculpt a Ganymede suggests that he probably was aware of the homoerotic potential in this figure’s subjectivity, for of all the deities and demi-gods discussed in this chapter, Ganymede was the one figure in mythology whose story was exclusively based on same-sex passion. Cupid, Narcissus, and Endymion all had heteronormative myths that permitted their presence in art without controversy and thus could be viewed as acceptable subjects for public display and private delectation. But Ganymede was different. Gibson being aware of the homoerotic implications of the figure, his own asexuality may have caused him yet again to censor himself as he had earlier after completing and never repeating a subject like *Mars Restrained by Cupid*. Evidence of this self-censorship is most apparent in his bas-relief in plaster entitled *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe in the Presence of Celestial Love*, ca. 1840 (fig. 4.24).

The subject of this work is the celebration of Psyche’s reunion with Eros (i.e. Cupid’s “celestial love” guise) and the granting of immortality to her in recognition of her trials in order to reunite with the god of love. Hebe, the cupbearer daughter of Zeus and Hera (Jupiter and Juno), stands between Psyche and Eros, presenting her with the nectar of immortality. Hebe appears as the peak in a triangulation, her position between the two almost making her appear as an interceder.¹²⁷ Considering Gibson’s emphasis on the male ephebe in his art up until this time, the figure of Hebe is anomalous in this work. Although

¹²⁵ *Thorvaldsen’s Museum*, trans. Ingeborg Nixon (Copenhagen: Thorvaldsen’s Museum, 1972), 40, 50, 52.

¹²⁶ Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1981), 21.

¹²⁷ Although the subject of the relief is heteronormative in its theme, one could argue for a potential lesbian point of view, whereby one female proffers to another her cup of nectar, the cup and nectar both symbolizing female sexuality. But this interpretation works against the ephebic male theme prevalent in Gibson’s early work at this time.

she was an Olympian cupbearer, Hebe was in the mythological tradition married to Herakles, and replaced by Ganymede, the Trojan prince kidnapped by Zeus to be his lover. The genealogy of classical mythology suggests that Psyche's arrival on Olympus post-dates Hebe's marriage to Herakles. Of course, the passage of time in mythology has little relevance, so that point is moot. What is significant, however, is that Gibson did not place Ganymede in the sculpted version of this work. This was a conscious decision on his part, because in a preparatory drawing for the relief Ganymede originally stood between Eros and Psyche.

In this *primo pensiero* (fig. 4.25), Ganymede is shown as a nude youth who offers to Psyche the nectar of immortality. His right hand gently rests on the shoulder of Eros, physically connecting the two youths in a sensual way that had only happened one other time in Gibson's oeuvre, in *Mars Restrained by Cupid*. The physical intimacy between these two nude ephebes reinforces their presence as *eromenoi*, beloved youths in the Greek pederastic tradition. In this exchange then, it is Psyche—the human soul, symbolized by butterfly wings—who becomes the viewer and who stares longingly at these youths as objects of desire. This sketch is arguably the most provocative and homoerotically charged subject in Gibson's oeuvre, one that apotheosizes Winckelmann's aesthetic teachings. The fact that Gibson altered the subject, effectively eliding Ganymede not only from the relief but from his entire oeuvre, suggests some level of consciousness on his part about the risk in representing this subject, especially paired with Cupid. His substitution of Hebe for Ganymede—an inversion of the mythological tradition in which Ganymede actually replaced Hebe—is tantamount to a general “closeting” of the homoerotics of Winckelmannian aesthetics from the first half of his career.¹²⁸

But why this subject, and why circa 1840? Put simply, times had changed. Winckelmannian classicism was on the decline, and Romanticism, Realism, and genre scenes were on the rise. Winckelmann's interpretations of classical sculpture had been questioned and debated by scholars almost immediately after the publication of the *Geshichte* in 1764, and by the end of the Napoleonic Wars, a clearer understanding of the evolution of Greek sculpture had challenged some of

¹²⁸ This theory is further supported by the fact that, even though Gibson never sculpted a Ganymede, later in his career he did make a well-received statue of Hebe. It is worth noting that around this same time period, in 1842 in Rome, the American sculptor Thomas Crawford modeled *Hebe and Ganymede*, a statue showing Hebe reluctantly handing over to Ganymede her pitcher and cup. A version in marble sculpted ca. 1851 is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Winckelmann's assertions. As a result, when Parliament considered purchasing the Elgin Marbles, they became more popular because they reflected an earlier "true style" of classicism. Alex Potts and Elizabeth Prettejohn have argued that it was at this time that criticism of the theatricality inherent in the *Apollo Belvedere* ultimately displaced it from the height of idealized beauty in favor of the more masculine naturalism of figures like the *Ilissus* from the Parthenon pediment.¹²⁹ Abigail Solomon-Godeau has further argued that by the 1830s the Winckelmannian aesthetic itself was exhausted in the French Academy, with critics rejecting Hippolyte Flandrin's *Prix de Rome* painting *Theseus Recognized by His Father*, 1832, both because the work lacked the sensuality inherent in the Winckelmannian *beau idéal*, but also because the piece of rib roast placed before Theseus's genitalia now prudishly parodied the sensuality that had once been inherent in the classical male body.¹³⁰

For Gibson, however, who was now about fifty years of age when he made the relief of *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe*, it was the purchasing power of his patrons that ultimately mattered most. Although aristocrats continued to frequent his studio, the rising middle classes who had built their wealth through industry increasingly became his more lucrative patrons. More familiar with the so-called "native style" of sculpture proliferated by Chantrey and his followers in London, the middle classes did not have the knowledge base of classical art that had been part of the education and aesthetic training of the aristocracy. One could even go so far as to suggest that the new model of traditional family values established by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, whom she married in 1840, helped reinforce a new mode of artistic patronage for British artists that focused on sentimentality, a mode which outright displaced Winckelmannian homoerotics and the ephebic body as an object of desire, and substituted for it images of nubile nymphs and charming children.

Gibson, of course, never rejected classicism itself. Rather, he continually reinforced it as the highest form of achievement in art and encouraged all artists to continue to follow the Greeks. In his memoirs he frequently warned against rejecting classicism: "All those men of genius in modern times who have

¹²⁹ Potts, *Flesh*, 125-26; Alex Potts, "The Impossible Ideal: Romantic Conceptions of the Parthenon Sculpture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain and Germany," in *Art in Bourgeois Society, 1790-1850*, ed. Andrew Hemingway and William Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 101-22; Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture: Greek Sculpture and Modern Art from Winckelmann to Picasso* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 38-73.

¹³⁰ Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 223-24.

deviated from the principles of Greek art have left us works not superior but greatly inferior to the ancients—we should profit by their errors.”¹³¹ It appears, then, that it may not be a coincidence that Gibson at this time turned to modern forms of reproductive media, such as new forms of porcelain statuettes, jewelry, and new processes associated with printmaking, as a way to disseminate his ideas about classicism. As I discuss in the next chapter, Gibson’s interest in reproductive media allowed him not only to reinforce his role as a designer in the academic tradition, but use his designs and reproductive media to continue to disseminate modern classics to the rising middle classes using the industrial techniques with which they were most familiar.

¹³¹ Matthews, 90.

Chapter 5. Gibson as Designer: Nineteenth-Century Reproductive Media

In previous chapters I explored Gibson's early life and training, his studio practice, and his representation of homoerotic subjects as a Winckelmannian classicist. I will now consider in this chapter the most modern aspect of Gibson's modern classics: his interest in reproductive media. By mid-century, as Gibson's studio evolved from an all-working space to an increasingly social space catering largely to visitors from the rising middle classes, so too did his role as a sculptor change. With his fame increasing and his works more commonly known in Great Britain and globally, Gibson by age fifty fashioned himself a gentleman artist, not a laboring craftsman. While Gibson certainly was not the only sculptor in history who redefined himself in this manner, for him this meant modifying his self-definition from "sculptor" to "designer" of sculptural works of art. This distinction may seem minor, but in the context of technological and cultural changes during the nineteenth century, Gibson the designer reestablished his lifelong interest in draftsmanship and ultimately asserted his presence, at least for a time, as the John Flaxman of the Victorian age. By having his designs reproduced as statuettes, cameos, and engravings—media in which aspects of sculpting were still intrinsic to the actual manufacturing process—Gibson was able to disseminate his classical subjects to a rising bourgeois audience using processes that were part of their modern world.¹

Sculpture and Reproduction

The making of sculpture is by its very nature a reproductive art form. A visitor to Gibson's studio once astutely noted: "It is evident that any number of copies may be made equally well from one clay-model; and in the studios, frequent repetitions of the same subject are seen."² What is noteworthy about this quote is that the unidentified author mentions "copies" and "repetitions" as separate ideas. In the nineteenth century, numerous artists regularly made replicas, or exact copies, of works they themselves

¹ Gibson also had an interest in photography, the most modern of nineteenth-century technologies. He sat for numerous portraits and had his work photographed to further disseminate his classical subjects. I have excluded photography from this discussion so as to focus on reproductive media where sculpting practices were still intrinsic to the media itself, such as modeling for Parian statuettes, carving for cameos, and incising plates for engravings.

² "A Morning with the Sculptors at Rome," *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 155 (20 December 1856), 386.

prized, to display them in their studios for possible future commissions. Artists also made repetitions, or variations, of works, sometimes for patrons who wanted their own version of a particular subject, but more often to continue to perfect a work over time. Details in repetitions could vary, making each one unique, but overall the subject was unchanged in each edition.³

Replicas and repetitions were common in the nineteenth century, not just in sculpture but also in painting. One of the most noteworthy artists whose career and studio practice were based on repetitions in particular was that of Gibson's French contemporary J.-A.-D. Ingres, who often made paintings with the same subject, but with differences in backgrounds or layouts, and in a variety of sizes.⁴ Modernism in art history has emphasized the "original" and thus disparaged this legacy of reproduction and, by extension, classicism/academicism, because these traditional practices derive from the imitation of masterworks from the past. Patricia Mainardi has argued:

The question of duplication has proved most troublesome for modernists ... because modernism holds chronological priority as the key to authenticity. The first manifestation of a style or theme assumes the quality of originality while subsequent renditions need to be explained and justified to be valorized.⁵

In Gibson's day, modernist originality was understood differently. As a Winckelmannian classicist in Rome, Gibson emphasized the importance of imitating the past, and thus he would have been aware that even the artistic legacy of ancient Greece and Rome was based on the practice of imitation. Polykleitos, Praxiteles, and other Athenian sculptors were known to have made repetitions of their own works of art. For instance, there was more than one *Doryphoros*. Furthermore, these subjects were so popular that studios centuries later continued to recreate these masterpieces or their appearance as historicized modern sculptures, as in the case of the numerous repetitions of the Praxitelean *Apollo Sauroktonos*.⁶

For nineteenth-century patrons, there was little concern that they owned a replica or repetition of a work of art. More important was the actual ownership of a work by a particular artist and that work's own

³ My definitions for replicas/copies and repetitions/variations, as they were understood in the nineteenth century, derive from Patricia Mainardi, "Copies, Variations, Replicas: Nineteenth-Century Studio Practice," *Visual Resources* 15, no. 2 (1999), 123-47. Mainardi explores these concepts in association with painting, but they are applicable to sculpture as well.

⁴ On Ingres's reproductive art practice, see Patricia Condon, ed., *In Pursuit of Perfection: The Art of J.-A.-D. Ingres* (Louisville, KY: J. B. Speed Art Museum; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

⁵ Mainardi, "Copies," 123.

⁶ For more on the Greco-Roman practice of reproduction and historicism, see Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art: From Greece to Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter 2, especially 102; and J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter 8, 164-84.

particular aesthetic value. Thus, as discussed in the chapter on Gibson's studio, he eagerly made replicas, reduced-size replicas, and repetitions of his statues and reliefs for patrons. Two life-sized versions of the *Tinted Venus* (fig. 1.1) were made for the Prestons and the Marquess of Sligo, and these were repetitions of his earlier, untinted *Venus Verticordia* for Joseph Neeld (fig. 3.29). A later untinted repetition of *Venus* was made for M. Uzzielli, and a reduced-size, tinted version was made for the Prince of Wales. With other subjects, Gibson also made repetitions with minor changes. For instance, the three repetitions in marble of *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3), first modeled in 1818, each show changes, including the position and size of the shepherd's staff, hat, and cloak, the style of his hair, and the presence or absence of the lizard on the tree trunk. In general, however, the basic form of the shepherd is similar and thus easily recognizable to those who know Gibson's work.⁷

Of all the sculptures in Gibson's oeuvre, however, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.1) arguably serves as the best example of artistic reproduction in his studio. It was his most popular subject, with at least nine versions commissioned in marble by patrons. Gibson first began working on the subject around 1830, and it was his belief that he had created a new interpretation of the god of love, although the figure was inspired by classical and Renaissance sources.⁸ The subject merges classicism with the contemporary taste for sentimentality, and also conveys a sense of theatricality in that the god wears a costume to hide his identity. A symbol of Arcadia, the epehebic god also aligns itself with Gibson's other statues of homoerotic youths, such as *Love Tormenting the Soul* (fig. 3.23), discussed in the previous chapter.

Gibson's statue was inspired by the pastoral comedy *Aminta* (1573) by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso. In this poem the god of love appears disguised as a shepherd so that he can use his arrows to play with the hearts of the nymph Silvia and the youth Aminta. In his memoirs, Gibson recorded the opening passage of the poem:

Who wou'd believe, that under an human Form, and under these pastoral Spoils, should be conceal'd a God? and that not one of the Sylvan Deities, or of the vulgar Ranks of Gods; but amongst the Superiour, and the Heavenly Ones the most Powerful: who often causes the bloody Sword to fall from the hand of *Mars*, and from *Neptune*, the Shaker of the Earth, the great Trident, and the eternal

⁷ These noted changes are my own observations. For more on the history of *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, see Timothy Stevens, "John Gibson's 'The Sleeping Shepherd Boy,'" in *Patronage & Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, ed. Penelope Curtis (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1989), 57-59.

⁸ Thomas Matthews, ed., *The Biography of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor, Rome* (London: W. Heinemann, 1911), 78.

Thunders from Supreme *Jove*. In this Disguise, certainly, and in these Cloaths, *Venus*, my Mother, won't so easily know me to be her son *Cupid*.⁹

Dressed in a shepherd's hat and cloak, the tips of his wings slightly visible below the mantle, this Cupid's precocious nature is masked by a seemingly kind grin. He hides in his left hand behind him his "heart-piercing dart," and reaches out with his right "to inspire confidence," assuming "that air of modesty and timidity to conceal the more his cunning designs."¹⁰ In early repetitions of the statue, he is shown holding a rose, which enhances the shepherd's flirtatious nature. Later variations, however, show him reaching out with an empty hand (fig. 5.2), which arguably could convey a gentler, yet more false, sense of benevolence. No documentation yet has explained this change in the outstretched hand. A drawing (fig. 5.3) suggests that early on Gibson wanted the figure to appear in motion, having shot an arrow and now rushing to hide his bow and quiver. By choosing instead to depict him upright and still, Gibson reverted to a study of idealized beauty. Uncertain if the god of love would be believable as a shepherd, Gibson's imagination soared heavenward, as he wrote in his memoirs about a daydream in which he sought the god's approval of his subject:

Oh Eros, canst thou disguise thy celestial countenance, or conceal thy ambrosial locks which wave luxuriantly round thy feminine shoulders? Thy little hands are too delicate for a shepherd, and so are those lovely limbs—will not thy god-like steps betray thee? Tell me, God of Beauty and Love, is this image, this humble mortal effort, in some degree tolerable in thy sight?¹¹

⁹ Torquato Tasso, *L'Aminta di Torquato Tasso, favola boscherecchia; Tasso's Aminta, a Pastoral Comedy, in Italian and English*, trans. P. B. Du-Bois (Oxford: L. Lichfield, 1726), n.p. Gibson recorded the text in Italian as follows:

Chi crederia che sotto umane forme
E sotto queste pastorali spoglie
Fosse nascosto un Dio! non mica un Dio
Selvaggio, o della plebe degli Dei,
Ma tra grandi Celesti il più possente
Che fa spesso cader di mano a Marte
La sanguinosa spada, ed a Nettuno,
Scotitor della terra, il gran tridente,
E le folgori eterne al sommo Giove.
In quest'aspetto, certo, e in questi panni,
Non riconoscerà sì di leggiero
Venere madre me, suo figlio Amore.

See Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 75; Matthews, 75.

¹⁰ Matthews, 75; Eastlake, 75.

¹¹ Matthews, 76. In Gibson's memoirs, the god of love responds to him by demanding that Gibson give the statue color. This suggests an attempt on Gibson's part to show divine providence with regard to his experiments with polychrome sculpture. As noted in the two previous chapters, Gibson only tinted Cupid in *Love Tormenting the Soul*.

The two earliest commissions for marble versions of the statue were from Sir Robert Peel and Sir John Johnstone. Peel's version is the best documented by Gibson, in part because the two had a cordial relationship, Gibson even once staying as a guest at his country estate, Drayton Manor in Staffordshire, where the statue itself was displayed.¹² Peel's *Cupid* was commissioned during the politician's trip to Rome in 1834, the same year in which he was first elected Prime Minister.¹³ Gibson's account books show that Peel paid £250 for the commission. His *praticien* Felice Bains carved the marble figure over the course of fifty-four days, for which he was paid £65 4s. Gibson's other expenses went toward individuals responsible for pointing, drilling, and polishing, as well as to an unnamed specialist who carved the hair and wings. Peel's version of the statue cost Gibson £154 7s 9d, earning him a profit of just under £100.¹⁴

The other early commission of this work was from Sir John Vanden Bempde Johnstone, 2nd Baronet, M.P., whose country estate was Hackness Hall in Yorkshire.¹⁵ An exact date for this commission is unknown, but the work was finished by early 1837, as Gibson submitted this repetition to the Royal Academy exhibition with the title *A Statue, in Marble, Representing Love Disguised as a Shepherd* (no. 1169). In the catalogue the title was accompanied by the first three lines of Tasso's poem in Italian.¹⁶ Gibson claimed that his *Cupid* was not received well by critics, but in fact two reviews did find it praiseworthy. The editors of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* claimed they "were very much struck" with the statue.¹⁷ A reviewer for the *Athenaeum* was generous in his comments:

We are anxious to come to Mr. Gibson's *Love disguised as a Shepherd* (1169), one of the most poetical things in the Exhibition: Mr. Gibson well knows how to hint the mischievous nature of the

¹² Peel's version of this statue was last put up for auction by Sotheby's London on 9 July 2008, but went unsold and presumably remains in a private collection. Peel also owned a copy of Andrew Geddes's portrait of Gibson, which hung in the portrait gallery of Drayton Manor. Gibson stayed with Peel in October 1847. See John Gibson to Mrs. Rose Lawrence, 16 and 17 October 1847, typed transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.

¹³ Matthews, 84.

¹⁴ Personal Account Book 1822-1859, GI/6/2, John Gibson, RA, Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (hereafter cited as Gibson Papers).

¹⁵ Johnstone's version of this statue remained with the family until it was sold at auction in 2002. It was last put up for auction by Sotheby's New York on 14 April 2008, but went unsold and presumably still remains in the collection of Lionel Hastings.

¹⁶ This was Gibson's first work shown in London after being elected a Royal Academician in February 1836. He exhibited two other works with *Cupid*. The first was entitled *A Monumental Statue* (no. 1164), which to date has not been identified, and the second was *A Group in Marble, Representing Hylas Surprised by the Naiades* (no. 1178).

¹⁷ "Exhibitions—The Royal Academy," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 42, no. 263 (September 1837), 341.

archer boy, even through his Arcadian disguise. Wo be to the next Silvia or Dorinda whom he approaches!¹⁸

Johnstone paid £150 for his commission. Even though his may have been the first version of the figure in marble, this price seems surprisingly low when compared to the £250 Peel paid for his about the same time. Indeed, the prices for all of the repetitions of this statue ranged from £150 to £300, with Gibson providing little explanation in his account books as to why he charged different amounts.¹⁹ For instance, in 1836 the American artist and writer Thomas Gold Appleton commissioned a version of the statue, for which he paid £150.²⁰ In early January 1839, Hereditary Grand Duke Alexander of Russia (later Czar Alexander II) commissioned a repetition during his tour of Rome, paying £300 for his *Cupid*, which Gibson said took three years to complete.²¹

In the early 1840s, a fifth version of the subject was commissioned by Richard Alison, a merchant from Woolton Hayes near Liverpool.²² Gibson does not record in his account books the amount Alison paid for this commission, but it seems safe to assume it was in the same price range. In 1850, a dry-goods merchant from Philadelphia named Henry Farnum paid £150 for his repetition of *Cupid*. A letter from Gibson to Farnum explains that the price of the statue normally would be £300; however, he had another version nearly complete, although it was marred with a black line running through the middle of the marble.²³ He was willing to sell that version at half the price and included a sketch of the statue (fig. 5.4) highlighting the flaw. Based on the final price paid, it would appear Farnum purchased this flawed

¹⁸ "Fine Arts. Royal Academy," *Athenaeum* 499 (20 May 1837), 371.

¹⁹ Size does not seem to be an issue as most of the versions measure about 51 inches high.

²⁰ The date of this commission comes from the contents of a letter. Benjamin Gibson to Unknown, 14 December 1836, MS4914D-40, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, transcribed online, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/cupid-disguised-as-a-shepherd-boy-181779> (accessed 27 September 2011).

²¹ In Matthews's edition of Gibson's memoirs, it was reported that this commission took place in 1842, but Gibson wrote to *The Art-Union* about the Hereditary Grand Duke's visit in 1839. Matthews also made the mistake of misidentifying this individual as Czar Nicholas I, but it was in fact his son, who later became Czar Alexander II. On this same visit, the Grand Duke also commissioned a reduced-sized version of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (probably by Gibson's brother Benjamin) and a nymph by Richard James Wyatt. All three of these works are now in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Matthews, 110-11; "Foreign Art," *The Art-Union* (15 March 1839), 23.

²² Alison also commissioned a statue of *Flora* at the same time, and an extant letter from 1844 acknowledges receipt of the female statue and asks for its companion, *Cupid*, to be completed and shipped soon. Richard Alison to John Gibson, 16 February 1844, GI/1/4, Gibson Papers. Both of these statues were presented by Alison to the Walker Art Gallery in 1873 and are part of the collections at the National Museums Liverpool.

²³ John Gibson to Henry Farnum, 9 January 1850, 1977.382.14, Drawings and Prints Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

repetition. Other undated repetitions of the statue were commissioned by a Mr. Collins Wood (or Collinwood) for £250 and by Lord Hungerford Crewe, 3rd Baron Crewe, for £300. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, in her edition of Gibson's memoirs, identified an additional version owned by a Mr. Abel Bulkley, Jr., and an 1848 article in *The Art-Union* noted that Benjamin Gibson was completing at that time a half-life-sized copy of the subject after his brother's work.²⁴

Nine repetitions in marble and one reduced repetition in marble clearly show that *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* was a popular work, and these versions do not include the plaster editions of the subject, at least one of which would have been in his studio, while another was exhibited in the Court of Modern Sculpture at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park.²⁵ In order to contextualize the popularity of this subject, it is worth considering it with another important statue produced at this time, the *Greek Slave*, modeled by Hiram Powers from 1841-43. The Florence-based American sculptor produced six life-sized and two two-thirds-life-sized repetitions of the subject.²⁶ Based on the number of repetitions, Gibson's *Cupid*, ten years older in its creation, actually surpassed Powers's work in terms of quantifiable popularity. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to argue the aesthetic and/or social historical value of one subject over the other. However, what is important in this context is that Gibson's studio reproduced this figure for patrons more times than Powers and, like the American sculptor, also disseminated it globally to the same geographical regions: England, America, and Russia. In no way did the reproduction and international marketing of this statue lessen its perceived quality, nor did its multiple forms create a sense that any of the later repetitions were less important than the first. This is because it was Gibson's design, and not his specific handcrafting, that appealed to his patrons and enabled him to make numerous versions of a popular subject.

²⁴ Eastlake, 250; "Art in Continental States," *The Art-Union* (1 February 1848), 50. The versions of *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* commissioned by Farnum, Collins Wood, Lord Crewe, and Bulkley, as well as the reduced copy, all remain untraced.

²⁵ Anna Jameson, *A Hand-Book to the Courts of Modern Sculpture* (London: Crystal Palace Library; Bradbury & Evans, 1854), 20.

²⁶ While some of these were replicas, others were repetitions in that Powers made changes such as replacing the slave's shackles with linked chains. For more on the *Greek Slave*, see Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers: Vermont Sculptor, 1805-1873* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 1:207-74, 2:157-68.

Design and Reproduction

Because sculpture is by its nature a reproductive practice, it is important to consider how Gibson emphasized the role of design in his studio practice. In this context, it is worth recalling the steps involved in making sculpture, as discussed in chapter three on Gibson's studio practice. Art history acknowledges the importance of drawings and models as parts of the sculptural process, but typically these are appreciated as independent works of art and/or possible evidence of the artist's original intent. Even more challenging in the assessment of sculpture production is the plaster cast, which has been disregarded in the historiography of art as nothing more than an intermediary stage with little aesthetic value of its own. The dismissal of the plaster cast in particular is endemically problematic, because until at least the early twentieth century casts (not marble figures) were a practical and widely accepted way of viewing sculpture, even if it was tacitly understood they were less beautiful or finished when compared to works in marble or bronze. Casts, not marbles, frequently were seen at exhibitions, and even the sculpture courts at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park were filled with plaster casts of ancient and modern works, including many by Gibson himself.²⁷

Because the word "sculptor" is most closely identified with "stone carver" or "bronze caster," inevitably it is only the finished product that often is considered the work of art. Related preparatory works are merely early stages of what lead inevitably to the finished product, and thus typically they are seen in what sculpture historian Malcolm Baker has called a "sequential ordering."²⁸ This assumes all drawings, models, casts, and marble works were done in regimented stages; but, as Baker notes, this was not always the case. As he aptly demonstrates with the work of Joseph Nollekens and others, there are numerous instances in which these were done not only out of sequence but in fact served no specific purpose at all and should be seen as independent works.²⁹ For instance, in the case of Gibson, while the aforementioned drawing of Cupid hiding his bow and arrow was discussed as a study for *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, it is undated, so there is no reason to assume that it came before the actual first

²⁷ On the importance of casts in the production of nineteenth-century sculpture, see H. W. Janson, *19th-Century Sculpture* (New York: Abrams, 1985), 12-16. On casts at the Crystal Palace, see Jameson, *Hand-Book*; and John Kenworthy-Browne, "Plaster Casts for the Crystal Palace, Sydenham," *Sculpture Journal* 15, no. 2 (2006), 173-99.

²⁸ Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London: V&A Publications; Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000), 40.

²⁹ For more, see Baker, 34-49.

marble statue. Therefore, I propose that related sketches, clay models (small and large), and plaster casts associated with finished marble/bronze statues should all be seen as repetitions of the artist's *disegno*, the idea as much as the drawing, which I explore in more detail below. From this revised perspective, sculpture production can be seen to embrace fully the nineteenth-century understanding and application of reproduction as the norm for art.

Although Rosalind Krauss has proposed a similar idea with regard to the sculpture of Auguste Rodin and the invention of the picturesque landscape, her argument is grounded in the foundation of the avant-garde and thus elides the original in favor of the proliferation of original replicas, what she calls "a system of reproductions without an original."³⁰ I do not agree that her model holds true for sculpture production before the late nineteenth century. For Gibson, there was clearly an origin: his design inspired by the Greeks. And from this design there was always a product, whether it was a plaster or marble statue made in his studio, or a porcelain statuette, a cameo, or a print made by others taken from his design. This was especially true by mid-century, when there were displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 the craft of sculpture in all of these media, demonstrating that reproductive works of art were all based on original designs.

For Gibson this emphasis on *disegno* and its application in various media was clear. As his career unfolded and his popularity grew, his role as a designer, a worker of ideas, came to the forefront of his artistic sensibility. This does not mean he stopped working hands-on in his studio, but it does suggest that he saw himself more and more as the creator of ideas, not a craftsman. Flaxman himself had acted similarly half a century earlier. His designs for Wedgwood porcelains and his illustrations for the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and other texts placed a greater emphasis on his role as a designer of sculptural projects. In the years he was Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, Flaxman worked on a relatively small number of sculptures, almost all of them bas-relief funerary monuments, but it was well-known at the time that Flaxman "was less adept with the chisel and he worked very little on the final marbles."³¹

Following Flaxman's example, and thus positioning himself as the Flaxman of the Victorian age, around 1840 Gibson began emphasizing in his art the importance of design, rather than the hands-on

³⁰ Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition," *October* 18 (August 1981), 58.

³¹ Mary Webster, "Flaxman as Sculptor," in *John Flaxman*, ed. David Bindman (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), 101.

craft of sculpture. In doing so, Gibson arguably was once again conscious of Leonardo da Vinci's *Paragone*, as was discussed in chapter three. According to Leonardo, the sculptor as marble carver is one whose "face is pasted and smeared all over with marble powder, making him look like a baker, and he is covered with minute chips as if emerging from a snowstorm, and his dwelling is dirty and filled with dust and chips of stone."³² None of the accounts in which Gibson appears in his studio describe him this way. Rather, Gibson presented himself, and was seen by others, as a gentleman artist of the Victorian age, a designer rather than a laborer, one whose drawings were transformed into marble and other media by craftsmen who did all the "dirty" work. Gibson lived in an age that celebrated technological wonders and industrial achievements, but not necessarily the laborer himself. Gibson encouraged the dissemination of his classical designs through multiple media. Thus, he succeeded in balancing his traditional sculptural medium and reproductive technologies with his self-presentation as a classicist and fine artist. His role in design culminated in showcasing works in his name in plaster, marble, cameo, and porcelain at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and immediately afterwards as facsimile engravings. Indeed, of all the sculptors who displayed their work at the Great Exhibition, Gibson alone identified himself as a "Designer," not a "Sculptor," which will be discussed in more detail below.³³

The art of *disegno* reaches back to the ancients, with the myth of the Corinthian maiden drawing her lover's shadow on the wall reinforcing the idea that the Greeks emphasized contour. This tale inspired numerous "true style" artists who appreciated the art of line over that of color. Rooted in classicism, *disegno* was a critical part of the academic education and training of artists from the Renaissance on. Texts such as Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell' arte* and Leon Battista Alberti's *Della pittura* asserted first in practice, then in theory, the fundamental importance of *disegno*, but it was in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* where *disegno* was presented not only as the hands-on practice of drawing but the manifestation of the artist's idea for the three major branches of art.

In that *disegno*, father of our three arts, Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, proceeding from the intellect, derives from many individual things a universal judgment, it is similar to a form or rather idea of all the things of nature, which is most singular in its measure. ... And seeing that from this

³² Leonardo's text in Italian reads: "Con la faccia impastata e tutto infarinato di polvere di marmo, che pare un fornaio, et coperto di minute scaglie, che pare gli sia fioccato addosso; e l'abitatione imbrattata e piena di scaglie e di polvere di pietre." *Paragone* 37, in *Paragone: A Comparison of the Arts by Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. Irma A. Richter (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 95.

³³ Authority of the Royal Commission, *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: The Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 2:845.

knowledge is born a certain conception and judgment, so that there is formed in the mind that something which then expressed with the hands is called *disegno*, one can conclude that this *disegno* is none other than a visible expression and declaration of the inner conception that one has and of that which others have imagined in the mind and given form to idea.³⁴

The principle of *disegno* as both drawing and idea was instrumental in the foundation of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, the first fine-arts academy, established in Florence in 1563, and continued to influence the formation of similar academies throughout Europe, including those in Paris and London.³⁵ Reinforcing this foundation, Michael Baxandall noted that the art of *disegno* moved to Britain during the English Renaissance and its primary meaning was understood from the beginning to be “intention, purpose” and “plan, scheme,” with its secondary meaning referring to the actual practice of drawing or, as it came to be called in British English, “draughtsmanship.”³⁶

Gibson’s role as a draftsman during his early years has been discussed in detail in chapter two. Although he was apprenticed in the carving of wood and stone, his early instinct was to draw and he had hopes of apprenticing in a painter’s studio. With the assistance of the printseller Tourmeau; his first patron, William Roscoe, with his drawings and prints collection; and Dr. Vose with the study of cadavers, Gibson learned early on the art of *disegno*, first through copying, then with life studies, and finally with his original ideas. His first official academy classes were at the Accademia di San Luca and at Canova’s private academy in Rome.

Some of Gibson’s friends remarked in their memoirs about his drawing talents, most notably with studies for bas-reliefs. Since relief sculpture arguably can be seen as a three-dimensional drawing, this connection between the two formats seems appropriate. Susan Horner wrote admiringly in her journal

³⁴ Vasari’s text in Italian reads:

Perchè il disegno, padre delle tre arti nostre, Architettura, Scultura e Pittura, procedendo dall’intelletto, cava di molte cose un giudizio universale; simile a una forma ovvero idea di tutte le cose della natura, la quale è singolarissima nelle sue misure; ... E perchè da questa cognizione nasce un certo concetto e giudizio, che si forma nella mente quella tal cosa che pio espressa con le mani si chiama disegno; si può concludere con esso disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell’animo, e di quello che altri si è nella mente immaginato e fabbricato nell’idea.

Le vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori et scultori italiani, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Firenze: Sansoni, 1981), 1:168, translated and quoted by David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 56.

³⁵ For more on *disegno*, academies, and Florentine, Roman, and Venetian Renaissance traditions, see Rosand, *Drawing*, 24-60; and David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10-25.

³⁶ Michael Baxandall, “English *Disegno*,” in *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J. B. Trapp*, ed. Edward Chaney and Peter Mack (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1990), 204.

that upon visiting his studio, “he showed a beautiful drawing he is making, ... very well executed,” and afterwards, when she visited the Vatican with him, he became “occupied making a drawing for a bas relief of Hyppolitus,” studying closely sea monsters in a Greco-Roman mosaic floor.³⁷ The Scottish-born scientist and mathematician Mary Fairfax Grieg Somerville, who first met Gibson during a tour of Rome in the mid-1830s, noted of his draftsmanship: “His drawings for bas-reliefs were most beautiful. He drew very slowly, but a line once drawn was never changed. He ignored India-rubber or bread-crumbs, so perfect was his knowledge of anatomy, and so decided the character and expression he meant to give.”³⁸

The majority of Gibson’s drawings remaining in his Roman studio were bequeathed to the Royal Academy, and these works show that, like other trained artists, he was skilled in different modes of draftsmanship depending on the drawing’s purpose. They include *primi pensieri* and studies from life in pencil, pen, or charcoal, and finished presentation drawings that use wash and/or white heightening to create volume in the subject. Others focus exclusively on contour, recalling the line engravings published by Thomas Piroli after Flaxman’s drawings. Thus, as Gibson’s career progressed and he continued to point more and more to the Greeks as the apex of art, he saw himself as the Victorian Flaxman because of his designs.

Gibson’s contemporaries also understood the importance of *disegno* for one’s artistic career. The Victorian sculptor Matthew Digby Wyatt wrote that in order to be successful, a sculptor needed to ensure he did not become merely a skilled craftsman: “For his work to be of value, [his] hand should be constantly guided by a highly cultivated imagination.”³⁹ His idea of a “cultivated imagination” was a long-standing belief shared by academicians in particular, and explains why the Royal Academy and other academies rarely taught the craft of sculpture but always emphasized draftsmanship. The principle of *disegno* was seen as the most important part of being an artist, regardless of the medium in which one worked.

³⁷ This visit took place on 10 April 1848. *Susan Horner Collection: Journal of a Tour in France and Italy, 1847-1848, Extracted from My Letters Home, and Notebooks*, British Institution, Florence, fol. 51-52, available online: *The Grand Tour* (Adam Matthew Digital), <http://www.amdigital.co.uk/m-collections/collection/the-grand-tour/> (accessed 8 December 2011).

³⁸ Mary Fairfax Greig Somerville, *Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age, of Mary Somerville: With Selections from her Correspondence*, ed. Martha Somerville (London: John Murray, 1873), 251.

³⁹ Matthew Digby Wyatt, *Fine Art. A Sketch of Its History, Theory, Practice, and Application to Industry: Being a Course of Lectures Delivered at Cambridge in 1870* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1870), 176.

Harriet Hosmer understood this as well. In the 1860s when she was forced to defend herself against allegations that she had not made her statue of *Zenobia*, she responded by stating that the sculptor was first and foremost a creator of a concept. She pointed to famous painters such as Raphael and sculptors such as Berthel Thorvaldsen whose studio workers carried out the designs of these artists. In emphasizing that the job of the sculptor was to think and the job of the craftsman was to carve, she concluded:

Those who look upon sculpture as an intellectual art, requiring the exercise of taste, imagination, and delicate feeling, will never identify the artist who conceives, composes, and completes the design with the workman who simply relieves him from great physical labor, however delicate some portion of that labor may be. ... It is time that some distinction should be made between the labor of the hand and the labor of the brain.⁴⁰

In denoting the difference between the labor of the brain and the hand, Hosmer was conveying the long-standing principle of *disegno* that she would have learned from her working relationship with Gibson in his studio.

Sculpture historian Martina Droth has argued that this concept was transformed later in the nineteenth century when, influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, artists began to focus more on the technique of making sculpture rather than its design. For the sculptor working in the classical/academic tradition, however, a consciousness about separating idea from craft remained:

The idea that sculptural beauty should transcend its material reality underpinned both its actual procedures and the ways in which it was presented to the world. Sculptors kept a certain distance from the physical activities required to make statues, articulating the material implications of their work only insofar as they were embedded etymologically in the overall classicizing framework by which sculpture was defined.⁴¹

By mid-century, Droth notes that “this determined separateness was visibly unravelling.”⁴² Industrial manufacturers had begun to make so-called “art” available commercially for the middle-class home through retailers and stores and no longer required the presence of the artist himself. This was most apparent with the long-standing statuette market that often produced poor quality imitations in bisque or plaster. This consumerism challenged the academic principle of design, and “commerce, with its worldly

⁴⁰ Harriet Hosmer, “The Process of Sculpture,” *Atlantic Monthly* 114, no. 86 (December 1864), 734-37, reprinted in Cornelia Carr, ed., *Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1912), 375.

⁴¹ Martina Droth, “The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics c. 1851-1900,” *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 3 (2004), 223.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 225.

connotation of materialistic desire, disrupted notions of intellectual and moral purity.” By emphasizing his role as a designer, Gibson was in fact ensuring the “intellectual and moral purity” of his art.

Droth cites Gibson as one of the few examples of classical sculptors who “exploited commercial avenues,” although she notes that sculptors such as he “for their artistic credibility [had] to uphold, at least publicly, an image of traditional practice.”⁴³ In order to do this, a conscientious approach to denying profit from commercial ventures was essential. As will be discussed below, Gibson explored and participated in a number of commercial ventures, but little documentation survives to suggest what (if any) profit he may have received from these activities. It is noteworthy, however, that in one collaboration with printmaking he rejected the option of receiving a profit from the sale of engravings after his work. Other research suggests that he probably turned down profits from these commercial explorations, and thus arguably could be seen as a leader among Victorian sculptors who balanced fine art with commercial projects. As such, Droth uses the Great Exhibition of 1851 to argue that Gibson successfully navigated this divide between art and commerce and maintained his artistic credibility. To this I would add that Gibson’s self-identified role as a designer at the international fair, which celebrated the finest achievements in craft and technology, enabled him to strike a balance between his traditional sculptural medium and other reproductive technologies while preserving his role as a classicist and artist.

There were two works of sculpture on display in the Sculpture Court of the Crystal Palace to which Gibson’s name was assigned. The first was a bas-relief in plaster of *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun* (no. 64; fig. 5.5), the marble version of which he had recently completed for the Earl of Fitzwilliam and exhibited at the 1849 Royal Academy, where it was praised for its “exquisitely classical feeling” in that the movements of the animals and figures “form a composition in the purest feeling of the antique.”⁴⁴ A large work measuring 7 ft. x 3 ft. 4 in., the bas-relief had been highly touted in the press from its creation in Rome a few years earlier.⁴⁵ It was with this plaster that he identified himself as “designer.”

His second work was the marble statue of *The Hunter and His Dog* (no. 80; fig. 1.2), but this was a submission by its owner, the Earl of Yarborough, and not Gibson. Of these two works, his statue of the *Hunter* earned him greater acclaim, including the distinction of being named for the Council Medal, the

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “The Royal Academy,” *The Art Journal* (1 June 1849), 176.

⁴⁵ “Art in Continental States,” *The Art-Union* (1 February 1848), 50.

highest award possible, but Gibson turned it down because he was a juror for the Fine Arts group, as previously discussed.⁴⁶ This association of Gibson's name with a plaster cast (as designer) and a marble statue (as sculptor, even though he did not literally carve it) becomes even more important when seen in the context of the Great Exhibition itself. At an international fair that celebrated the craft of sculpture as technological innovation, it was ultimately equated to a form of the industrial arts and not a fine art. Thus, for Gibson to have identified himself exclusively as a "sculptor" would in his mind have limited the appreciation of his art. In choosing to call himself a "designer," Gibson was able to exploit other forms of craftsmanship beyond that of sculpture's plaster casts and marble. These included Parian ware statuettes and cameos based on his original designs, which were on display elsewhere in the Crystal Palace.

Statuettes

Gibson's Royal Academy diploma work, *Narcissus* (fig. 2.24), was the model for one of the earliest and most popular mass-produced statuettes made in Parian ware (fig. 5.6). Multiple statuettes of *Narcissus* were issued in three editions (in 1846, 1849, and 1850) by its manufacturer Copeland and Garrett. Their other Gibson designs included Parian statuettes of *Venus* (1849; reissued in a tinted version after 1862), *Venus and Cupid* (1858 and 1860), and *Nymph at the Bath* (1859, issued with details decorated in gilt). First developed in the 1840s, Parian ware was considered at the time to be one of the greatest innovations in the production of porcelain for the statuette market because it had the appearance and texture of marble. It was marketed as "Statuary Porcelain" by Copeland and Garrett, but it was called Parian ware by Minton in honor of marble from the Greek island of Paros. By the time of the Great Exhibition this had become its preferred name.

Its popularity by mid-century led a number of individuals and companies to declare themselves its inventor and first manufacturer. Of these, Copeland and Garrett, based in Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, and Thomas Battam, the manager of their art department, are considered today to have

⁴⁶ Despite turning down the award, he was repeatedly lauded both for the statue and his rejection of the award in the reports of the findings of the jurors. See *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Reports by the Juries on the Subjects of the Thirty Classes into Which the Exhibition Was Divided* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1852), 684, 692.

been the first to develop Parian ware in 1842.⁴⁷ Its origins were bisque/biscuit, a form of unglazed porcelain developed in the eighteenth century for figurative statuettes and sold by companies such as Sèvres, Wedgwood, and Minton. Despite its ubiquity, bisque was susceptible to chemical and environmental changes and could not be cleaned, so manufacturers actively sought out ways to improve upon it.

According to an 1846 article published in *The Art-Union*, what made Copeland and Garrett's Statuary Porcelain "one of the greatest additions to the bounds of artistic production" was its "lustrous transparency" comparable to alabaster, its "purest white" coloring, and "if soiled, it is restored to its original purity by simple soap and water."⁴⁸ The mixture of clays and the firing temperature enabled it to maintain its uniformity in shape, which was another improvement over bisque and other ceramics. A liquid form of clay that was poured into molds, Parian ware was fired in segments, assembled, and then refired.⁴⁹ Its application to the mass production of fine art was immediately apparent:

Messrs. Copeland & Garrett have already copied some of the finest pieces of sculpture in this exquisite material; and we have little doubt that, in the progress of their art, they will give us imitations, or rather new creations, of every great piece of sculpture which bears on itself the impress of being predestined to immortality.⁵⁰

The Art Journal, or more specifically its editor Samuel Carter Hall, took credit for being responsible for introducing Gibson to Parian ware, noting in particular that Gibson first saw it in "our presence," although it was noted that the process then was in its infancy and had since undergone numerous improvements.⁵¹ This event must have taken place in 1844 during Gibson's first trip back to England, as his next trip did not take place until 1847 and the Parian version of his *Narcissus* was released the year before. It was also reported that the Duchess of Sutherland had introduced Gibson to Parian ware, but it is unknown if

⁴⁷ Other individuals who had worked at the company, including the modellers John Mountford and Spencer Garrett (son of the owner), later claimed it was their invention. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, the jury determined no one officially could be credited or awarded with the invention of Parian ware because there were too many making that claim. Maureen Batkin and Paul Atterbury, "The Origin and Development of Parian," in Paul Atterbury, ed., *The Parian Phenomenon: A Survey of Victorian Parian Porcelain Statuary and Busts* (Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset, England: Richard Dennis, 1989), 9-10.

⁴⁸ "Illustrated Tour in the Manufacturing Districts. Stoke-upon-Trent. The Works of Copeland and Garrett," *The Art-Union* (1 November 1846), 298.

⁴⁹ For more on the details on how Parian ware was made, see Robert Hunt, "On the Applications of Science to the Fine and Useful Arts. Artificial Stone—Statuary Porcelain," *The Art Journal* (January 1849), 17-18; and Batkin and Atterbury, quoting the *Staffordshire Advertiser* in 1851, in Atterbury, 18.

⁵⁰ "Illustrated Tour," 298.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

this is true. Since Copeland and Garrett developed their earliest Parian experiments using statues from the collection of the Duke and Duchess, this may explain the report of her involvement.⁵²

More importantly for Copeland and Garret, Gibson was reported to have declared the new process “decidedly the next best material to marble.”⁵³ No other sculptors were quoted as to its potential success for the production of statuettes; thus, Gibson’s quote clearly was seen as a powerful statement, one which *The Art Journal* and other publications used as a public endorsement of Copeland and Garrett’s process.⁵⁴ In fact, Copeland and Garrett needed the cachet of a major sculptor to support their new product. Their first experiment had been with a figure after a statue by Richard James Wyatt, but Wyatt lacked the international reputation or Royal Academician status that Gibson had. *The Art Journal* reported that Gibson was “extremely anxious that one of his works should be produced in it.”⁵⁵ This feat soon was accomplished when his *Narcissus* was the first Parian ware statuette to be mass produced by Copeland and Garrett and distributed in a series of fifty through the Art Union of London as a lottery prize to its members. As Benedict Read has noted: “The combination of Gibson as sculptor, his demonstration ‘pièce de résistance’ (which is what an R.A. Diploma Work should amount to) as object, and the London Art Union as commissioner and propagator, amounted to a major salvo in favour of this type of work.”⁵⁶

Maureen Batkin and Paul Atterbury claim that Gibson “was only prepared to allow *Narcissus* to be reproduced because he was confident of the high quality of the material and the skill of the manufacturer, as well as the accuracy of the reproduction,” perhaps referencing the aforementioned quotation by Gibson, as they provide no further documentation to support this.⁵⁷ They continue by claiming: “Of course, he also received a reproduction fee or royalty, a feature of Parian reproduction that encouraged artists to allow their works to be used.” They provide no documentation to support this statement either, and to date I have uncovered no evidence that Gibson ever received such a royalty. Regardless of

⁵² On the Duchess of Sutherland and Gibson, see *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851; Illustrated by Beautiful Steel Engravings, from Original Drawings and Daguerreotypes, by Beard, Mayall, etc., etc.*, Vol. 2 (London; New York: John Tallis and Co., [date?], 154; and “The Great Exhibition,” *Times*, 4 October 1851, 8.

⁵³ “Illustrated Tour,” 298; Hunt, 17.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, “The Birmingham Exhibition of Manufactures and Art,” *The Art Journal* (October 1849), 298; *Tallis's History*, 2:154; and “Great Exhibition,” 8. Copeland and Garrett also quoted Gibson on the title page of their catalogues; see Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, 19.

⁵⁵ “Illustrated Tour,” 298.

⁵⁶ Benedict Read, “Parian & Sculpture,” in Atterbury, 40.

⁵⁷ Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, 19.

whether he did or did not, the fact that his work was the first they mass-produced, and his supporting quote, suggests Gibson's validation of this venture because of its association with marble and the dissemination of art to the masses using reproductive technology. Certainly he was aware of a potential market for sculpture in reduced size. He would have seen and known of the market for bisque statuettes, but he probably was discouraged by their dissimilarity to marble and their problems with dirt and aging. Bronze statuettes were also available, but this was not Gibson's primary sculptural medium. Perhaps more noteworthy is that his brother Benjamin Gibson was at this time working in Rome on reduced-sized marble statues, both after Gibson's own designs and with his own original subjects, as has been discussed in chapter three.

It was also about this time that sculpture-reduction machines invented by men such as Benjamin Cheverton and Achille Collas were being patented and marketed as technological innovations.⁵⁸ To date there is no direct evidence that Gibson showed any interest in these machines or their works, and arguably this process did not appeal to him because of the reliance on a machine and not the human hand to produce the sculpture, a practice that would extend to the carving of cameos and engraving plates as well. The Art Union considered using Cheverton's machine to make their Parian statuette, and in fact it was used to make reductions produced by Minton, but ultimately Gibson's *Narcissus* was modeled by the sculptor Edward Bowring Stephens, who studied in Rome from 1839 to 1842 and likely worked with Gibson.⁵⁹

Hall and *The Art Journal* took credit for proposing to the Art Union of London the distribution of Gibson's *Narcissus* as their first Parian ware lottery prize.⁶⁰ The Art Unions were city-based organizations throughout Great Britain that existed for the purpose of disseminating art to the masses so as to "improve

⁵⁸ On sculpture reduction machines and other related technologies see Michele Bogart, "In Art the Ends Just Don't Always Justify Means," *Smithsonian* 10 (June 1979), 104-11; Meredith Shedd, "A Mania for Statuettes: Achille Collas and Other Pioneers in the Mechanical Reproduction of Sculpture," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (July/August 1992), 36-48; and Robert A. Sobieszek, "Sculpture as the Sum of Its Profiles: François Willème and Photosculpture in France, 1859-1868," *The Art Bulletin* 62, no. 4 (December 1980), 617-30.

⁵⁹ The minutes of the committee meetings of the Art Union of London regarding the potential use of Cheverton's machine and other related aspects of this project are quoted in Roger Smith, "The Art Unions," in Atterbury, 29. On Stephens, see Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, rev. ed. (London: Abbey Library, [1964]), 371-72. Stephens is misidentified as J. B. Stephens by the authors in Atterbury's text.

⁶⁰ "Illustrated Tour," 299.

the minds, morals and taste of all those who looked upon them.”⁶¹ The Art Union of London was established in 1837 and was the most popular. With annual membership costing one guinea, this organization was geared toward the middle classes, not the working classes. For this annual fee, subscribers received a print after a British painting, and an annual lottery gave subscribers the opportunity to win an additional art prize each year. Initially these also were prints, but in 1842 they began distributing bronze statuettes as prizes, the first of which was Edward Wyon’s reduced-sized copy of *Michael and Satan* by Flaxman, in addition to medallions and plaster figurines.⁶²

Although Gibson supported Copeland and Garrett and the Art Union of London in this collaborative venture, the Royal Academy refused permission to take measurements of Gibson’s statue without his written permission. Gibson apparently did write to give his permission, but this letter has not been traced. The Royal Academy then decided that a cast could not be taken from the marble statue, but they did authorize that a reduced copy of it could be modeled, which Stephens did and then made into plaster, submitting it to Copeland and Garrett by mid-November 1845. Despite setbacks on the manufacturer’s part, by the end of the month Copeland and Garrett told the Art Union of London they had produced a final design. However, the Art Union responded with dismay that the *Narcissus* was nude and requested a fig leaf be added. Although Stephens refused, presumably to support Gibson’s original design, it seems clear that the Art Union won this debate, as most photographic reproductions of the statuette show a fig leaf. Fifty statuettes were issued in 1846.⁶³ *Gentleman’s Magazine* reported on these statuettes in June of that year, noting in particular that the collaboration was “assisting the efforts now being made to bring fine art to aid that important branch of manufacture,” i.e. blurring the distinction between the fine and decorative arts through mass production and lottery dissemination.⁶⁴

The Art Union of London worked with Copeland and Garrett for many years distributing Parian ware statuettes. Among other contemporary sculptors whose works were issued in this format were William Calder Marshall, John Henry Foley, and John Lawlor, and copies after ancient works were distributed as well. Although Gibson’s *Narcissus* was not produced again after 1850, it was still being distributed by the

⁶¹ Smith, in Atterbury, 28.

⁶² On bronzes and the Art Unions, see Charles Avery and Madeleine Marsh, “The Bronze Statuettes of the Art Union of London: The Rise and Decline of Victorian Taste in Sculpture,” *Apollo* 121 (May 1985), 328-37.

⁶³ An additional fifty were issued and distributed by the Art Union of London both in 1849 and 1850.

⁶⁴ “Fine Arts,” *Gentleman’s Magazine* (June 1846), 629.

Art Union as a lottery prize as late as 1911, even though by this date Parian ware was less popular due to changes in decorative taste. In addition, the Art Union also issued the Parian statuette of *Venus and Cupid*, taken from Gibson's statue exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833. Forty were issued in 1858 with an additional thirty issued two years later.

A rival art union, the Crystal Palace Art Union, was founded in 1858 by Battam, the credited inventor of Parian ware, who was then overseeing the Ceramics Court at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham Park. The success of this art union was based on different levels of membership fees, each with increased benefits, so that a subscriber had a choice of works that were issued rather than being forced to accept what was offered that year. In 1859 one of the new Parian statuettes was Gibson's *Nymph at the Bath*. Queen Victoria herself was a subscriber to the Crystal Palace Art Union and owned this particular work in Parian ware by Gibson, as well as one of the editions of the *Narcissus* by the Art Union of London.

At the Great Exhibition of 1851, the display for Copeland (the partnership with Garrett having been dissolved in 1847) included a number of Parian ware statuettes taken from modern sculptors. Among these were two after Gibson's design: the *Narcissus* as executed for the Art Union; and *Venus*, manufactured in 1849 and taken from his *Venus Verticordia*, first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839 and soon to be reexhibited as the *Tinted Venus*.⁶⁵ Following the exhibition of the *Tinted Venus* at the 1862 International Exhibition, Copeland issued a polychrome Parian ware version of the same statue. As Batkin and Atterbury note, this was just one of a number of works by this date in which Parian ware began to appear in polychrome format, mirroring the overall interest in polychrome sculpture as exhibited by Gibson, Owen Jones, and others.⁶⁶

Copeland won a prize medal for "statuary porcelain (general excellence)" in the category of Ceramics at the 1851 Great Exhibition.⁶⁷ His Parian ware figures were credited in particular for their "great beauty ... several of which are eminently successful, and show complete mastery over this material in its best and most legitimate application."⁶⁸ Although Copeland by this time was now successfully manufacturing Parian ware figures after a number of modern sculptors, Gibson was clearly the most popular of these sculptors. In the context of the Great Exhibition, the Gibson-Copeland-Art Union collaboration

⁶⁵ Authority, 2:711.

⁶⁶ Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, 19-20.

⁶⁷ *Exhibition of the Works*, cvi. Copeland also won a medal at the 1862 International Exhibition.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 540.

demonstrated the value of new reproductive technologies integrated with artistic design, allowing a derivative of fine art to be more readily available in the homes of the middle classes. Related to this were Gibson's collaborations with the Saulini family, makers of high-quality cameos, who produced and disseminated works using his designs, which they also displayed at the Great Exhibition.

Cameos

In Thomas Matthews's edition of Gibson's memoirs, there is one reference to the Saulini family. In the text, Gibson described his design for a bas-relief, the goddess Minerva bringing to Bellerophon the winged horse Pegasus to help him battle the Chimera, for which Saulini "made a fine cameo from my small model of it."⁶⁹ This passing reference might lead the reader to think this was a single incident, but in fact this was one of many works in which the Saulini family worked from Gibson's designs to make cameo jewelry. As such, they were no different from Copeland in the manufacturing of Parian statuettes after Gibson's work, with Gibson acting as the academically-trained designer whose works were reproduced in another sculptural medium. More significantly, from the perspective of sculpture, the Saulini cameos transformed some of Gibson's three-dimensional figures into two-dimensional reliefs, although it is unknown whether Gibson or the Saulinis were responsible for the designs in these instances.

As Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoë have noted, nineteenth-century cameo production in Rome continued a trade that had been established in the late eighteenth century with the use of portraits and ancient classical sculpture, but to this was added "the new use of contemporary sculpture ... both historic and modern," resulting in "close relationships ... between sculptors and the cameo-cutters and jewellers working in Rome."⁷⁰ Cameos came to be seen in Victorian society as not just jewelry but also signifiers of cultured taste.

Cameos occupied a special place in Victorian culture, crossing the boundaries of art and personal ornament. The cameo-set brooch is a classic Victorian jewellery type, owned across many levels of society. ... One of the many attractions of cameos for the Victorians was their value as souvenirs of travel, but they had wider connotations—not least of connoisseurship, taste and classical learning—in

⁶⁹ Matthews, 223.

⁷⁰ Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoë, *Jewellery in the Age of Queen Victoria: A Mirror to the World* (London: British Museum, 2010), 466.

the jewellery culture of the age. Their connection with sculpture was important; sculpture held a key position in Victorian art, admired for itself and as a decorative element in architecture.⁷¹

The Saulini family ran one of the leading cameo manufacturers in nineteenth-century Rome, first established by Tommaso Saulini and then run by his son Luigi.⁷² Both father and son received artistic training in Thorvaldsen's studio. It is not known exactly when Tommaso began to make cameos, but he had a studio at 8 and 9 Via del Croce from the late 1830s, and in 1857 Luigi moved their studio to 96 Via del Babuino, not far from Gibson's own studio on Via della Fontanella. Count Hawks Le Grice's 1841 guide to the studios of Rome is one of the earliest published sources in English to discuss the Saulini family, and he notes by that date that they had made cameos from their own original subjects and after the designs of the sculptors Thorvaldsen, Gibson, R. J. Wyatt, and Emil Wolff.⁷³

It is unknown when Gibson began working with Saulini, but Le Grice's guide records that Gibson's bas-relief of *Venus and Cupid* was available as a Saulini cameo, suggesting his designs may have been used by the Saulinis at least by the end of the 1830s.⁷⁴ Because little research has been published on the sources for Saulini cameos, and because few are aware of Gibson's designs, there has been little appreciation of how significant this collaboration was. After thorough research through published and unpublished archival sources, I have identified, some for the first time, fourteen original designs by Gibson that were made into shell or onyx cameos by the Saulinis. It is unknown how many of each design were made by the Saulinis, but as commercial jewelry for sale they probably were reproduced in numbers. Images of all of these are not available, but Gibson's design (and/or the relief or statue) on which the cameo is based is known. The subjects, arranged approximately in the order the cameo was available, are as follows:

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 467.

⁷² For more on the Saulinis, see Malcolm Stuart Carr, "Tommaso and Luigi Saulini," *Connoisseur* 190 (November 1975), 170-81; and Micaela Dickmann de Petra and Francesca Barberini, *Tommaso e Luigi Saulini: Incisori di Cammei nella Roma dell'Ottocento* (Rome: Gangemi Editori, 2006).

⁷³ Count Hawks Le Grice, *Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome with a Brief Historical and Critical Sketch of Sculpture* (Rome: Crispino Puccinelli, 1841), 2:269. The earliest recorded instance of a Saulini cameo taken from British sculpture seems to date from 1831, when the sculptor Joseph Gott wrote from Rome to his family in England and mentions having ordered cameos after the busts of family members which he had sent back previously. A surviving cameo from one of these busts has Saulini's signature. Carr, "Saulini," 173.

⁷⁴ Le Grice, 2:157. Before working with Saulini, Gibson apparently first worked with another Roman cameo manufacturer, known only as Dies, who made cameos from busts of his recently modeled statues *Flora* and *Nymph at Her Bath*. See John Gibson to Edward Rogers, 4 April 1832, Add. 37951 G. f. 79, British Library, London.

1. *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (shell cameo; date: unknown; based on the statue design from the early 1820s and commissioned in marble by Sir George Beaumont, Czar Alexander II, and Prince Torlonia; cameo located in the Massimo Carafa Jacobini collection)⁷⁵
2. *The Birth of Venus, or Venus Rising from the Sea, Received by Celestial Love and Crowned by Persuasion* (shell cameo; date: 1840-41; based on the bas-relief design from 1840, but never commissioned in marble; cameo exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition; cameo located in the Saulini family collection)⁷⁶
3. *Celestial and Terrestrial Love Contending for the Soul, or Eros and Anteros Contending for the Soul* (shell cameo; date: ca. 1840-51; based on the bas-relief design from 1839, commissioned in marble by Lady Jane Davy; cameo exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition; cameo location unknown)
4. *Venus and Cupid* (shell cameo; date: by 1841; based on the bas-relief design from the 1830s; cameo location unknown)
5. *Aurora* (shell cameo; date: after 1842; based on the statue design and model from 1841-42, commissioned in marble by the Sandbachs 1843-47 and exhibited at the 1848 Royal Academy; cameo located in the Saulini family collection)⁷⁷
6. *Hope: Monument to Edward and Margaret Roscoe* (shell cameo; date: 1843; based on the funerary monument bas-relief design from 1839, plaster model from 1840-41, and marble from 1841-42 commissioned by the Sandbachs; two surviving cameos in the Saulini family collection)⁷⁸
7. *Queen Victoria* (shell cameo: date: 1844-45; based on the portrait bust modeled in 1844 for a planned statue of the queen; cameo possibly located in the Royal Collection)⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Dickmann de Petra and Barberini did not recognize this cameo as a Gibson design and called it *Scena mitologica*; 88, fig. 42. In his review of their book, James David Draper correctly identified the cameo as taken from Gibson's statue. See *The Burlington Magazine* 149 (June 2007), 420.

⁷⁶ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design and was given by Dickmann de Petra and Barberini the generic name *Scena mitologica* despite the obvious imagery; 87, fig. 36. Gibson wrote about Saulini's interest in making a cameo from this new design. John Gibson to Margaret Sandbach, 19 September 1840, MS 20566-7E, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

⁷⁷ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design; Dickmann de Petra and Barberini gave it the title *La Temperanza*; 101, fig. 99.

⁷⁸ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design, but it was entitled *La Speranza* by Dickmann de Petra and Barberini because of the iconographic anchor at the bottom of the design; 101, figs. 97 and 98. The Sandbachs apparently purchased a cameo based on the design of the funerary monument, for which Saulini charged them 20 crowns. See John Gibson to Margaret Sandbach, 1 January 1844 and 30 March 1844, MS 20566-7E, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

8. *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* (shell cameo; date: ca. 1844-51; based on the bas-relief design from ca. 1844-46, commissioned in marble by Queen Victoria; cameo exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition; cameo location unknown)
9. *Cupid Pursuing Psyche* (fig. 5.7; two versions: shell cameo, and onyx cameo in diamond mount; date: possibly 1844-62; based on the bas-relief design from the 1840s, commissioned in marble by the Sandbachs and others; shell cameo exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition as *Cupid and Psyche*; onyx cameo possibly located in Hancocks and Co. collection)⁸⁰
10. *The Hours Bringing the Horses to the Chariot of the Sun* (shell cameo; date: 1846-51; based on the bas-relief design from 1846-47 and the bas-relief in marble exhibited at the 1849 Royal Academy and in plaster at the 1851 Great Exhibition, commissioned in marble by Earl Fitzwilliam; cameo also exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition; cameo location unknown)
11. *Bellerophon Receiving Pegasus from Minerva* (shell cameo; date: probably 1848-51; based on the bas-relief design and model from 1847-48, commissioned in marble by Mr. C. S. Dickens; cameo exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition; cameo location unknown)
12. *Phaeton Driving the Chariot of the Sun* (fig. 5.8; two versions: shell cameo and onyx cameo; date: 1850-62; based on the bas-relief design from 1850, commissioned in marble by Earl Fitzwilliam; shell cameo exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition; two surviving shell cameos in the British Museum and Saulini family collection)⁸¹

⁷⁹ Extant correspondence with George E. Anson, Prince Albert's secretary, shows that Gibson ordered the Saulini cameo taken from his bust of Queen Victoria and presented it as a gift to Albert, perhaps as a gesture to show how the bust itself was progressing. John Gibson to G. E. Anson, 22 January 1845, GI/1/6, and 24 March 1845, GI/1/7, Gibson Papers.

⁸⁰ Carr suggests the cameo date is 1844-54. He was the first to note the important distinction that the cameo was based on Gibson's drawing and not the bas-relief itself: "The cameo differs from the relief in one detail, the butterfly in Psyche's right hand. Among Gibson's drawings in the Royal Academy is a pen and ink wash, which includes the butterfly. ... Thus we may assume that Tommaso used this or another such drawing given him by Gibson." Carr, "Saulini," 175.

⁸¹ The British Museum claims their cameo of *Phaeton* dates from ca. 1840, but this is not possible as Gibson's design dates from 1850. The original drawing, signed and dated, is located in the Royal Collection; see Delia Millar, *The Victorian Watercolours and Drawings in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (London: Philip Wilson, 1995), 1:352-53. This same cameo also was formerly misidentified by the British Museum as *Aurora* and not associated with Gibson. See Hugh Tait, ed., *The Art of the Jeweller. A Catalogue of the Hull Grundy Gift to the British Museum: Jewellery, Engraved Gems and Goldsmiths' Work* (London: British Museum, 1984), 1:137, cat. 912. Dickmann de Petra and Barberini refer to the subject as *Apollo* and neglect to attribute it to Gibson; 77, fig. 8, and 85, fig. 30. Gere and Rudoe correctly identify it as Gibson's design and suggest the cameo would have been worn in a diadem or comb mount because of its weight; 475.

13. *Zephyr and Psyche* (shell cameo; date: probably 1851-62; based on the title page design for *Gibson's Designs*, published by Joseph Hogarth in 1851; cameo exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition; cameo location unknown)⁸²
14. *Nymph and Cupid* (shell cameo; date: after 1858; based on the statue design from 1858-59, commissioned in marble by the Prince of Wales, Mr. J. Malcolm, and the Sandbachs, and exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition; cameo also exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition; cameo location unknown)

In addition to these fourteen Saulini cameos based on Gibson's designs, a tiara with a cameo showing *The Toilet of Nausicaa* (fig. 5.9) has been attributed to Gibson. According to an unsubstantiated oral tradition, Gibson designed both the cameo and the mount, with the cameo carved by Luigi Saulini and the mount made in gold by the Rome-based jeweler Castellani.⁸³ James David Draper, however, has rejected this claim, arguing that Castellani was not known for the high-quality "sharp-focus foliage" apparent in this mount, and that the cameo design "is not strongly reminiscent of Gibson."⁸⁴ To date, no Gibson drawing has surfaced showing this subject, so it remains unclear if Gibson ever designed original work for the Saulinis. Continuing in his ongoing role as an agent for Victoria and Albert with the commissioning of works from other sculptors in Rome, Gibson did represent the Queen in her request from Saulini for a number of double-cameo portraits of Albert and herself following the Prince's death. These double-portrait cameos were used by the Queen thereafter as badges for prizes and given as gifts.⁸⁵

As discussed above with the Parian statuettes, Saulini exhibited cameos taken from Gibson's designs at the 1851 Great Exhibition. In the jury report on Saulini's contribution, it was noted: "The greater part of

⁸² The subject of this cameo differs from the earlier *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* in that it shows a single Zephyr carrying Psyche over his shoulder. No plaster or marble versions are known to exist.

⁸³ Ernst Kris, *Catalogue of Postclassical Cameos in the Milton Weil Collection* (Vienna: Anton Schroll & Co., 1932), 45, fig. 117; Carr, "Saulini," 177.

⁸⁴ Draper, Review, 420. For more on the cameo tiara and its accompanying brooch and necklace, see James David Draper, *Cameo Appearances*, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 65, no. 4 (Spring 2008), 46-47.

⁸⁵ For more on Gibson's role in the commissioning of these cameos, see Carr, "Saulini," 176-77; and Jonathan Marsden, ed., *Victoria & Albert: Art & Love* (London: Royal Collection, 2010), 332-33. See also the following extant correspondence: John Gibson to Katherine M. Bruce, 6 May 1864, GI/1/37; Katherine M. Bruce to John Gibson, 22 September [1864], GI/1/42/1; and Sir Charles Beaumont Phipps to John Gibson, 21 November 1864, GI/1/279, all Gibson Papers.

these are copied from the most attractive works of the celebrated English sculptor Gibson.”⁸⁶ This was not an accurate statement, but it reflected the personal bias of the jury in recognizing their own nationalist sculptor, Gibson, for having his designs produced by Saulini. The cameo manufacturer displayed twelve cameos. Five of these were Gibson designs, five were after Thorvaldsen, one after Raphael, and one was from the antique.⁸⁷ While Copeland was awarded a prize medal, Saulini was given an honorable mention.

Of the five Gibson designs exhibited by Saulini, *The Hours Bringing the Horses to the Chariot of the Sun* is arguably the most important, as Gibson displayed at the Great Exhibition the plaster bas-relief of the same subject in the Sculpture Court, as discussed above. Unlike *The Hunter and His Dog*, which officially had been submitted by the Earl of Yarborough, *The Hours* was Gibson’s own contribution, and it was with this work that he designated himself the designer, not the sculptor. Considering that Saulini was displaying a cameo with the same subject for which Gibson was the designer, it cannot be coincidental that Gibson chose to name himself as designer in the official catalogue with both the bas-relief and cameo on display.

It is possible that Gibson was still aware of this connection eleven years later when he and Saulini exhibited additional works at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Although his three polychrome statues of the *Tinted Venus*, *Love Tormenting the Soul*, and *Pandora* have dominated scholarship about his contributions to this international fair, Gibson in fact also had other works on display. These were portrait busts of the Duchess of Wellington and an Italian model named Grazia, his statue of *Nymph at the Bath* for the Earl of Yarborough, and a new statue in marble, *Nymph Playing with Cupid*. Saulini exhibited at this fair twenty cameos, for which this time he received a medal. In addition to three cameos showing different stages of carving, his exhibit included: two original designs by Saulini; five after the antique; two after Thorvaldsen; one after Gibson’s former pupil Benjamin Spence; and four after Gibson’s designs.⁸⁸ The four Gibson designs as shell cameos included one entitled *Nymph and Cupid*, which was taken from Gibson’s statue on display in the British Paintings section of the hall, thus once again reinforcing Gibson’s presence as a designer.

⁸⁶ *Exhibition of the Works*, 704.

⁸⁷ *Authority*, 3:1286-87.

⁸⁸ *International Exhibition 1862: Official Catalogue of the Fine Art Department* (London: Truscott, Son, & Simmons, [1862]), 271.

However, by 1862 Gibson's focus was on his experiments with polychrome sculpture, and he was probably less concerned about the public's understanding of him as a designer. Therefore, it is the 1851 Great Exhibition which can be seen as a pivotal moment for him in the dissemination of his designs in other forms of modern reproductive media. The Great Exhibition showcased two of his important sculptures in plaster and marble, but the fair also displayed the reproductive complements of these works in Parian statuette form by Copeland and cameos by Saulini, all directly taken from Gibson's designs. It was only at the Great Exhibition of 1851, an international arena which celebrated advancements in the dissemination of modern technology, as it applied in this case to sculpture, where the connections between fine art and commercial dissemination came together for Gibson. This emphasis on his role as a designer came to full fruition soon after the Great Exhibition closed. This was when the printseller Hogarth released a series of forty engravings appropriately entitled *Gibson's Designs*.

Prints

The print series *Gibson's Designs* was issued in London in four parts by the printseller and framer Hogarth of 5 Haymarket. The first part, with ten imperial (approx. 16 x 22 in.) folio engravings, was released on 1 December 1851, with another set of ten prints released each subsequent month through March, thus providing a full portfolio of forty engravings after Gibson's designs. Hogarth charged £2 2s for proofs on India paper, and £1 1s for prints.⁸⁹ In one set of the first two parts, owned by the Yale Center for British Art, each has a cover page showing a vignette of Gibson's drawing *Psyche Carried by Zephyrus* and textual information identifying the part number, title, and publisher in a classical-style block font. However, other versions of this series appeared in book format. An edition at the Royal Academy has thirty-nine prints after Gibson's drawings, as well as a title page with a publication date of 1852.⁹⁰ This oblong book edition, measuring 15 x 21½ in. (38 x 54.5 cm), suggests that Hogarth probably also offered the series in bound format after it was completed.⁹¹

⁸⁹ "[Advertisement for *Gibson's Designs* published by Hogarth]," *The Publishers' Circular*, 15 November 1851, 372. For reviews of the print series, see "Gibson's Designs," *Literary Gazette* 1818 (22 November 1851), 802; and "Gibson's Designs," *The Art Journal* (1 February 1853), 63-64.

⁹⁰ *Imitations of Drawings by John Gibson R.A. Sculptor. Engraved by G. Wenzel and L. Prosseda Rome 1852* (London: J. Hogarth, 1852).

⁹¹ The British Museum and the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, own individual prints from this series, suggesting they either were cut from a copy of the book or sold individually by Hogarth.

The plates themselves were engraved by Giovanni Wenzel and Lodovico Prosseda, two engravers based in Rome whom Gibson knew, although more specific information detailing their association with one another has yet to be discovered. The writer Susan Horner, discussed above with regard to Gibson's drawings, wrote in her journal in April 1848 that Gibson showed her some engravings after his designs, and, in an 1848 letter to Lady Jane Davy, Gibson wrote: "All my works are engraving [*sic*] & will be published in London in the course of a year."⁹² This suggests that Wenzel and Prosseda had begun working on the engravings by 1848, but a few more years would pass before the actual prints were sold by Hogarth.

Each print is the same size and portrait/landscape orientation of the original drawings on which they are based (fig. 5.10). As a result, the images vary in size on each page. Although the prints have the addition of the engraver's and the publisher's names, plus titles of the works themselves and impressed plate marks on the pages, the uncanny similarity between Gibson's drawings and the prints often make them indistinguishable, with the print itself almost always appearing like an exact duplicate of the drawing. The actual printmaking technique is unknown. Although many of them may have been aquatints, a closer examination of the prints shows they were not all made the same way and that it is possible photographic printing technology was incorporated as well.⁹³ Indeed, the fact that the original drawings themselves still survive for many, if not all, of these prints suggests the engravers could have used daguerreotype photography to ensure an accurate representation of Gibson's drawings without destroying the original source, but this is mere speculation. However these engravings were made, the insistence on the images appearing as if they actually were Gibson's drawings shows that they were not meant to be interpretations by Wenzel and Prosseda, but facsimiles of Gibson's actual designs.

One might assume that Gibson sought to earn a profit from the sale of these prints, but in fact this seems to have been of little interest to him, as a letter to Hogarth suggests:

What I said to you verbally the other day I now repeat here, that I renounce all claims of sharing in the profits that may arrive from the sale of the engraved work from my drawings done at Rome, published

⁹² *Susan Horner Collection*, fol. 51-52; John Gibson to Lady Jane Davy, [21 October 1848], Misc. Ray 196635, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

⁹³ My thanks to Elisabeth Fairman and Gillian Forrester at the Yale Center for British Art for their insights into how these engravings may have been made.

by you. Therefore you are at liberty to sell that work entirely for your own profit without sending me any account. But I wish to say to you that I claim a copy, now & then, to present to a friend.⁹⁴

The content of this letter implies that Gibson was aware of his potential right to earn money from the sale of prints after his drawings as, presumably, he did not sign over copyright with the making of the engravings. The practice of selling copyright was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. For instance, the Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt around this time earned a tremendous profit by selling copyright with his painting *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1854-55, to Ernest Gambart for the then record-breaking sum of 5500 guineas, enabling the art dealer to sell prints of the painting for an even larger profit over the ensuing decades.⁹⁵ Thus, Gibson clearly was more interested in the dissemination of his designs as works of art to be emulated, utilizing print technology to mass produce his art. In this way he may have been unique among Victorian sculptors in how he strove to maintain artistic integrity while still exploiting commercial reproductive technology.

Just prior to the Hogarth print series, Gibson also provided illustrations for an essay and lyrical poem written by Elizabeth Strutt on the myth of Psyche.⁹⁶ Measuring 20½ x 14¾ in. (52 x 37.5 cm), the book was intended to be a fine art publication for wealthy collectors, not a pocket-sized book of poetry. Although some of Gibson's illustrations were based on works which he had also made as sculpture, there were also a number of original drawings designed to accompany Strutt's poem (fig. 5.11). All of these drawings were published as line engravings, reflecting Flaxman's influence. Like his predecessor's images for the *Iliad* and other Greek epics, Gibson's illustrations are full-page engravings, appearing between individual cantos of the poem. However, other engravings appear as vignettes at the beginning or end of specific cantos, reflecting newer techniques in illustrated book publishing that had been

⁹⁴ John Gibson to Joseph Hogarth, 20 September 1853, Misc. Ray 196637, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Gibson goes on to ask him to send a copy to the painter William Boxall and another to Gibson himself at the London home of Mrs. William Huskisson, with whom he was then staying on a visit to London.

⁹⁵ Thomas M. Bayer and John R. Page, *The Development of the Art Market in England: Money as Muse, 1730-1900* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 120.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Strutt, *The Story of Psyche with Classical Enquiry into the Signification and Origin of the Fable with Designs in Outline by John Gibson Esq. R.A.* ([London, n.d.]). No publication year appears in the book, and it has been assumed that the first version was published in 1852. A second edition reportedly was published in 1857; Matthews, 247. However, advertisements for a first edition began appearing in *The Roman Advertiser* on 6 November 1846 and appeared in each subsequent issue for five months until 17 April 1847. Strutt's husband and son were painters who lived and worked at 52 Via del Babuino, close to Gibson's studio, so they all knew one another. The advertisement noted that buyers could purchase the book for two guineas from the Strutts' studio.

developed by Thomas Bewick and his followers and are now seen in art history as a mark of the contemporary Romantic movement in illustrated works of literature.⁹⁷

Following the publication of *Gibson's Designs*, in 1861 the London-based art and print dealer Colnaghi, then managed by Dominic Charles Colnaghi and his nephew John Anthony Scott, published a book of engravings after Gibson's sculptures.⁹⁸ Like the prints after his drawings and Strutt's *Story of Psyche*, this book was intended for wealthy collectors. One edition housed at the Royal Academy is a large vertical-format book measuring 23½ x 16½ in. (59.5 x 42 cm), with seventy-seven pages of engravings, mostly of Gibson's classical subjects such as *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (fig. 5.12), but also of his funerary monuments and memorial statues. Significantly, the prints here also were line engravings, once again continuing Gibson's role as the Victorian Flaxman. Gibson dedicated the book to Sir Charles Eastlake, who thanked him for the book and its dedication, and noted how his designs elevated the sculptor's status in the world of British art.

It is a noble monument to yr fame, executed in the best taste & without any ostentation, the endless beauty of some of the figures & compositions contrasts well with the plain titles. ... One outstanding quality in this fine series is its variety, & I really should be puzzled to say which class of subjects exhibits your powers & feeling to the best advantage. ... In short, I repeat, it would not be easy to say what subjects you have undertaken most "con amore." The plain truth I believe is that you have put your soul into everything & have never failed to do your best.⁹⁹

The title page for this collection of engravings identifies the individual artists who worked on the project. The drawings after Gibson's statues were made by Pablo Guglielmi, a Spanish-born artist who worked for a time in Rome, although like Wenzel and Prosseda no evidence has surfaced about his working relationship with Gibson. The engraving plates were made under the direction of Ludwig (Lewis) Gruner. His print studio was based in Dresden, where two engravers, Theodor Langer and Oswald Ufer, worked on the plates for this project. A third engraver named Siedentopf, who may have been related to the printsellers Siedentopf und Sohn in Frankfurt am Main, also engraved plates for this project. The complex nature of Guglielmi as draftsman, Gruner/Langer/Ufer/Siedentopf as engravers, and Colnaghi/Scott as publishers arguably mirrors that of a sculptor's studio practice, where numerous

⁹⁷ Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, "The Romantic Vignette and Thomas Bewick," in their *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art* (New York: Viking, 1984), 71-96.

⁹⁸ *Engravings from Original Compositions Executed in Marble at Rome by John Gibson, R.A.* (London: P. & D. Colnaghi, Scott & Co., 1861). The book received a surprisingly negative review in the *Athenaeum* 1781 (14 December 1861), 800-01.

⁹⁹ Sir Charles Eastlake to John Gibson, [n.d.], GI/1/106, Gibson Papers.

assistants worked together to produce a single object that began with Gibson's design. Gibson was first and foremost the conceptual artist, the creator of the designs that were carved in marble by others, and incised into plates to make engravings by others. In that sense, the prints, like all other forms of reproductive media, were the natural continuation of the dissemination of Gibson's ideas, as was the case for the statuettes and cameos.

This was not the first time Gibson's sculptures had been engraved, however. Prints after his sculptures had first appeared in 1835 in the first volume of the Italian serial *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori*. Published in Rome, with members of the Academies in Rome and other cities as its intended audience, this fine-art journal was published annually until 1840. It honored artists past and present whose works were made or could be seen in Rome. Modern works were published under the direction of and approved by the artist himself. Each print was a copper-plate line engraving and was accompanied by an essay written in Italian about the subject.

Gibson's monumental statue of the Liverpool politician William Huskisson, the first version of which recently had been installed in the city's cemetery, was the first of his works to be engraved. The figure was drawn by Franco Pagliuolo and the essay was written by Giuseppe Melchiori.¹⁰⁰ In the next issue, Gibson's *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (*Psiche trasportata dai Zefiri*) appeared. This was followed in 1837 by *Love Tormenting the Soul* (*Amore*) and in 1838 by *The Guardian Angel* (*La protezione angelica*), a bas-relief funerary monument for Henry Blundell for a church near Liverpool. All three of these prints were a collaboration, with the drawing by Guglielmi and the engraving by Wenzel, each of whom would later be involved in the other engraving projects of Gibson's sculptures (1861) and designs (1851), respectively.¹⁰¹ What is perhaps most significant is that of the first four issues published, Gibson was the only modern sculptor to appear in all four. Perhaps not coincidentally, one of the authors of the essays in this series was a man named Filippo Moisè, who very well may have been the same Moisè in Gibson's studio who specialized in carving ornamental features.

¹⁰⁰ *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori* 1 (1835), 1:40-42, plate 26.

¹⁰¹ *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori* 2 (1836), 2:20-25, plate 15; (1837), 3:28-29, plate 15; (1838), 4:12-15, plate 9. I have been unable to find copies of the 1839 and 1840 issues of the journal. The publication of these prints in Rome easily could have led to further commissions for Gibson. For instance, in 1836 Prince Torlonia may have seen the engraving of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, a statue originally designed in the 1820s, and commissioned a repetition of it.

Outside of Gibson's direct purview, in London engravings after Gibson's work began to appear in the *Illustrated London News*. This newspaper first began production as a weekly serial in 1842, its unique feature being the appearance of wood engravings, which provided for the first time the opportunity for illiterate Londoners the opportunity to understand current events from pictures if not from words. Following Gibson's death in 1866, a number of newspapers published obituaries and detailed information about his funeral. However, the *Illustrated London News* was the only publication to illustrate Gibson's obituary and its article about his funeral with images of his cortege, childhood home, and one of the last subjects his studio was then completing, *Theseus and the Robber*.¹⁰² The first work by Gibson to be reproduced in this newspaper had been his statue of Queen Victoria in July 1847.¹⁰³ The line engraving provided the viewer with an idea of how the statue looked, which at that time had just arrived at the Royal Academy exhibition. It reflected current events not only because it represented the monarch, but also because it was the first time Gibson exhibited in London a tinted statue. But the mass production of the newspaper itself prevented the image from ever being perceived as a fine-art print.

The first journal to provide engravings as fine-art prints was *The Art Journal*, a serial intended for the educated. Issued monthly, *The Art Journal* (originally *The Art-Union*, changing its name in mid-1848) at first utilized less expensive wood engravings for mass production, but soon began producing fine-art engravings of works of art by printing on high-quality paper and only on one side so that the print did not bleed through. In issuing these prints as detachable or loose with the issue itself, *The Art Journal* not only helped elevate its status as the leading British journal for the study of art, but also elevated the status of the artists whose works it reproduced and thus marketed, giving images of their paintings and sculptures to readers with removable, high-quality prints that were suitable for framing.

Gibson's name first appeared in the journal in 1839 when it published his letter to the editor about the recent departure from Rome of Hereditary Grand Duke Alexander of Russia and the commissions that Gibson and other British artists had received from him.¹⁰⁴ Ten years later, *The Art Journal* published its first high-quality Gibson engraving with the subject of *Aurora*, the goddess of the dawn. The statue was owned by Margaret Sandbach and had been shown at the 1848 Royal Academy exhibition. The subject

¹⁰² "The Funeral of John Gibson, R.A.," *Illustrated London News*, 10 February 1866, 136-37; "John Gibson, R.A.," *Illustrated London News*, 17 February 1866, 159-61.

¹⁰³ "Gibson's Statue of the Queen," *Illustrated London News* (17 July 1847), 48.

¹⁰⁴ "Foreign Art," 23.

was drawn by Guglielmi in Rome and engraved by William Callio Roffe, a British engraver who frequently worked on prints of sculptures and was regularly employed by *The Art Journal* for that purpose. In the accompanying article about the sculpture, the unidentified author described its place in Sandbach's home:

It is placed in a niche, which is coloured a deep soft ultramarine blue: this helps to carry out the sentiment of the beautiful statue, and likewise relieves the marble, preserving all the clearness of the outlines, and harmonising well with the delicate colouring of the drapery; the niche is finished by a simple border of dead gold.¹⁰⁵

This description allowed the viewer not only the possibility of imagining it in a domestic interior, but perhaps suggested as well how one could frame it and hang it on a wall with a similar background color and gold frame to enhance the experience of what the sculpture itself must look like in person.

Considering Gibson's rising interest in polychromy by this time, the emphasis in this article on the harmonizing of white marble in the decorative interior seems prescient. Having a work engraved as a fine-art print by *The Art Journal*, however, did not necessarily exempt the artist or the subject from critique. In the same text, the author criticized Gibson for his failed attempt at successfully managing in stone what was clearly an otherworldly subject.

There must always be great difficulty in giving to a subject that expression of ethereal motion which is essential to carry out the idea: nor has the sculptor quite succeeded here in his attempt, though there is lightness in the attitude of the figure and in the disposition of the limbs, as well as movement in the flowing lines of the drapery. But the absence of the quality most desired is perhaps not so much to be imputed to the conception itself, nor to the treatment, but rather to the necessity of introducing a *support* to the marble by means of the mass of material seen between the feet, which encumbers the figure and deprives it of its aerial nature. Mind and matter here do not quite harmonise.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, Gibson was seemingly unfazed by the criticism. His works continued to be engraved by *The Art Journal* and he appreciated the promotion of his art in the form of prints. After the journal published an engraving of his bas-relief *Cupid and Psyche*, Gibson wrote a letter to the editor Hall thanking him for a copy of the print: "It certainly does the greatest credit to Mr Roffe[;] a more beautiful engraving I have never seen from sculpture—it is executed 'con amore'."¹⁰⁷ Despite this satisfaction, Gibson had to mention his one concern: "The line under this beautiful engraving shocked me horribly—'From the statue[.]' The nose of the Cupid would be more perfect if less aquiline & it could be done—so,"

¹⁰⁵ "Aurora. From the Statue by J. Gibson, R.A.," *The Art Journal* (September 1849), 288.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ John Gibson to Samuel Carter Hall, 17 December 1855, MSL/1941/421, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

to which he added a drawing of the figure's corrected nose. This suggests that although the drawing was based on his sculpture, it was a relief and not a statue. Furthermore, the drawing and engraving plate were not exact replicas of Gibson's work but interpretations of them and thus reflected the potential for errors in design, which clearly distressed him as it impacted what the public might think of his design.

Hall apparently had extended to Gibson the offer of receiving a few copies of the print, and he welcomed them, adding that Hall might consider sending copies to Queen Victoria and the Duke of Northumberland, both of whom owned repetitions of the relief itself. Gibson went on to suggest to Hall that he consider engraving another of his reliefs, also done for Northumberland, of "Cupid & Psyche flying in the air. It is the soul pursued by desire. Every year they sell many cameos of it. If you would like to engrave it in your work I would have a perfect drawing made by Sigr. Gulielmi [*sic*], that is, if you were to give it to Mr. Roffe." This letter addresses, then, some understanding of the working relationship Gibson had with Guglielmi. More importantly, though, the mention here of the cameos produced by the Saulinis after Gibson's design links the prints and sculpture with jewelry production.

Gibson's consciousness of how these media all related to one another as different forms of the same design shows that he and his contemporaries had fewer concerns about the concept of originality, but more concerns about how a design was disseminated. Reproduction was key to how artists such as Gibson worked, whether it was overseeing his own studio practice in creating marble statues, or allowing for statuettes, cameos, and engravings to be made after his own designs. The reality of art production in the mid-nineteenth century was based on the very opposite of what modernism would have us think today. Rather than apotheosize the single so-called original object, the nineteenth-century viewer sought to own multiple versions of the same subject in different media. Thus, Queen Victoria herself could, and did in fact, own Gibson drawings, bas-reliefs and statues, porcelain statuettes, cameos, and prints all with similar subjects, none of which suffered from a sense that there was a lack of originality to any of these reproductions. On the contrary, multiple versions in various media simply reinforced for someone like the Queen the primacy of Gibson's designs. As such, Gibson maintained his standing in the art world as a leading artist, and his designs allowed him to spread his classical art and his love of the Greeks to a wider audience by using the modern reproductive technologies of his day.

Chapter 6. Conclusion: Gibson's Legacy

In this dissertation I have considered a number of aspects in the life and work of John Gibson so as to argue that this sculptor should be viewed anew for his contributions to the history of nineteenth-century sculpture. Rather than a *retardataire* classicist, Gibson should be seen as one who presented classicism as modern. Rather than an eccentric classicist who sought to reintroduce polychromy with the *Tinted Venus*, Gibson should be acknowledged for attempting to adapt an ancient practice for modern taste. He was trained and educated to follow artistic principles of imitation and to work with an eye toward balancing idealized beauty with a close study of nature. He was a Grecophile following the aesthetic principles of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and he adhered to teachings by Royal Academy artists such as Joshua Reynolds, John Flaxman, and Henry Fuseli. But Gibson did more than just produce modern classics; he adapted his adherence to classicism by modernizing it through new ideas, practices, and technologies relevant to changes in the nineteenth century.

This concluding chapter explores Gibson's legacy. Having shifted the focus of his career beyond polychromy, I will consider briefly how his influence continued to impact other artists. In doing so, I am using Gibson's legacy as a means to challenge the way art historiography has insisted on a break with classicism as the only way to be seen as modern. To do this I will explore three ideas: first, the work of Gibson's pupils and followers as a survey of his general artistic influence; second, how the *Tinted Venus* and other polychrome works inspired other British sculptors and painters; and, third, how *The Hunter and His Dog*, Gibson's acknowledged masterpiece during his lifetime, re-addresses the development of nineteenth-century British sculpture.

Gibson's Followers

In the third chapter on Gibson's studio practice, I discussed his working relationships with his brother Benjamin Gibson and with the American-born sculptor Harriet Hosmer. In many ways, each can be considered Gibson's most noteworthy pupils. But they were not the only people to work in Gibson's studio. Browsing through *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851*, one discovers a

number of other nineteenth-century artists who worked in Gibson's studio and learned directly from him.¹ For many of these individuals, little scholarship has been published, so it is unknown how strongly Gibson's influence can be seen in their work. Nevertheless, the total number is larger than scholars heretofore have assumed.

Among his English pupils were the sculptors George Gammon Adams (1821-1898), Benjamin Jennings II of Hereford (b. unknown, d. 1875), Benjamin Edward Spence (ca. 1823-1866), Edward Bowring Stephens (1815-1882), who modeled the *Narcissus* manufactured by Copeland and Garrett, and William Theed the Younger (1804-1891). The Irish sculptor John Hogan (1800-1858) also studied with Gibson.² The married sculptors Mary Francis Thornycroft (1809-1895) and Thomas Thornycroft (1816-1885) reportedly worked for a short time in Gibson's studio when they arrived in Rome in late 1842. More importantly for the Thornycrofts, however, was Gibson's association with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Through Gibson, Mary Thornycroft received numerous commissions from the monarchs.³ Gibson also acted as an intermediary in securing for the Queen commissions from numerous British sculptors in Rome such as Spence, Theed, Henry Timbrell, and Gibson's friend Richard James Wyatt.

A visual comparison between Gibson's sculptures and those of his followers also demonstrates that he was a source of inspiration to many others, including some whose connection with him is unknown. As noted in the introductory chapter, Gibson's *Hunter and His Dog* (fig. 1.2) was a significant work during his lifetime and spawned after his death a series of polychrome bronze reductions by an unidentified sculptor or manufacturer (fig. 1.7). The same statue also influenced John Quincy Adams Ward's *Indian Warrior*, 1860 (fig. 1.5), although Ward's statue transformed the classical hero into an American Indian, albeit retaining his idealized, classical physique. Hamo Thornycroft (son of Mary and Thomas) modeled a statue of *Artemis*, 1880 (fig. 1.6), that bears a striking resemblance to Gibson's *Hunter*, although his figure is female and there are two dogs in the model.

Gibson's Royal Academy diploma work *Narcissus*, 1836-38 (fig. 2.24), also proved influential. His brother's pastoral *Shepherd Boy and Dog*, 1840-41 (fig. 3.14), borrowed from *Narcissus*, while Theed's

¹ Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M. G. Sullivan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

² On Hogan, see John Turpin, *John Hogan: Irish Neoclassical Sculptor in Rome 1800-1858* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1982).

³ On the Thornycrofts, including their sculptor son Hamo, see Elfrida Manning, *Marble & Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft* (London: Trefoil Books, 1982).

Narcissus, 1845 (fig. 6.1), is almost a repetition of Gibson's statue. Theed worked in Gibson's studio for some time while he was in Rome from 1826 to 1848, so it is not surprising that he saw Gibson's *Narcissus* as a source of inspiration, especially since this was his first commission from Victoria and Albert. Although Theed's figure is standing and leaning on a shepherd's staff, his body, hair, and face are identical to the seated *Narcissus*. Even the turn of the head and the eyes are similar, as they stare down at their reflection in a pool of water. Finally, Hosmer's life-sized statue *Oenone*, 1854-55 (fig. 3.19), the wife of the Trojan Paris who abandoned her to elope with Helen, shows the nymph looking downward in grief, her one arm supporting her torso. As such, the position of her body shares great similarities to Gibson's statue, which she would have seen in plaster form in his studio.

Hosmer's *Sleeping Faun*, 1864-66 (fig. 3.20), was likely inspired by the ancient statues of *The Marble Faun* in the Capitoline Museum and the Hellenistic *Barberini Faun* in the Glyptothek. However, the statue shares its origins with Gibson's *Sleeping Shepherd Boy* (figs. 2.20 and 3.3), for although their figures do not resemble one another exactly, they share similar pastoral subjects and are modern interpretations of ancient works. A more obvious influence of Gibson's shepherd can be seen in the work of the German sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand (1847-1921), whose own *Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, 1871-73 (fig. 6.2), seems a repetition of Gibson's work, albeit with a more pronounced, naturalistic sense of nudity. Although Hildebrand did not first travel to Italy until 1867, more than a year after Gibson's death, he may have visited Gibson's studio where the model for *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy* would have been displayed until the studio itself was dismantled starting in 1868. Alternatively, Hildebrand could have seen Gibson's statue reproduced as an engraving. However Hildebrand saw Gibson's work, it clearly influenced him, as the similarities between the two figures are remarkable. As more research on Gibson's oeuvre is published, inevitably the work of other sculptors may correlate to Gibson's works as sources for them. Beyond these direct comparisons and the consideration of Gibson's pupils, however, another point of consideration has to do with the impact of his polychrome experiments.

Tinted Venus

In the third chapter, I explored the role of the *Tinted Venus* (fig. 1.1) and Gibson's other polychrome sculptures in the context of his studio practice, with a focus on installation history and viewer reception.

As I have argued, Gibson should not be seen as the first sculptor to reintroduce polychromy in the nineteenth century. Rather, it is more appropriate to point to Gibson and his international contemporaries as collectively being responsible for reintroducing polychrome sculpture. Gibson's contribution is that he applied wax-based pigments to marble statues, tinting them as a modern form of classicism that focused on harmonizing the statue with the decorative interior. In doing so, he challenged the paradigm of white marble's purity of form, which had been the foundation for the "true style" for nearly a century.

This harmonizing of polychrome sculpture with the decorative interior is best seen in the temple structure (figs. 3.24, 3.31, and 3.32) that Jones designed for the *Tinted Venus*, *Cupid* (fig. 3.23), and *Pandora* (fig. 3.22) statues that Gibson displayed at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Seen in the context of the multi-colored architectural setting, some critics noted how much better the tinted figures looked than those left in white marble, such as Hosmer's *Zenobia*. In emulating the effects of ivory and chryselephantine figures, and in his focus on the decorative interior, Gibson arguably can be seen as part of the generation of modern designers who impacted the rising Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts movements in Britain.⁴ Indeed, in the 1850s, when working on his large-scale public monument for Westminster Palace (fig. 2.26), Gibson planned to tint the white marble figures of Queen Victoria, Justice, and Clemency so as to better harmonize their classical appearance with the ornamental Gothic room in which the statues were installed.⁵ Lady Eastlake, in her published edition of Gibson's memoirs, noted boldly that he was an Aesthete, "ever communing with ... the True and the Beautiful, and serving Art for her own sake only."⁶ Her statement may reflect her own ideas related to the decorative interior that she and her husband had championed, but it also reinforces Gibson's alliance with the Art for Art's Sake and Aesthetic movements.

This repositioning of Gibson as an innovator of Aestheticism, rather than as a *retardataire* classicist, thus points toward *fin de siècle* New Sculpture, as exemplified in works by men such as Edward Onslow Ford (fig. 6.3) and Alfred Gilbert (fig. 6.4), who crafted polychrome statuettes using bronze and other

⁴ For more on these movements, in particular their relationship to the decorative interior, see Stephen Calloway, et al., eds., *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011); Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publications, 2010); Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996); and Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, eds., *International Arts and Crafts* (London: V&A Publications, 2005).

⁵ The statues remained untinted either because the architect Charles Barry rejected Gibson's plans or because Gibson changed his mind.

⁶ Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., Sculptor* (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 10.

media with the decorative interior in mind. Indeed, considering Gibson's polychrome experiments along with his exploration of the statuette market through Parian ware—best exemplified in the polychrome Parian version of the *Tinted Venus* issued by Copeland after 1862—it is arguable that Gibson's practice of tinting shares more with late-nineteenth-century New Sculpture than has been seen in the past. This argument thus overthrows the heretofore dominant scholarship by art historians such as Susan Beattie, who contended that these sculptors had consciously rejected the classicism inherent in Gibson's work.⁷

While the influence of Gibson's polychromy may seem directly relevant to the evolution of sculptural practice in Britain, what has not been considered is the potential influence of polychromy, specifically the *Tinted Venus*, on painting. Scholars are well aware of how painters often referenced sculpture on canvas. From Reynolds using the *Apollo Belvedere* as a model for his heroic portraits, to Frederic Leighton painting himself before a cast of the Parthenon frieze, the presence of sculpture in painting is well known.⁸ The reverse situation rarely has been explored. In considering this approach, it is worth recalling that the *Tinted Venus* and Gibson's other tinted statues had wax-based pigments applied to the marble. While these may not have been directly "painted" on the statues in the traditional sense, the effect at least suggested a painterly approach through tinting.

Historians of Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic art know that the 1860s saw a resurgence of interest in classical subjects in British painting at this time.⁹ These artists included Leighton, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Albert Moore (fig. 6.5), Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Simeon Solomon, and others, who painted Venuses and other classical subjects. Up to the 1860s, these subjects typically had been the purview only of European painters, particularly academic followers of J.-A.-D. Ingres. At the 1862 International Exhibition in London, the fine art gallery included sections for foreign paintings as well as an entire floor for the English school of art. The list of paintings for the exhibition shows that, with the exception of portraits (such as Reynolds's *Mrs. Siddons as a Tragic Muse*) and landscapes (such as Richard Wilson's *Apollo and the Seasons*), there was only one contemporaneous British artist who painted a classical

⁷ Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983).

⁸ See, most recently, Penelope Curtis, ed., *On the Meanings of Sculpture in Painting* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2009).

⁹ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Allen Staley, *The New Painting of the 1860s: Between the Pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

mythological subject.¹⁰ This was William Etty, whose painting *Venus Descending*, was the only painted Venus hanging in the English gallery, and this was more a Baroque-style reinvention, rather than a work in the “true style.”¹¹ In contrast to this dearth of classical subjects in the English paintings gallery, outside, in a polychrome temple-like structure, was Gibson’s own *Tinted Venus*, both praised and derided as a modern classic. As the only colored Venus among works by British artists at the exposition, Gibson’s statue may very well have been a significant influence on these rising Aesthetic Movement artists in their new representations of the goddess of love, all of which were painted after 1862.

Of all these painters, however, the one possibly most influenced by Gibson’s polychromy was Rossetti. In 1863 he began a picture of *Venus Verticordia* (fig. 6.6), his only nude subject. Gibson’s original name for his Venus, when it was exhibited untinted in 1839, was also *Venus Verticordia*. While her reddish-blond hair and framing at the bust in Rossetti’s painting differ greatly from Gibson’s statue, the apple in their left hands is noteworthy. Missing from Gibson’s statue is the arrow Rossetti’s Venus holds, a symbol more appropriately associated with Cupid. Recall, however, that positioned to the left of the *Tinted Venus* in Jones’s temple structure was Gibson’s statue of *Love Tormenting the Soul*, a tinted Cupid caressing a butterfly, about to pierce it with an arrow. And butterflies themselves are seen in the halo over Venus’s head. Rossetti’s painting, then, arguably references these two tinted sculptures by Gibson and merges them into one iconographic body.¹² Although Rossetti never claimed to be inspired by Gibson’s statues, he did go to the exposition and he would have seen the polychrome temple and statues in the heavily-trafficked area between the front and back entrances. Perhaps more telling is that his brother William Michael Rossetti wrote one of the most laudatory reviews of Gibson’s tinted figures, declaring them to be valid Aesthetic experiments and describing them as “a legitimate phase of sculpture, ... having a separate beauty of [their] own.”¹³

This connection made between Gibson’s *Tinted Venus* and Aesthetic painting of the 1860s is not meant to suggest that it was the only possible influence on these artists. Indeed, the larger issue at stake

¹⁰ Tom Taylor, *Handbook of the Pictures in the International Exhibition of 1862* ([London]: Bradbury & Evans, 1862).

¹¹ Denis Farr, *William Etty* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 155-56.

¹² For more on Rossetti’s painting, see Julian Treuherz, Elizabeth Prettejohn, and Edwin Becker, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 188-89.

¹³ William Michael Rossetti, “The Fine Art of the International Exhibition,” *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country* 66 (July 1862), 195.

really is the influence of polychrome sculpture in general, or, more broadly, the classical revival of the 1860s with interrelated works of art across all media. With regard to Gibson's polychrome statues, however, it does seem suggestive that, despite the controversy attached to them at the 1862 International Exhibition, these works may have partly inspired these painters, and, by extension, the later generation of New Sculptors who exploited the use of polychromy for the decorative interior. Yet, considering again the reception of Gibson's sculptures during his lifetime, it is important to keep in mind that throughout his life, and after his death, the work for which Gibson was believed to be forever remembered was not the *Tinted Venus* but *The Hunter and His Dog*.

The Hunter and His Dog

As discussed in the introduction, Gibson's statue of *The Hunter and His Dog* (fig. 1.2) was the work most frequently exhibited in public during his lifetime, appearing at the Royal Academy in 1844, the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Exposition Universelle of 1855, the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, and the hall of modern sculpture at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park. It was regarded as his masterpiece, seen as the highest achievement in sculpture because of its successful amalgamation of idealism based on classical precedents and a close observation of natural form. For Victorian audiences in particular, the narrative element and the presence of the dog elevated the statue's reception even more. At the Great Exhibition, it was named for one of the top awards, the Council Medal, but because Gibson was on the jury for the fine art committee, he turned down the prize. This act, ironically, may have drawn more attention toward Gibson and his statue, as if somehow they were beyond the awarding of an actual prize. Regardless, it is important to note that Gibson, had he accepted the award, would have been one of five international sculptors to win a Council Medal.¹⁴

The four statues that did receive Council Medals for sculpture were: August Kiss, *The Amazon*, cast in zinc and bronzed, representing Prussia (fig. 6.7); Carlo Marochetti, *Richard, Coeur de Lion*, plaster, representing the United Kingdom (fig. 6.8); James Pradier, *Phryne*, marble, representing France (fig. 6.9); and Richard James Wyatt, *Glycera*, marble, also representing the United Kingdom.¹⁵ The two marble

¹⁴ It is unknown if Gibson's medal was awarded to someone else in his place, or if it simply was excluded from the total medal count.

¹⁵ A replica of Wyatt's *Glycera* is in the Royal Collection, but I was unable to obtain an image.

figures of *Phryne* and *Glycera* were both classical subjects and represented ideals of female beauty. Wyatt's inclusion in this group was probably a posthumous acknowledgment of his talents, as he had died in 1850 and had never been elected to the Royal Academy. Gibson himself may have encouraged this award, as Wyatt had been his friend in Rome. Kiss's and Marochetti's statues were large-scale monumental figures. Kiss's was perhaps the most noteworthy statue, as it showed an Amazon warrior on a rearing horse using a spear to battle a panther attacking them. Its medium of zinc and bronze also worked well with the Great Exhibition's mission of recognizing innovative examples of industrial and fine art design. Marochetti, though Italian-born, had established a career in England and his British-history figure of Richard the Lion-Hearted was afterwards made into bronze and installed outside Westminster Palace at the Houses of Parliament.

In some ways the inclusion of Gibson's *Hunter* with this group may seem incongruous. From our perspective today, his statue, particularly as a nude male figure in marble, may suggest an out-dated Neoclassical style. But Gibson's statue arguably complemented each of these works. It was the male version of classical beauty that balanced the female figures of *Phryne* and *Glycera*. It was the "true style" vision of heroism that countered the "native style" in Marochetti's medieval representation of a monarch from Britain's past. And Gibson's *Hunter* offered a narrative moment in time that involved an animal, and thus balanced Kiss's violent scene with a more restrained vision that emphasized intellectual patience and vigilance over a reactionary, bellicose scene.

Repositioning Gibson's *Hunter* at mid-century also serves to help consider how the figure reflected both the past and the future of sculpture in the nineteenth century, particularly in Britain. If one looks to the past at heroic male figures that celebrated the "true style," such as Canova's *Perseus* (fig. 4.20) or Gibson's own figure of Mars (fig. 4.3), one can see how these works celebrated the idealism of Greco-Roman art but offered modern interpretations in the poses and musculature of the body. These two works are less directly interactive with the viewer and perhaps challenge some of the assumptions of scholars such as Alex Potts, who has argued for Canova's modernity through the statue's interaction with the viewer. Nevertheless, these statues fit in line with the Winckelmannian aesthetic of their particular day, which emphasized the male body as a modern form of heroism and desire.

Looking toward the future, statues of the male body crafted by the late 1870s, such as Leighton's *Athlete Wrestling a Python* (fig. 1.9) and Hamo Thornycroft's *Teucer* (fig. 6.10), although partly inspired by Renaissance sculpture, are considered today to be more naturalistic in their design when compared to the idealism of the past, the use of bronze itself enhancing the realism of the figures. Hence, these two subjects are seen by scholars of New Sculpture as among those works that began the radical shift away from Neoclassicism toward a modernist approach that emphasized naturalism and purity of form. Yet, both of these figures are classical subjects. The *Athlete* arguably is a rendition of Hercules battling the Hydra, and *Teucer* was an archer who fought during the Trojan War. Furthermore, their nudity and accentuated musculature reinforce their origins in the "true style."

Historically positioning Gibson's *Hunter* between figures such as Canova's *Perseus* and Leighton's *Athlete* allows us, the viewer today, to see Gibson's balance of idealism with a close observation of nature as the evolutionary step that saw sculptures of heroic male figures evolve from the "true style" earlier in the century to the naturalism more common later in the century. This is not to say that Gibson's *Hunter* should be seen as proto-modernist. Rather, I am saying that Gibson's *Hunter* was exactly of its time: a modern classical body that balanced idealism with a close observation of nature. It incorporated temporality, narrativity, and subject matter (the dog), and thus directly appealed to audiences of its day. In short, Gibson's *Hunter and His Dog* epitomized the primacy of the modern classic in mid-century London.

In shifting attention away from Gibson's *Tinted Venus* and toward his *Hunter*, I have argued for a conscious effort to rewrite the artistic appreciation of Gibson himself. The heretofore dominant scholarship on his polychrome experiments has led to a skewed perception of Gibson's life and career, in which he has been branded as either a retrograde classicist or a Victorian eccentric. This dissertation has moved Gibson beyond the debates on polychromy and established that his career was more than an aberration in tinting marble. I have recontextualized his biography to demonstrate his awareness of the wide scope of contemporaneous art and art historical discourse. The chapter on his studio practice considered how his methods of making sculpture reflected his acumen in handling patron commissions and encouraged him to elevate himself above the craftsman-sculptor to be a gentleman artist. In the chapter on Winckelmannian aesthetics, I argued that Gibson explored homoerotic subjects for patron

consumption, but could censor himself when he was aware of how tastes and audiences had changed. Finally, the chapter on reproductive media considered his role as a designer, how in utilizing mass production through prints, jewelry, and statuettes, he could spread his teachings about classicism to a modern audience. In reexamining Gibson's contributions to the history of nineteenth-century sculpture—beyond polychromy—and reorienting his understanding of classicism not as retrograde but as modern in the context of his own day, I contend that Gibson was a significant figure in the reinvention of the modern classical body. To that end he can be seen as a case study for a revisionist approach to the study of Neoclassical sculpture itself, in such a way that it can be seen, and truly appreciated, as the modern art of its day.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1.1. John Gibson, *Tinted Venus*, 1851-53, marble with wax pigments, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 1.2. J. Gibson, *The Hunter and His Dog*, modeled 1840-41, this version 1847, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.



Fig. 1.3. Matthew Cotes Wyatt, *Bashaw*, 1831-34, mixed media, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 1.4. Richard James Wyatt, *Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses*, 1844, marble, Royal Collection, London.



Fig. 1.5. John Quincy Adams Ward, *Indian Hunter*, 1860, bronze, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 1.6. Hamo Thornycroft, *Artemis*, 1880, plaster and wax, Tate Britain, London.



Fig. 1.7. Unknown, after J. Gibson, *The Hunter and His Dog*, date unknown, gilt bronze, Private Collection.



Fig. 1.8. David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, *John Gibson*, 1844, calotype, George Eastman House, Rochester.



Fig. 1.9. J. Gibson, *Bust of Anna Jameson*, 1862, marble, National Portrait Gallery, London, on long term loan to Bodelwyddan Castle, Rhyl, Wales.



Fig. 1.10. H. Thornycroft, *The Mower*, 1880, bronze, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 1.11. Frederic Leighton, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, bronze, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 2.1. J. Gibson, *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer*, ca. 1805-10, terracotta, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 2.2. Marcantonio Raimondi, after Raphael, *Alexander Preserving the Works of Homer*, ca. 1500-34, engraving.



Fig. 2.3. J. Gibson, *Half-Length Anatomical Study of a Man, Drawn from a Dissected Corpse*, ca. 1810-15, black chalk and graphite, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 2.4. J. Gibson, *Monument to Emily Robinson*, 1829-30, marble, St. James Oratory, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 2.5. J. Gibson, *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*, 1810-11, pen and ink and wash over graphite, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 2.6. Henry Fuseli, *Thor Battering the Midgard Serpent*, 1790, oil on canvas, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

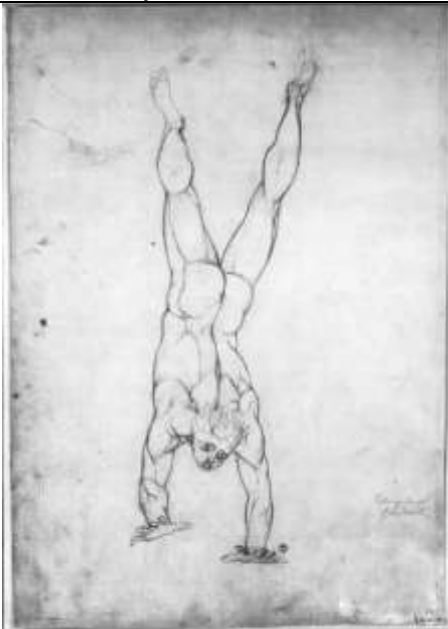


Fig. 2.7. J. Gibson, *Male Nude Falling* (Study for *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*), 1810-11, pen and ink, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 2.8. J. Gibson, *A Falling Angel* (Study for *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*), 1810-11, pen and ink, British Museum, London.



Fig. 2.9. J. Gibson, *A Bacchante Diverting the Attention of a Tiger, with Her Cymbals*, 1813, terracotta, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.



Fig. 2.10. J. Gibson, *Medallion of William Roscoe, Esq.*, 1813, plaster, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 2.11. J. Gibson, *Bust of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, 1814, bronze, National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig. 2.12. J. Gibson, *Study after the Theseus/Dionysus Figure from the Elgin Marbles*, undated, probably 1817, pencil and charcoal, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 2.13. J. Gibson, *Bust of John Walter Watson Taylor*, 1816, marble, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 2.14. J. Gibson, *Bust of George Watson Taylor*, 1816-19, marble, Osuna Art Gallery, Bethesda, MD.



Fig. 2.15. J. Gibson, *Bust of Mrs. Anne Watson Taylor*, 1816-19, marble, Private Collection.



Fig. 2.16. J. Gibson, *Bust of William Roscoe*, 1817-19, marble, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.



Fig. 2.17. Antonio Canova, *Hebe*, 1816-17, marble with bronze, Pinacoteca Civica di Forli, Italy.



Fig. 2.18. Francis Chantrey, *Monument to Be Placed in Litchfield Cathedral in Memory of Two Children (The Sleeping Robinson Children)*, 1817-19, marble, Litchfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, England.



Fig. 2.19. J. Gibson, *Monument to Richard James Wyatt*, 1850-51, marble, Protestant Cemetery, Rome.



Fig. 2.20. J. Gibson, *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, modeled 1818-19, this version ca. 1830, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 2.21. J. Gibson, *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, modeled 1821-22, this version 1837-40, marble, Palazzo Corsini, Rome.



Fig. 2.22. J. Gibson, *Nymph Untying Her Sandal*, 1826-30, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.



Fig. 2.23. J. Gibson, *Venus and Cupid*, 1831-33, marble, Usher Gallery, Lincoln, England.



Fig. 2.24. J. Gibson, *Narcissus*, modeled 1829, this version 1836-38, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

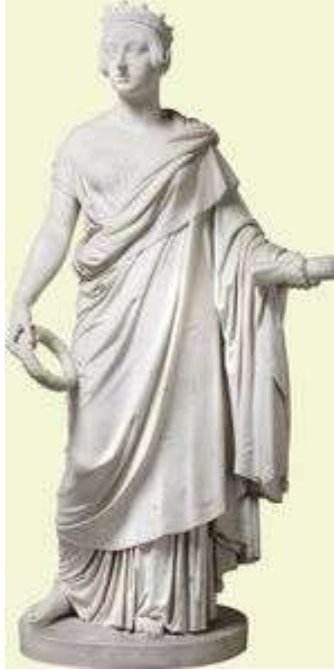


Fig. 2.25. J. Gibson, *Queen Victoria*, 1844-47, marble (original tinting removed), Royal Collection, London.



Fig. 2.26. J. Gibson, *Queen Victoria Between Justice and Clemency*, 1851-56, marble, Prince's Chamber, Westminster Palace, Houses of Parliament, London.



Fig. 3.1. Carlo Lasinio, Plate VI: "A demonstration of methods for making plaster molds for clay and marble sculptures," engraving, from *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura* (1802) by Francesco Carradori.

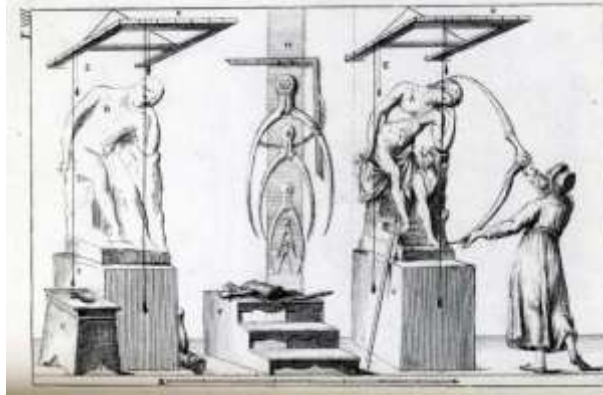


Fig. 3.2. C. Lasinio, Plate VIII: "Rules for locating and transferring the measurements of any sculpture," engraving, from *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura* (1802) by F. Carradori.



Fig. 3.3. J. Gibson, *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, 1818-19, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 3.4. Francesco Chiarottini, *Interior of Canova's Studio in Rome*, ca. 1787, watercolor, Museo Civico, Udine, Italy.



Fig. 3.5. Ditlev Martin, *Pope Leo XII Visiting Thorvaldsen's Studio near the Piazza Barberini, Rome, on Saint Luke's Day, 18 October 1826*, 1830, oil on canvas, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Fig. 3.6. Unknown, *Hosmer and Her Men*, 1861, albumen print, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge.



Fig. 3.7. Unknown, *Hosmer with Her Sculpture of Thomas Hart Benton*, ca. 1854, albumen print, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge.

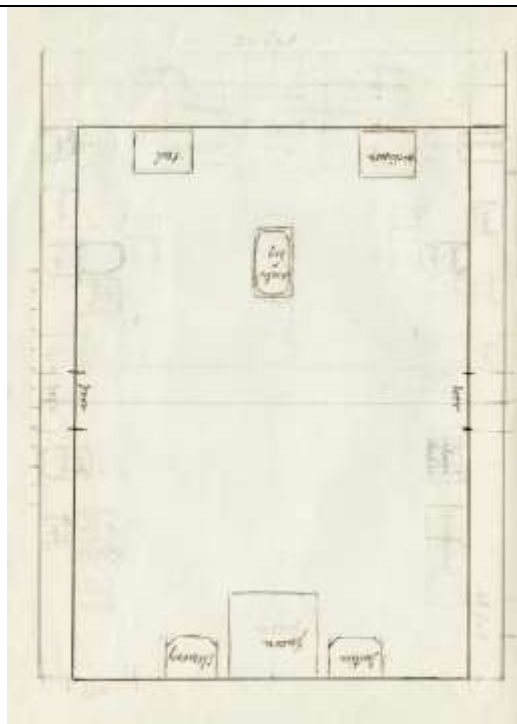


Fig. 3.8. J. Gibson, *Plan of the Studio Grande*, pen and ink over pencil, undated, probably mid- to late 1850s, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 3.9. J. Gibson, *Sir Robert Peel*, 1851-53, marble, Westminster Abbey, London.



Fig. 3.10. J. Gibson, *William Huskisson*, modeled 1831, this version 1846, bronze, Duke's Terrace, Liverpool.



Fig. 3.11. "The Prince of Wales at Miss Hosmer's Studio," from *Harper's Weekly*, 7 May 1859.



Fig. 3.12. Felice Bains, *Saint Scholastica*, 1836, marble with bronze, Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Rome.



Fig. 3.13. Benjamin Gibson, *Bust of John Gibson*, 1836-38, marble, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.



Fig. 3.14. B. Gibson, *The Shepherd Boy and Dog*, 1840-41, marble, location unknown, photograph: Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.



Fig. 3.15. Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Shepherd Boy*, modeled 1817, this version 1822-25, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Fig. 3.16. B. Gibson, after J. Gibson, *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 3.17. B. Gibson (attrib. J. Gibson), *The Three Graces with Cupid*, probably 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 3.18. B. Thorvaldsen, *Cupid and the Graces*, 1817-18, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Fig. 3.19. Harriet Hosmer, *Oenone*, 1854-55, marble, Kemper Art Museum, Washington University, St. Louis.



Fig. 3.20. H. Hosmer, *The Sleeping Faun*, 1864-66, marble, Cleveland Museum of Art.



Fig. 3.21. H. Hosmer, *Zenobia*, 1857-59, marble, Huntington Library, San Marino.



Fig. 3.22. J. Gibson, *Pandora*, 1856-59, marble with traces of wax-based tinting, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, England.



Fig. 3.23. J. Gibson, *Love Tormenting the Soul*, modeled ca. 1835, this version early 1840s, marble, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool.



Fig. 3.24. Unknown, Installation view of Owen Jones's temple with J. Gibson's polychrome sculptures at the International Exhibition of 1862, photograph: Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.



Fig. 3.25. J. Gibson, detail of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (fig. 2.21) showing gilt.



Fig. 3.26. Charles Cordier, *The Jewish Woman of Algiers*, 1862, marble and mixed media, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 3.27. Carlo Marochetti, with William H. Millais, *Princess Gouramma of Coorg*, 1855, marble with watercolor and gilt, Royal Collection, London.



Fig. 3.28. Antoine-Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, Frontispiece to *Le Jupiter olympien, ou, l'art de la sculpture antique considéré sous un nouveau point de vue* (1814), hand-colored engraving.



Fig. 3.29. J. Gibson, *Venus Verticordia*, late 1830s, marble, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.



Fig. 3.30. "The Great Exhibition," from *Punch*, 25 October 1862.



Fig. 3.31. Owen Jones, Side elevation of temple structure for J. Gibson's sculptures at International Exhibition of 1862, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 3.32. O. Jones, Rear elevation of temple structure for H. Hosmer's *Zenobia* at International Exhibition of 1862, watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

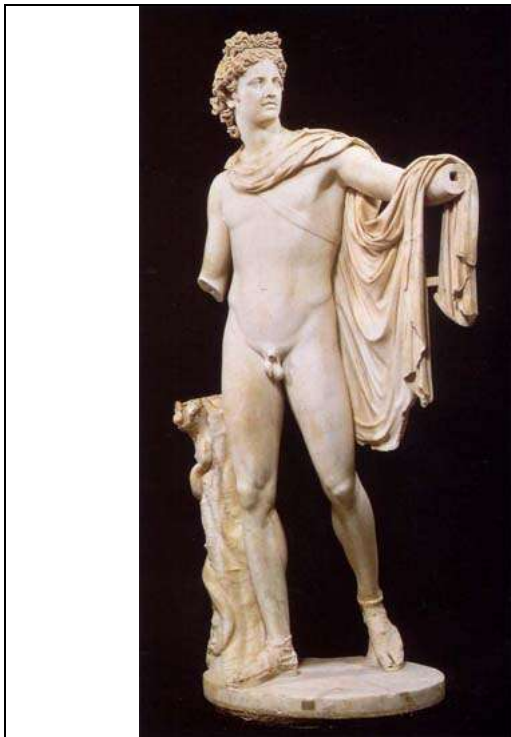


Fig. 4.1. *Apollo Belvedere*, Roman copy after 3rd century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.



Fig. 4.2. Anne-Louis Girodet, *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 4.3. J. Gibson, *Mars Restrained by Cupid*, 1819-25, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.4. William Henry Hunt, *The Staircase in the Painted Hall, Chatsworth* (detail), 1827, watercolor, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.5. Attrib. Scopas, *Ludovisi Mars*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Museo Romano Nazionale, Rome.



Fig. 4.6. B. Thorvaldsen, *Mars and Cupid*, ca. 1810, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Fig. 4.7. A. Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1802-06, marble, Duke of Wellington Collection, Apsley House, London.



Fig. 4.8. A. Canova, *Venus and Mars*, 1816-22, marble, Royal Collection, London.



Fig. 4.9. Brygos Painter, *Man and Youth Initiating Intercultural Relations*, 5th century BCE, red-figure kylix, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

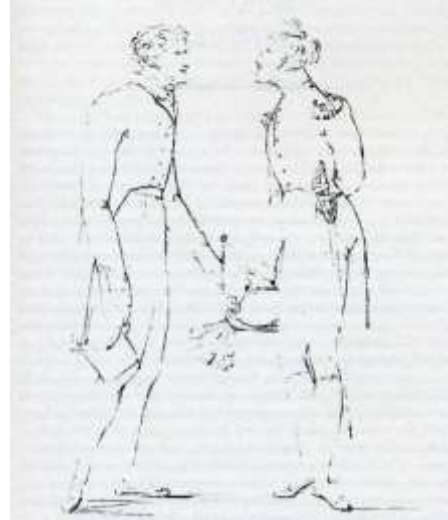


Fig. 4.10. Count St. Antonio, *The 6th Duke of Devonshire and Grand Duke Nicholas*, 1817, pen and ink, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.11. A. Canova, *Endymion*, 1819-22, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.12. Adamo Tadolini, *Ganymede with the Eagle of Jove*, 1822-23, marble with bronze, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.13. Filippo Albacini, *Wounded Achilles*, 1823-25, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.14. Mathieu Kessels, *Discobolus*, 1823-28, marble, Duke of Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, England.



Fig. 4.15. J. Gibson, Sketch for *Love Tormenting the Soul*, left view, undated, probably ca. 1835, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 4.16. J. Gibson, Sketch for *Love Tormenting the Soul*, right view, undated, probably ca. 1835, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 4.17. After Praxiteles, *Il Genio del Vaticano* (*Eros of Centocelle*), Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.



Fig. 4.18. After Praxiteles, *Borghese Genius*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 4.19. J. Gibson, *Bacchus*, 1856-60, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London, on long term loan to Bodelwyddan Castle, Rhyl, Wales.



Fig. 4.20. A. Canova, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, 1804-06, marble, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 4.21. Attrib. Praxiteles, *Apollo Sauroktonos*, Roman copy after 4th century BCE original, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome.



Fig. 4.22. Richard Westmacott, *Jupiter and Ganymede*, 1812, marble, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 4.23. B. Thorvaldsen, *Ganyমেদে with Jupiter's Eagle*, 1817, marble, Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Fig. 4.24. J. Gibson, *Psyche Receiving Nectar from Hebe in the Presence of Celestial Love*, ca. 1840, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 4.25. J. Gibson, Preparatory sketch for *Psyche Receiving Nectar*, ca. 1840, pencil, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 5.1. J. Gibson, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, modeled ca. 1830, this version ca. 1834-37, marble, Private Collection.



Fig. 5.2. J. Gibson, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, modeled ca. 1830, this version ca. 1836, marble, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Fig. 5.3. J. Gibson, Study for *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, undated, probably ca. 1830, pen and wash, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 5.4. J. Gibson, Sketch of *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* showing flaw in statue, from letter to Henry Farnum, 9 January 1850, ink on paper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 5.5. J. Gibson, *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun*, 1847-48, plaster, Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 5.6. *Narcissus*, modeled by Edward Bowring Stephens after design by J. Gibson, manufactured by Copeland and Garrett, 1846, Parian ware porcelain, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 5.7. *Cupid Pursuing Psyche*, cameo by Tommaso Saulini after design by J. Gibson, after 1844, onyx cameo with diamond mount, Private Collection.



Fig. 5.8. *Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, cameo by T. Saulini after design by J. Gibson, after 1850, shell cameo, British Museum, London.



Fig. 5.9. *The Toilet of Nausicaa*, mount by Castellani and cameo by T. Saulini, after designs attributed to J. Gibson, date unknown, gold with shell cameo, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.



Fig. 5.10. *Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, from *Gibson's Designs* (London: Hogarth, 1851), engraved by Giovanni Wenzel and Lodovico Prosseda after design by J. Gibson, engraving, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT.

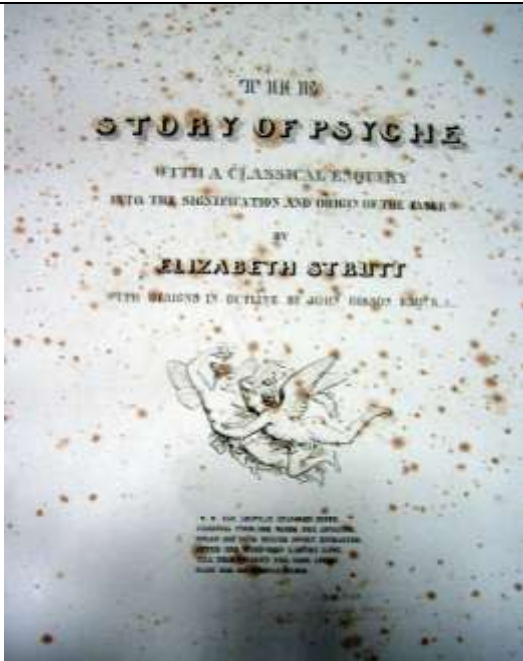


Fig. 5.11. Title Page to *The Story of Psyche* by Elizabeth Strutt with designs by J. Gibson (London, n.d.), Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Fig. 5.12. *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, from *Engravings from Original Compositions ... by John Gibson* (London: Colnaghi, 1861), engraved by Oswald Ufer, after design by J. Gibson, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.



Fig. 6.1. William Theed the Younger, *Narcissus*, 1845, marble, Royal Collection, London.



Fig. 6.2. Adolf von Hildebrand, *Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, 1871-73, marble, National Gallery, State Museum of Berlin.



Fig. 6.3. Edward Onslow Ford, *The Singer*, exhibited 1889, bronze and mixed media, Tate Britain, London.



Fig. 6.4. Alfred Gilbert, *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, 1895, bronze and mixed media, Private Collection.



Fig. 6.5. Albert Moore, *A Venus*, 1869, oil on canvas, York City Art Gallery, England.



Fig. 6.6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Venus Verticordia*, 1863-68, oil on canvas, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, England.



Fig. 6.7. August Kiss, *The Amazon*, modeled 1834, cast 1842, bronze, Altes Museum, Berlin.



Fig. 6.8. C. Marochetti, *Richard, Coeur de Lion*, modeled ca. 1850, cast 1856, bronze, Westminster Palace, Houses of Parliament, London.



Fig. 6.9. James Pradier, *Phryne*, 1845, marble, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble, France.



Fig. 6.10. H. Thornycroft, *Teucer*, 1881, bronze, Tate Britain, London.