Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908): Fame, Photography, and the American “Sculptress”

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Art
University of Toronto

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Abstract

“Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908): Fame, Photography, and the American ‘Sculptress’” is a case study inspired by one nineteenth-century sculptor’s career and a rare body of photographs showcasing the artist and her work. The American neoclassical sculptor Harriet Hosmer came of age near Boston, where she began her early artistic training. In 1852, at the age of twenty-two, she moved to Rome to further her career as a sculptor. Soon after, she became the most famous woman sculptor of her period. Her friends and patrons included Anglo-American literary figures, women’s rights activists, wealthy Americans, British aristocracy, and European royalty. This study asks what, if anything, photography had to do with Harriet Hosmer’s rise to fame.

Hosmer’s life and work have been subject to much scholarly commentary in recent decades, with several writers attempting to account for her unprecedented international renown as a female sculptor. None of these writers, however, has centred an investigation on photography’s intervention in Hosmer’s career. This study foregrounds the intersection of
sculpture and photography as it relates to Hosmer’s rapid rise in the mid-nineteenth-century artistic firmament. A substantial part of the dissertation undertakes a careful analysis of photographs depicting Hosmer and her work, as well as related archival materials, highlighting the ways in which Hosmer joined forces with commercial photographers to engineer her career success. At the same time, it provides insight into practices of commercial photographers vis-à-vis their portrayals of sculptors and their work.

The dissertation teases out a complex web of mid-nineteenth-century concerns that anticipate modern-day preoccupations, including self-fashioning, identity formation, gender roles, androgyny, tourism, the rise of celebrity culture, and the artist’s complicity with and battles against the contemporary press. Taken together, it seeks to complicate and enrich our understanding of Hosmer and her vital engagement with photography, leading to a fundamental reinterpretation of her career. Moreover, it aims to provide a model for future investigations into the complex, fascinating, and still little understood relationship between nineteenth-century sculpture and photography.
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One of the rewards of completing a dissertation is finally being able to thank those whose support has been incalculable. I would like to begin with my dissertation supervisor. Without the unflagging backing of Marc Gotlieb over the long number of years that it has taken me to write this dissertation, I can honestly say it would never have come to fruition. He saw scholarly potential in my work that I did not yet recognize and his own approach to art history provided an inspiring model that helped me forge my own path. I will never be able to adequately express my thanks to him, but I hope the fact that I saw this project through to the end is some small recompense for his ongoing faith in my ability to do just that.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents and to Paul.
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Appendix B  Timeline of Harriet Hosmer’s Career and Works
Introduction

“Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908): Fame, Photography, and the American ‘Sculptress’” is a case study inspired by one nineteenth-century sculptor’s career and a rare body of photographs showcasing the artist and her work. The American neoclassical sculptor Harriet Hosmer came of age near Boston, where she began her early artistic training. In 1852, at the age of twenty-two, she moved to Rome to further her career as a sculptor. Soon after, she became the most famous woman sculptor of her period. Her friends and patrons included Anglo-American literary figures, women’s rights activists, wealthy Americans, British aristocracy, and European royalty. This study asks what, if anything, photography had to do with Harriet Hosmer’s rise to fame.

Hosmer’s life and work have been subject to much scholarly commentary in recent decades, with several writers attempting to account for her unprecedented international renown as a female sculptor. None of these writers, however, has centred an investigation on photography’s intervention in Hosmer’s career. This study foregrounds the intersection of sculpture and photography as it relates to Hosmer’s rapid rise in the mid-nineteenth-century artistic firmament. A substantial part of the dissertation undertakes a careful analysis of photographs depicting Hosmer and her work, as well as related archival materials, highlighting the ways in which Hosmer joined forces with commercial photographers to engineer her career success. At the same time, it provides insight into practices of commercial photographers vis-à-vis their portrayals of sculptors and their work.

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androgyny, tourism, the rise of celebrity culture, and the artist’s complicity with and battles against the contemporary press. Taken together, it seeks to complicate and enrich our understanding of Hosmer and her vital engagement with photography, leading to a fundamental reinterpretation of her career. Moreover, it aims to provide a model for future investigations into the complex, fascinating, and still little understood relationship between nineteenth-century sculpture and photography.

Hosmer Historiography

At the midpoint of the nineteenth century, Harriet Hosmer was one of the most famous artists of her day, known throughout the Anglo-American world for the works of sculpture she produced in Rome. By the late 1870s, however, her career had nearly come to a standstill, and she began to spend an increasing amount of time in England. In the early 1890s, she returned to the United States, where she lived until the end of her life. The descent of Hosmer’s career coincided with the widespread rejection of her chosen artistic metier: neoclassical, or “ideal,” sculpture. Sculptors perceived to be harbingers of modernism – most prominently, Rodin – bumped Hosmer and her ilk from the prominent positions they held. By the time of Hosmer’s death in 1908, she was virtually unknown.

In the 1970s, however, a new enthusiasm for American neoclassical sculpture brought Hosmer and her fellow American sculptors back into view, thanks in great part to the endeavours of American art historian William Gerdts. His mission was to reinsert the work of American neoclassical sculptors into the art historical enterprise. Concurrently, feminist

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art historians, concerned with uncovering the work of women artists of the past, established Hosmer’s position as a prominent mid-nineteenth-century artist. Together these scholars encouraged renewed interest in Hosmer and her career. Subsequent to Hosmer’s “rediscovery” forty years ago, she has become something of a magnet for scholars. Dolly Sherwood produced a comprehensive biography of the sculptor in the early 1990s. Other publications on the sculptor tend to explore one of four overlapping areas. A number of commentators claim that Hosmer’s status as a female artist influenced her choice of subject matter. Others contextualize Hosmer’s rise to fame within the mid-nineteenth-century women’s rights movement. Still others situate Hosmer’s career within a broader examination of American expatriate artists in Italy. More recently, scholars exploring the terrain of mid-nineteenth-century lesbianism are shedding light on Hosmer’s interpersonal

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relationships and their connection to her work. In addition, Hosmer’s career has inspired two major visual arts projects by the American conceptual artist Patricia Cronin, who also produced a catalogue raisonné of the sculptor’s work.

Despite the fact that Hosmer’s career trajectory overlapped with major developments in the early history of photography – photographs of both the artist and her work have come down to us – no sustained study on Hosmer considers the ways that photography may have functioned in enhancing her career. My preliminary research strongly suggested, however, that from the time she was an aspiring sculptor living near Boston, Hosmer understood the new medium’s power as a creative and promotional tool. Evidence includes the surviving Hosmer photographs; published remarks by Hosmer and her peers about photographs and sculpture; textual and visual material in nineteenth-century newspapers, periodicals, literature, and travel guides; promotional material generated by nineteenth-century photographers; and recent scholarly commentary touching on Hosmer’s engagement with photography. Here, I foreground the way the newest technological innovation of the age helped Hosmer to revivify a flagging form of artistic expression and mould herself as an entirely new kind of artist – the artist as celebrity.

The Hosmer Photographs

Two main repositories house photographs related to Harriet Hosmer and her work, both in the Boston area. Her papers are held by the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the

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History of Women in America, part of Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. The Hosmer papers comprise letters, writing, sketches, drawings, and clippings, along with an assortment of photographs depicting Hosmer and her work. The Watertown Free Public Library, located in the town where Hosmer was born and raised, also holds nineteenth-century photographs relating to Hosmer’s career. These collections are complemented by the holdings of other institutions, including the Fogg Museum at Harvard and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington.

Within these and other collections we find more than thirty different photographic images of Hosmer and/or her work. They include portraits of Hosmer, mostly in the form of cartes-de-visite, albumen prints of her sculpture, and to a very limited extent, stereoviews of her sculpture. I decided to limit my investigation to a selection of the photographic portraits of Hosmer and the albumen prints of her sculpture, leaving aside the question of the stereoviews. In the case of the portraits, I selected eleven images from the Schlesinger Library and other Boston collections, complemented by a portrait held by the National Portrait Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution. Taken together, these twelve images revealed tantalizing evidence of Hosmer’s active process of self-fashioning before the camera’s lens. In addition, they could be definitively dated to the mid nineteenth century and in nearly all cases the creators were known. On the other hand, the creator (or creators) of the albumen prints of sculpture were not known, but textual evidence revealed that Hosmer certainly commissioned photographs of her work while in Rome. Thus, these photographs – also about a dozen – set the stage for an exploration of their provenance. As for the stereoviews – scant evidence of photographs in this format can be found in the Schlesinger Library and related collections in Boston. However, certainly copies of these do exist, generally produced as part
of a larger effort by the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company under the auspices of international exhibitions and probably without Hosmer’s direct involvement. Her portraits and the albumen prints of her sculpture, however, had the potential to reveal how Hosmer employed photography in an effort to promote herself and her work, and these became the focus of the case study.⁹

The Hosmer Biographies

One of the key goals of this dissertation has been to create new narratives about the life and career of Harriet Hosmer in the face of prevailing and obstinate storylines. The nineteenth century was the century of biographies, and from the very earliest days of her career, Hosmer proved to be one of the period’s most popular subjects. Friends and supporters, along with total strangers, repeatedly rehearsed the purported facts of Hosmer’s unconventional upbringing and education and her attention-grabbing antics: how she was raised as a “tomboy” by her doctor father; how she took up hunting, boating, collecting natural objects, and modelling from a nearby clay pit as a child; how her youthful pranks forced her father to send to her to a small private school in the Berkshires; how she moved to St. Louis to study anatomy; and how she left America for Rome to become a professional sculptor.

The first significant biography on Hosmer came as early as 1858, in an article by her close friend and supporter Matilda Hays. In 1861 her American friend Lydia Maria Child provided another overview of her career in an American magazine, The Ladies’ Repository. The articles by Hays and Child were reproduced in numerous American publications. Hays and Child knew Hosmer personally and therefore can be understood to have written accounts of

⁹ The remaining photographs I saw at the Schlesinger Library and the Watertown Free Public Library cannot be definitively dated to the nineteenth-century at this point and warrant further study, as do stereoviews of Hosmer’s sculpture.
her life that met with the sculptor’s approval. Together in these early years, they provided the template for subsequent articles and books about Hosmer – a template that has more or less been followed down to the present day.

A New Point of View

As noted above, a number of modern-day studies on Hosmer have set out to determine the reasons for her professional success and attendant fame. In so doing they highlight how she benefited from the backing of the women discussed above, and other well-placed female supporters who promoted her efforts, tolerated her idiosyncrasies, purchased her work, and, above all, positioned her as an exemplar of female accomplishment. For example, in her recent “cultural biography” of Hosmer, Kate Culkin writes, “Her career fascinated me, but I soon had a pressing question: How did she do it? How did she rise to fame so quickly at such a young age in an era . . . in which so many elements in society would work against her?”

Culkin rightly comes to the conclusion that “a large network of people helped Harriet Hosmer achieve success.” It is the makeup of this network and how it functioned to Hosmer’s advantage that Culkin aptly and ably elucidates in her book.

I have found in my own study that some attention to Hosmer’s influential network is unavoidable, as it was so pervasive. As such, elements of this aspect of Hosmer’s career trajectory will necessarily be rehearsed here on occasion. However, a large part of what I believe has been overlooked in interpretations of Hosmer’s career success is the significance of neoclassical sculpture in its own right in her mid-nineteenth-century world. It is true that neoclassical sculpture was in crisis in Hosmer’s day, particularly in France, as critics called

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11 Ibid., xi.
for ways to invigorate what they perceived to be an outmoded art form and sculptors struggled to meet their demands. Nonetheless, as I show in the first chapter, neoclassical and “ideal” sculpture still held great sway in the Anglo-American cultural milieu, and especially in the New England of Hosmer’s childhood and formative years. To be associated with it was a mark of prestige. Chapter one sets out conditions in Boston during the 1840s that would allow a young woman in the 1850s to jump so quickly into the world of neoclassical sculpture. The chapter helps us to see that Hosmer’s decision to become a sculptor, while far from inevitable, is understandable once we recognize the elevated status that neoclassical sculpture had in the eastern United States from the 1830s onward. Beyond that, the chapter articulates the emerging synchronicity between sculpture and photography in the period, through the inventive initiatives of the famed Boston daguerreotype studio of Southworth & Hawes, and demonstrates how the intersection of sculpture and photography played a critical role in allowing women to subtly test the boundaries of the nineteenth-century “Cult of True Womanhood.”

The second chapter is closely linked to the first, investigating the genesis of Hosmer’s marble bust Hesper, the Evening Star (1852). It is the earliest work of sculpture she created on her own without copying a prototype, and she produced it in the United States before moving to Italy. Hesper, a rather awkward and even androgynous depiction of a female mythological figure, is nearly always overlooked in commentary about Hosmer’s output. Rather, writers tend to privilege her later, more accomplished representations of women. This chapter argues that the bust’s androgynous appearance was a deliberate construction on Hosmer’s part and a conscious reflection of her own androgynous character. Moreover, this very androgyny was part of the work’s appeal, and the appeal of Hosmer herself, to her burgeoning support group
of American women. But I also argue that Hosmer imbued her work with feminine characteristics very much in keeping with the popular fashion of the day, and that she used photographs of sculpture and photographs of local women from the daguerreotype studio of Southworth & Hawes to help conceptualize the bust and ensure its popularity.

As other commentators on Hosmer have noted, the sculptor constantly changed her appearance and behaviour – from boyish to ladylike and back – to court support. However, chapter three marks the first time that Hosmer’s self-aware, strategic moves have been demarcated through portrait photographs of the sculptor produced over the course of her active career. The chapter undertakes a detailed analysis of photographs of Hosmer. It shows that while she rejected the gendered term *sculptress*, and was known for her “boyish” behaviour and dress, she willingly exploited contemporary conceptions of femininity when she felt this tactic was in her interest. The chapter reconstructs the circumstances behind the genesis of the aforementioned photographs of Hosmer in her studio: the one in which she poses next to her clay model of Thomas Hart Benton, and the other in which she stands amongst her male workers. Here I argue that, in tandem with the photographers she commissioned, Hosmer both built on and advanced a new photographic genre – images of the sculptor in the studio.

Chapter four takes as its subject photographs that have survived of Hosmer’s sculpture – that is to say, a number albumen prints that have come down to us, each depicting a single work. Until now the provenance of these images has been completely unknown. In this chapter I show how photographs commissioned by Hosmer for her own promotional purposes were co-opted by one of the most famous commercial photographers in Rome, the British expatriate James Anderson. Anderson saw the potential to increase his business by selling
photographs of sculpture taken at the behest of Hosmer and her fellow neoclassical sculptors living and working in Rome. The chapter argues that such photographs were valued by middle-class and bourgeois travellers not because they depicted sculpture per se, but because they stood as substitutes for meeting the sculptors themselves, who were the most popular tourist “attractions” in the Eternal City. The chapter shows how this tourist artifact resulted from the cult of celebrity that arose around sculptors in Rome from circa 1850 to circa 1870.

A brief conclusion focuses on the question of fame versus celebrity in the mid-nineteenth century and its relationship to the professional goals of Hosmer. It positions the discussion within the Bloomian framework of the “anxiety of influence” and asks why Hosmer did not seem to suffer from a sense of belatedness. I conclude that Hosmer was spared both the despair that comes from trying to compete with the past and the pressure that comes from trying to innovate, because what she craved, whether she realized it or not, was a more short-term form of fame that we today understand as celebrity. As such, Harriet Hosmer, that faithful emulator of a centuries-old artistic tradition, can be understood as an exemplar of an emerging modern condition so familiar to us now, whereby the desire to be in the limelight today overpowers the desire to have one’s work live on forever.
Chapter 1
“Vignettes or Heads Simply”
Ideal Sculpture, Daguerreotypes, and Female Self-fashioning in
Antebellum Boston

In daguerreotype after daguerreotype, the women sit, heads slightly tilted or turned, eyes
gazing out dreamily or downcast. Their hair is parted at the centre and pinned up or gently
curled, their necks, shoulders, and a hint of décolletage revealed. Exhibiting a curious
mixture of reticence and exposure, the anonymous subjects of these daguerreotypes are
uncannily alike (fig. 1.1). Who are these women, and why are they posing like this? The only
thing we know about them is that, around 1850, they made their way to a daguerreotype
studio in Boston to sit, silently, before the camera’s lens.

The daguerreotype studio was Southworth & Hawes, named after the proprietors, Albert
Sands Southworth (1811–94) and Josiah Johnson Hawes (1808–1901). Southworth set up his
studio in 1840, just months after the daguerreotype was introduced to the world in France, in
1839. Hawes, an artist who specialized in portraits, joined Southworth in 1843, and the two
went on to establish a partnership that catered to middle-class and bourgeois citizens of
Boston. Their customers appreciated the unique artistic flair the partners brought to their
daguerreotype portraits, and the two indeed considered themselves to be artists, as opposed to
mere technicians. Although the partnership of Southworth & Hawes ended in 1861, when
Southworth left the studio, Hawes continued to practise photography in Boston. Photographs

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12 Drawing on a recent book exploring the nineteenth-century American cultural elite, I define members of the bourgeoisie as “Americans who distinctly wedded culture to capital,” such as merchants, manufacturers, and bankers. The “middle class” comprised shopkeepers, artisans, teachers, clerks, and the like, while lawyers and white-collar managers straddled the two categories. See Julia B. Rosenbaum and Sven Beckert, The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.
and artifacts remained in the studio until the time of Hawes’s death in 1901, when family
members came into the possession of the surviving materials. As a consequence of their
stewardship and of subsequent care by collectors and museums, a remarkable number of
daguerreotypes produced by the studio have survived – more than two thousand – all
attesting to the photographers’ central role in the social and cultural life of Bostonians and
other Americans who patronized their studio in the mid-nineteenth century.13

_Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth & Hawes_ is a recent and monumental
catalogue offering a comprehensive survey of their work. The majority of images reproduced
in the catalogue are portrait photographs, and most date to circa 1850. Southworth &
Hawes’s photographs of women are especially splendid (fig. 1.2). In nearly five hundred
daguerreotypes of unidentified women, they pose covered in dark clothing. But along with
these daguerreotypes we find a number of incongruous images, such as those discussed
above: approximately one hundred close-up portraits of women in which they look to be
almost nude. Light-coloured and low-cut evening dresses conceal the women’s bosoms, to be
sure, but the photographers have framed the shots to nearly edit out their clothing (fig. 1.1).

The suggestion of nudity we find here would appear to contradict the sense of propriety we
might expect from antebellum American women. Why would they choose to expose
themselves in such a manner before the camera’s lens? How can we account for such a
surprising set of images? This chapter argues that the women stepped outside the bounds of
convention because they were posing not as _themselves_. Rather, they were taking on new
personas: they sat in front of the camera in the guise of female mythological figures, an act

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13 For the history of the Southworth & Hawes daguerreotype studio, see Grant B. Romer and Brian Wallis, eds.,
_Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth & Hawes_ (Göttingen, New York, and Rochester, NY:
that allowed them a sense of agency that the visual evidence does not immediately reveal. More specifically, they were attempting to look like statues – and two statues in particular, both depicting female mythological figures and both available for women to view in Boston. One is a bust known as Clytie that dates either to antiquity or to the eighteenth century (fig. 1.3). The other bust depicts Proserpine and was an original creation of the American neoclassical sculptor Hiram Powers (1805–73). Powers first created the bust in 1843 but produced a more simplified form in the mid-1840s, a version of which we see here (fig. 1.4). The chapter will show how the women, posing in the guise of female mythological figures, and these two in particular, were engaged in the process of their own identity construction. It was a process that worked both inside and outside the traditional boundaries for women’s activities, boundaries defined by the prevailing “Cult of True Womanhood.” And it was a process that could occur only in the unique setting of antebellum Boston. This was the world that informed Harriet Hosmer’s artistic sensibility and ambition. It warrants careful investigation and rewards us with new perspectives on her determined pursuit of international recognition.

Classical Statuary and Perceptions of Female Beauty

To begin to discern the genesis and significance of these statue-like daguerreotypes, it is important to understand that in mid-nineteenth-century America we find a direct connection between perceptions of female beauty and classical statuary depicting women. Two texts from Godey’s Lady’s Book – the most popular women’s magazine of the era – will serve to illustrate the point. First, in a short story from the January 1852 issue of Godey’s, a young

14 The date of this figure (by an unknown artist) is disputed, but the British Museum, which holds the marble bust, lists it as a Roman work from about AD 40–50. For more about the controversy regarding the bust’s origins, see below. This version of Clytie should not be confused with Hiram Powers’s conception of the mythological figure, dating to 1867.
woman’s attractive appearance is specifically connected to marble statuary. The opening scene is set at a party, and the young woman, named Florence, enters the room, where she attracts the attention of a male admirer:

Herbert followed with his eyes the statuelike-looking young creature who passed him by. She was rather pale, with delicate and finely chiseled features, a well-formed head, and beautifully set upon her shoulders. The throat and shoulders were exquisite, and the whole air was thoroughly aristocratic. The marble was evidently Parian, and the workmanship of the highest finish. Most persons thought her too cold, some said she was inexpressive, and Herbert turned from them in impatience, as if thought and feeling would have disturbed the calm exclusive air he admired so much.\(^\text{15}\)

The writer’s description of the “young creature” impresses upon the reader her “statuelike” demeanour throughout the passage: she is pale, has “chiseled” features, is inexpressive. She is cold, calm, a virtual work of Parian marble. Herbert is smitten with the living, breathing statue, and demands an introduction. Florence is cool to his advances. Herbert therefore tries to engage her through witty conversation; he tries, as the narrator indicates, to bring this marble creature to life: “He seemed, Prometheus-like, to have stolen fire from Heaven to animate his statue,” but Florence does not respond. Undeterred, Herbert continues to attempt to woo her over time, even as her distant air forms part of her appeal: “He felt that she was to be placed on a pedestal, and he willingly did homage to her shrine.”\(^\text{16}\) Eventually Florence agrees to marry Herbert.


\(^{16}\) Ibid.
The story of Herbert and Florence alerts us to a number of related issues. First, we can say that the narrator equates physical attractiveness in a young woman with her resemblance to a work of statuary. Next, we can say that her statue-like bearing holds special appeal for her male observer. We can further say that the man wants to bring the woman “to life” upon falling in love with this “statue” in the manner of Pygmalion. Finally, we can say that when he fails in this regard, he is satisfied to set her on a pedestal, where he can admire her and, of course, enact a sense of ownership over his prized possession, his living work of statuary.

Yet the story also suggests that a woman could take what we might call the mid-nineteenth-century “classical statue” aesthetic and consciously mould it to her own purposes. Florence appears to be “statuelike,” and we must consider the possibility that this is a deliberate decision on her part, a choice that she is making from a range of options available to her.

An article published in *Godey’s* in 1854 reinforces the view that women consciously behaved in a statue-like manner when they chose to. The scene is a fabric store, and a young woman has just arrived with her other family members:

> The party seated themselves with some regard to personal comfort, as though their business was likely to be of some duration. Their commands were, the indispensables of a lady’s outfit. During this period, the young lady looked on with a kind of lofty indifference, and when appealed to, gravely declined interference, leaving the matter to be arranged by the lady mother and the useful cousin.

The young woman ignores the goings-on even as items of clothing are laid out before her for her consideration. The narrator continues: “This I thought strange, till I remembered she was a fiancée, almost as good as a married lady already, and had therefore some dignity to
sustain.” However, the business of shopping for her wedding trousseau eventually overcomes the young woman, for

what young lady of eighteen could maintain the appearance of indifference? It was not in nature – not in female nature. The statue descended from its pedestal; entered quietly and gracefully into the details before it; made selections with the taste of an artist and knowledge of a woman of fashion (two qualities rarely combined).\(^\text{17}\)

With that, the shopping trip comes to a satisfactory conclusion. As the story reveals, mid-nineteenth-century American women could consciously exploit the prevailing classical-statue aesthetic to their own ends, assuming or relinquishing a resemblance to a statue as they thought the situation required. Taken together, the two texts suggest that men and women in mid-nineteenth-century America admired the classical-statue aesthetic but engaged with it differently: for men, classical beauty was something to be possessed for their own enjoyment; for women, it was something to be manipulated for their own ends. The following three sections of the chapter test the accuracy of this claim.

**Boston Men and Female Mythological Figures**

In the mid-nineteenth century, as David Dearinger has remarked, the city of Boston was engaged in a “marmorean love affair.”\(^\text{18}\) It must be admitted, however, that the pursuit of sculpture was an enterprise dominated by men, which Dearinger clearly demonstrates in his


monumental study outlining Boston’s patronage of neoclassical sculpture.¹⁹ Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, upper-middle-class and bourgeois male patrons imported sculpture to Boston or purchased statuary from local sculptors in an effort to enhance their reputations as civic leaders. They did so in conscious imitation of great collectors of the past. However, as we shall see, when they commissioned or purchased depictions of female figures – which they did frequently – they were driven by a more personal urge, similar to that of Herbert in the first Godey’s text. Herbert’s wish to own and display his statue/woman in the domestic setting of his home is reflected in the very real impulses of the wealthy men of Boston.²⁰ In this section, therefore, we shall explore elite Bostonian men’s “love affair” with sculpture, especially sculpture depicting female figures.

Important male patrons in Boston in the mid-nineteenth century included Thomas Handasyd Perkins (1764–1854) – a Bostonian so rich he was known in his day as the “Merchant Prince,” in direct imitation of his Renaissance forebears – and Francis Calley Gray (1790–1856), the son of a Massachusetts man who owned the world’s largest fleet of sailing vessels.²¹ Perkins, Gray, and many other men just like them were well educated and well travelled. On repeated trips to Europe, they ordered copies of classical sculpture or commissioned original works from American and European sculptors for their private collections. These financially secure Boston men deliberately set out to emulate British and European collectors from the past, in an effort to elevate their own status and the cultural

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²⁰ Ibid.
status of their city. Their homes became private showplaces for their acquisitions. They also created a public showcase, in the ever-growing institution known as the Boston Athenaeum.

Founded in 1807 as a membership library, over time the Athenaeum became the de facto art museum in Boston. From the beginning, the Athenaeum’s founders and patrons were determined to build up a creditable collection of painting and statuary. Obtaining original Great Master paintings or antique sculpture was generally beyond the means of the Athenaeum’s supporters, however. Rather, from as early as 1817, they began to import from Europe copies of paintings and plaster casts or marble copies of antique sculpture for their private collections or for the Athenaeum’s collection. Thomas Handasyd Perkins cemented his reputation as a modern-day Medici by donating his copies of Michelangelo’s statues *Night* and *Day* to the Athenaeum in 1834. There they joined, among other plaster casts, those of the *Laocoön* and *The Dying Gaul* (also known as *The Dying Gladiator*), the *Apollo Belvedere*, the *Borghese Gladiator*, and the *Venus de Medici*, along with a marble bust of the *Apollo Belvedere*.22

Thus, during the initial stage of sculpture collecting in Boston, the emphasis of male patrons was on accumulating copies of the works of classical sculpture they would have seen at the great museums and collectors’ homes while travelling in Britain and Europe. They also began commissioning their own portrait busts in a classical style, such as Frances Calley Gray’s bust by Hiram Powers, dating to 1836 or 1837 (fig. 1.5). Simultaneously, however, another passion was emerging. Male American patrons also purchased what was known in the period as “ideal” sculpture – that is to say, an original creation from the sculptor’s

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22 For a list of the donors of these works, see Dearinger, “American Neoclassic Sculptors,” 51–52. For more on the history of the Boston Athenaeum, see Stanley Ellis Cushing and David B. Dearinger, *Acquired Tastes: 200 Years of Collecting for the Boston Athenaeum* (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 2006).
imagination, executed in the style of antique sculpture. Ideal statuary took its inspiration from mythological, historical, literary, or biblical sources and was held in great esteem in antebellum America. The style originated in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the forefather of neoclassical sculpture, Italy’s Antonio Canova (1757–1822). Notably, female subject matter predominated in the work of Canova, especially depictions of female mythological figures.

Although he died in 1822, Canova’s work continued to be made available in reproduction, and enterprising institutions in Boston displayed copies of his work for an admiring public. In 1827 the New England Museum, on Court Street in Boston, held an exhibition of sculpture that included a Venus in marble by, or after, Canova. In 1833 the Corinthian Hall, a multipurpose event space in Boston, held another exhibition, where copies of Canova’s Dancer, Venus, Hebe, and Three Graces were exhibited. In 1841 the new Boston Museum and Gallery of Fine Art exhibited Canova’s Dancing Girl and another iteration of Venus.23 Boston men undoubtedly had a special fondness for Canova’s depictions of mythological female figures; by 1850 many works by the sculptor had found their way into the private collections of elite men in that city. Perkins, for example, owned a marble reproduction of Canova’s Hebe, cupbearer to the gods and the goddess of youth, which he purchased circa 1840 (fig 1.6).24

Beginning in 1827, the Boston Athenaeum began to hold public exhibitions that showcased art belonging to the institution itself and works on loan from private collectors. We are

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fortunate that catalogues produced in tandem with the Athenaeum’s annual public exhibitions have survived, and that the information included therein – which works were on display, along with the identities of those who had loaned them – was assembled and published by the Athenaeum in 1980. We are most concerned here with the years from 1839, when the Athenaeum held its first public exhibition of sculpture, to 1850. Over this period, the catalogues reveal, men of Boston exhibited works that fall into three main categories, all of which included representations of female mythological figures. The 1840 catalogue is paradigmatic: first, we find copies of classical work (including statues of Ariadne, Psyche, Flora, Minerva, Sappho, and various Venuses). Next, we find ideal works by American sculptors; for example, in 1840 Gray loaned the Athenaeum a bust of Psyche that he had commissioned from Horatio Greenough (1805–52). And finally, we find works by British and European sculptors, most prominently from Canova’s studio, including Perkins’s marble Hebe, which he loaned in 1840.

Most works exhibited by the Athenaeum received only brief listings in the exhibition catalogues. However, the catalogue editors singled out some paintings and sculptures by offering rather lengthy annotations with the listings. The annotations consist of descriptions along with excerpts relating to the work from guides to art, reviews, literature, poetry, and so on. The bulk of the sculptural works with annotations are reproductions of antique statuary; however, some sculptural works from the modern era receive special attention, in particular those of Canova. The annotations devoted to Canova’s work reward examination, for they reveal the special affection that men of Boston had for modern statuary depicting female

26 Ibid., 67.
27 Ibid., 30.
28 Ibid., 284–85.
mythological figures. The Canova works graced with descriptive annotations – all owned by Boston men – comprise a statue of *Hebe* (loaned by Perkins), three variations on his *Dancing Girls*, a variation on *The Three Graces*, and a group depicting Mars and Venus. With the exception of *Mars and Venus*, all the highlighted works by Canova feature young female subjects, and the annotations emphasize this fact. In each case the editors discuss the statues in a similar fashion: the annotations dwell lovingly on the attractive feminine qualities that the statues exhibit, emphasizing the figures’ pleasing female forms. Furthermore, throughout the texts, the statues are rhetorically anthropomorphized and animated; their poses are described as if the figures are in real time, as if they are actually engaging in discrete movements. We find this occurring in the following description of one of Canova’s dancing girls, owned by Dr. G. Parkman: “This figure is beginning the dance and has gathered up her long and elegant dress to give the necessary freedom to her feet, in doing so she displays her finely proportioned limbs to advantage . . . .”

The annotation for Perkins’s *Hebe* operates in a similar fashion, “welcoming” the “charming Goddess of eternal youth” to the Boston Athenaeum exhibition as if the statue were a real person. However, in this case the commentary is enhanced by the reproduction of a poem dedicated to Canova’s *Hebe* by the Italian poet Ippolito Pindemonte (1753–1828), a contemporary of Canova’s. Here we find the statue’s lifelikeness attributed to the great skill of the sculptor who created her: “Immortal Sculptor, who dost yet outvie / Italian art, and reached attic grace, / Life, soft and breathing aspect thou couldst trace . . . .”

Pindemonte’s high praise of Canova, of course, falls into the long tradition of according lifelikeness to sculpture as a mark of a sculptor’s skill. As Pindemonte’s poem indicates, admirers of

29 Ibid., 284.
30 Ibid., 285.
Canova’s marble statuary of female mythological figures had, from the start, imbued them with human qualities. The poem’s inclusion in the Boston Athenaeum catalogue of 1840 shows that Boston’s “connoisseurs” did the same. However, additional commentary in this entry, provided by the editors of the catalogue, suggests that *Hebe*’s appeal to mid-nineteenth-century male patrons in Boston comes especially from the statue’s literal embodiment of a young, attractive female body. The annotation notes that “the light drapery which clothes her, knotted gracefully round the waist, descends below the knee, and leaves uncovered her delicately moulded shoulders and swelling bosom; this soft dress is pressed by the buoyant wind against her person and partly reveals to us the beauties of her perfect form.”

There can be no doubt that for the writer of the annotation, Canova’s statue of Hebe is appealing because of its fundamental sensuality. The writer emphasizes the appeal of the attractive and nubile young woman portrayed in the work. For the owner of the statue, then, we can imagine that it exercised equal sensual appeal: Perkins’s *Hebe* offered him the power of possession over a desirable female body, the same that Herbert enjoyed over his statue-like young wife in the *Godey’s* short story discussed above.

The annotations in the Boston Athenaeum catalogues help us to ascertain that for wealthy men in Boston who longed to “possess” the female form in a nude or semi-nude state, ideal sculpture of mythological figures provided a socially acceptable outlet for this desire. By emulating the great collectors of the past who held prized works of antique sculpture among their collections, these Bostonians could justify the ownership of the works. And by citing earlier “experts” such as the poet Ippolito Pindemonte, they could further position their ownership of these objects as acts of connoisseurship. Ultimately, however, what they

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31 Ibid.
possessed, as the descriptive annotations above frankly acknowledge, were lifelike specimens of the perfect female form that they could admire within the confines of their own homes and in prestigious public spaces such as the Boston Athenaeum.

**Clytie, Proserpine, and Anglo-American Men**

By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a special subspecies of female mythological figure in statuary found favour with antebellum American men: marble busts, portraying the head, neck, shoulders, and upper torso rather than a full figure. Two such busts captivated them especially: Clytie, the putative antique work, and Hiram Powers’s Proserpine (figs. 1.3 and 1.4). Through the first part of the nineteenth century, iterations of both works found their way to the United States and into the hands of American men, where they became objects of particular affection – indeed, one could say, love objects.

Our investigation begins with the bust known as Clytie, a charming concoction of feminine beauty, melancholy, modesty, and sensuality. Wavy hair parted in the middle flows like rippling waves across the brow and in tendrils down the neck. The symmetrical face, with its pensive eyes, long nose, and pursed lips, is tilted downwards. Beneath the neck and the visible collarbones, a sheer dress runs asymmetrically across the torso, exposing part of the figure’s left breast. The body is truncated by a ring of flower petals or leaves. The figure evinces a sense of stillness but also a sense of life; it suggests an interior world and conveys more than a hint of sadness. Altogether, the bust seems designed to invite admiration and incite desire.

Although Francis Calley Gray’s biographer, Marjorie Cohn, does not mention it, it appears that Gray obtained a marble version of Clytie for his personal collection sometime before
1851. Our knowledge of Gray’s prized possession comes from a collection of poetry, published that year by the local physician and writer Walter Channing (1786–1876). The collection includes a sonnet titled “To Clytie,” for which Channing provided a note. Here, Channing informs readers that the sonnet is dedicated “to a bust of Clytie, copied by permission from the original marble among the Townley Marbles in the British Museum, for, and in the possession of, Hon. Francis C. Gray, of Boston.” Channing goes on to explain the saga of the Townley Marbles: how the wealthy British connoisseur Charles Townley, of Townley Hall, Lancashire, travelled to Europe for his education (a consequence of his Catholic upbringing); how, while in Italy, he began to collect marble monuments from antiquity; that his collection came to be housed in the British Museum; and that Clytie is part of that collection.32

Thanks to Channing’s remarks, we know that Gray must have desired for his own collection a copy of Clytie to accompany the bust of Psyche that he had already commissioned from Horatio Greenough, noted above. Clytie would have had special significance, however, because, as Channing points out, the bust was associated with a prestigious male British collector. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Charles Townley (1737–1805) gained renown for owning the finest private collection of antique sculpture in the world. He opened his house on Park Street, in Westminster, to visitors, often personally showing them his prized possessions. Gray surely wanted to emulate Townley. He may even have had a feeling of affinity with Townley, as both men were unmarried. Furthermore, while it is no doubt just a coincidence, Gray’s Boston home was, like Townley’s in London, located on Park Street.

32 Walter Channing, “To Clytie,” in Old and New (Boston, 1851), 148n18.
Townley’s collection is celebrated in a painting – the famous depiction of his sculpture
gallery by the artist Johann Zoffany (1733–1810), dating to 1782 (fig. 1.7). Zoffany portrays
Townley and his friends posed alongside major works from his collection. The painting is a
fantasy creation that includes works owned by Townley that were actually exhibited in other
parts of his house. We find Clytie in a privileged place at the centre of the painting, which is
not unexpected, as the bust was known to be one of Townley’s favourite works. Indeed,
Clytie so entranced Townley that he reportedly referred to the work as “his wife.” His
marble “spouse” presumably captivated him with her delicate features and subtle sensuality.

The mystique of Townley’s Clytie extended far beyond his library. For instance, Joseph
Nollekens (1737–1823), the pre-eminent British sculptor of the late eighteenth century, sold
copies of the bust in his studio, indicating its broad appeal. The Boston Clytie, we can
imagine, must have been an object of Gray’s special affection. Walter Channing’s sonnet to
Clytie, discussed earlier, reinforces our speculation, as Channing declares in no uncertain
terms his own great affection for Gray’s bust of Clytie. Channing was surely emulating Gray,
who was in turn emulating Townley. Channing’s sonnet indicates for us the depth of passion

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33 B. F. Cook, The Townley Marbles (London: British Museum, 1985), 15. The origins of the bust are uncertain. As Nicholas Penny explains, Townley was probably under a false impression about the source of the work; while he may have been led to believe he was purchasing an antique work when he was in Italy, some scholars have come to the conclusion that the bust originated at the hand of an eighteenth-century rococo artist. Penny, certainly, doubts the bust’s supposed antique origins. Based, among other things, on the remarkably good condition of the work – “matched by very few antique Roman marbles” – Penny maintains that “while it seems to me likely to be eighteenth-century, it was made by a sculptor as thoroughly saturated in the antique as Bastianini was to be in the Quattrocento. (It has nothing to do with the rococo).” With the example of Bastianini, a nineteenth-century Italian sculptor known for his forgery of Renaissance works, Penny implies, of course, that Townley was a victim of fraud. See Nicholas Penny, review of “Fakes? London, British Museum,” Burlington Magazine 132, no. 1048 (July 1990): 506–7. For a more recent discussion of Clytie’s origins, which suggests that the bust is an ancient work that was heavily modified in the eighteenth century to make it more saleable, see Viccy Coltman, Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760–1800 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 4–6.


35 Cook, Townley Marbles, 15.
that a mid-nineteenth-century Boston male could express for a sculpted bust of a female mythological figure:

    I LOOK at thee, and know not what to say,
    With thoughts so various fillest thou my mind.
    Thy loveliness increases every day,
    And then thy sadness doth my vision blind.
    Of all of beauty which in early time
    Out from the Grecian heart in glory sprung, —
    Of all that art has wrought in every clime,
    By hand in marble, or in deathless song, —
    No single passage in the varied whole
    So fills with love and peace my weary breast:
    Thou hast thy place within my deepest soul,
    And thy blest presence med’cines me to rest.
    Thy author has no name; he lives in thee,
    — In his own work hath immortality.36

For Channing, Clytie gets lovelier every day. But not only that: this work of art, he declares, fills him more with love than any other work of art, in any medium. Ultimately, the bust of Clytie and the poet Channing are soulmates. As Ippolito Pindemonte does in his paean to Canova’s Hebe, Channing attributes Clytie’s remarkable qualities to the (unknown) ancient sculptor who carved the work. And like Pindemonte, he declares that the work gives the

sculptor everlasting, immortal fame. Channing does not possess his own copy of Clytie, but he is possessed by Gray’s version.

Channing’s sentimental prose suppresses, to a certain extent, the erotic pull that the figure of Clytie could exert over male spectators not themselves in ownership of such a beautiful possession. Zoffany’s painting, however, thematizes this very phenomenon. None of the three male figures closest to Clytie is Townley himself; rather, he sits off to the right-hand side of the canvas while one of his friends “flirts” conspicuously with the bust – his right arm wraps around her head and the fingers of his left hand grasp the fabric draped over her arm.37 For Townley and other Anglo-American men, the Clytie bust provided an enticing stand-in for an erotic, semi-nude wife.

A more recent work depicting a female mythological figure also found its way into the minds and hearts of antebellum American males in the 1840s and 1850s – Hiram Powers’s bust Proserpine (fig. 1.4). Less delicately carved and more idealized than the bust of Clytie, Powers’s Proserpine may at first appear to lack the former work’s overt sensuality. The hair is more tightly bound and held in place by a fillet. The face shows less emotion. Indeed, the figure does not produce an impression of individuality, as the bust of Clytie does, but comes across more like an idealized everywoman. Powers’s Proserpine projects a cooler and calmer aura than Clytie. Yet, in contrast to Clytie, the breasts of the figure are entirely exposed, thus offering viewers a tantalizing simulacrum of a nude female torso.

From the very time of Proserpine’s inception, it garnered an ardent response from its future owner, who, ironically, did not live to see the finished sculpture. Edward L. Carey (1806–

37 For a detailed discussion of the Zoffany painting in this regard, see Coltman, “Representation, Replication,” 308–9.
45), a Philadelphia publisher and art dealer, keenly desired an original work by Powers. When Powers devised his model for *Proserpine* in 1843, he determined that the first version in marble should go to Carey. It took months, however, for the marble version to reach completion, and all the while, Carey anxiously awaited the bust’s arrival. Eventually, in May 1844, he wrote to Powers:

> Where is *Proserpine*? I begin to fear that she may have left the earth forever. This day six months ago you wrote that “if I fail to have the bust done in season for the vessel you mention I shall be able to send it on the next . . .”

I can’t tell you with what anxiety I have watched the sailings and arrivals of every vessel from Leghorn. One after another has arrived here and not a word from you. I have written you once or twice but feeling that the vessel which the steamer has reported as having sailed, would bring the bust, I have torn up the letter and determined to wait patiently, that is, as patiently as I can.

Do oblige me, my dear sir, in case you have not already forwarded it, by sending it at once.\(^{38}\)

As in the poems and catalogue annotations discussed above, Carey writes about the bust of Proserpine as if it were a real person. He expresses his intense desire to “meet her” as if awaiting a promised lover. Unfortunately, Powers was nowhere near completing the bust for Carey at that point. He placed the finished work in a ship headed to the United States only on April 10, 1845. In a true tale of unrequited love, just as Carey’s *Proserpine* arrived in the United States, Carey died after a short illness. He never got to see his *Proserpine*. A

Philadelphia friend informed Powers that “three or four days before his death,” Carey “anticipat[ed] with almost wild delight the pleasure of seeing ‘Proserpine,’” but his dearest wish remained unfulfilled.  

Powers’s bust of Proserpine continued to prove irresistible to American and British men. From 1845 until 1852, the period we are concerned with here, orders for marble copies of the bust flowed into Powers’s Florence studio. During those seven years at least nine marble versions of Proserpine, in varying designs, found their way to the estates of aristocratic British men, and about two dozen went to America. Our interest is with a version of Proserpine that came to Boston in 1849 and was subsequently purchased by a close friend of Powers, a New York businessman by the name of Sidney Brooks. The circumstances of Proserpine’s presence in Boston and Brooks’s ownership of it are closely linked to the touring exhibition of Powers’s famous statue The Greek Slave. At this juncture, then, we will briefly touch on that tour, and The Greek Slave’s two stops in Boston, before returning to our discussion of Proserpine.

In his studio in Florence, Powers created six full-length versions of The Greek Slave between 1844 and 1866, each with an average height of 165 centimetres. John Grant of London purchased the first version and it was exhibited in that city in the summer of 1845 (fig. 1.8). In 1847–48 Powers’s friend Miner Kellogg organized an American tour for the statue, and at least 100,000 Americans flocked to exhibition spaces to gaze upon the artistic marvel. Linda Hyman has summed up the tour this way: “The Greek Slave was widely exhibited in

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39 Portion of a letter from Henry Lea to Hiram Powers, quoted in ibid., 139.
40 For a complete list of the variations of Proserpine by Hiram Powers, see Wunder, Hiram Powers, vol. 2, 187–204.
American cities and towns – in special tents, exhibition galleries, merchants’ exchanges, rotundas, etc. – throughout the late 1840s and ’50s, and was lavishly praised at every stop.41

One day in late July 1848, a report in the Boston Daily Evening Transcript alerted the local citizenry to the phenomenon that awaited them:

Amongst the many attractive exhibitions at present to be visited in our city, the most prominent to persons of refined taste, will be the exquisite statue of the captive Greek [Powers’s original name for the statue] – one of the most successful achievements of our countryman Powers, and in itself embodying a very high ideal.42

That summer The Greek Slave was exhibited at the Horticultural Hall, where it attracted an audience of close to twenty thousand – women, men, and children alike, each paying a dollar a ticket.43 Such was its popularity that The Greek Slave made a repeat appearance in Boston a year later, in midsummer. By now the display had grown to include three other works, sent by Powers from Florence to enhance the exhibition: his statue The Fisher Boy (1841–44), a bust of General Andrew Jackson (1834–35), and a version of his Proserpine bust.

By the time of the second Boston exhibition, in addition to the promoter Miner Kellogg, Powers had another advocate working on his behalf in the United States, a man named Sidney Brooks. Brooks shepherded the three additional works upon their arrival in America. At the end of the tour, in late 1849, he purchased both the Fisher Boy and the bust of

Proserpine for himself. Sidney was now the second Brooks male to own a bust of Proserpine. His brother, Peter, had had his own copy since 1846.

For all the men discussed in this chapter, owning a marble bust of Proserpine or of Clytie allowed them to display and contemplate a three-dimensional depiction of an exposed or semi-exposed female figure in their own homes. Another episode concerning Proserpine reinforces the bust’s erotic appeal. In late 1845, a Baltimore man named James Howard McHenry ordered a bust of Proserpine from Powers, an order that was finally fulfilled in 1848. The following November, McHenry ordered a second, smaller Proserpine. He had an idiosyncratic request, however: he wanted the new version to include “the entire breast and part of the arms,” presumably so he could see more of the figure’s/woman’s nude body. Even Powers appears to have found McHenry’s specification odd. He replied that the design McHenry had requested was typically available only in a full-size figure. However, he agreed to make an exception for the Baltimore man. McHenry received his unique Proserpine, with its extended torso and without the leafy border, in 1852. In 1854 McHenry sheepishly acknowledged to Powers that Proserpine “looked better with her original basket of leaves.” But his attempt to have Powers produce a less truncated version of Proserpine signals that McHenry viewed the bust as a sexualized object.

Proserpine, Clytie, and American Women

If Powers’s Proserpine was an object of delectation for men in the mid-nineteenth century, what significance did the bust have for women? As we will see in this section, in 1845

46 Ibid., 196.
47 Ibid.
Proserpine took on a new role in the Anglo-American world, one closely related to the “classical-statue aesthetic” discussed in the opening of this chapter, whereby women consciously modelled themselves after ideal statuary. That year, the father of a young woman named Martha Endicott Peabody Rogers (1826–66) travelled with his wife and daughter to Italy. They paid a visit to Powers’s studio in Florence. Martha’s father wanted a marble bust of his daughter, and he sought something unique by the sculptor. Powers came up with the idea of portraying the young woman in the guise of his own Proserpine, which the family agreed to with one stipulation. Whereas in the bust of Proserpine the breasts are exposed, in the version with Martha as Proserpine, the torso was to be partially draped with flowing fabric that covered both breasts, in keeping with contemporary conceptions of feminine modesty and propriety. The finished bust took some time to complete; it finally arrived in the United States in September 1848 (fig. 1.9). Her father expressed his satisfaction with the results in a letter to Powers, stating how much he valued it as a work of art and as a reflection of “its resemblance to the original.” Furthermore, Mr. Rogers noted that everyone who saw the bust appreciated “its exquisite finish.”

Lauren Keach Lessing notes that the bust of Martha as Powers’s Proserpine was, in fact, a wedding present for the young woman from her parents, to commemorate her forthcoming marriage to Richard Denison Rogers. For Lessing, then, “when Martha Peabody’s parents gave her a portrait bust in the guise of Proserpine on the eve of her wedding, they expressed their feelings of loss as she vacated their home for her husband’s. By displaying this bust in their home, both Martha and her husband expressed their reverence for the emotional ties

48 Ibid., 89.
between parents and children, husbands and wives that formed the core of domestic ideology.”49

To put it another way, the gift from Martha’s parents served to reinforce the principles of what Barbara Welter, in a pioneering essay in 1966, identified as the “Cult of True Womanhood,” also known as the “cult of domesticity.” This mid-nineteenth-century code of conduct prescribed “four cardinal virtues” for the behaviour of women: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.50 Since the publication of Welter’s article nearly half a century ago, scholars have been attuned to the significance of the “cult” when interpreting gender relationships in the nineteenth century, and they have worked to add nuance to Welter’s preliminary analysis. We can count Lessing among them.51 Lessing’s discussion of Proserpine helps us to understand the role the bust played in governing the structure of Martha Peabody Rogers’s married life.

Up to this point in the chapter, we have seen that Proserpine could function concurrently as an icon of female desirability and an icon of female purity. In both cases, however, we find one thing in common: men dictated the various roles that the bust of Proserpine played in their lives or the lives of their families. But in another episode from the period, we see a woman seize control of Proserpine’s symbolic and erotic potential. Anstiss Derby Rogers Wetmore (1822–62) was a cousin of Martha Rogers. Given this relationship, there can be little doubt that she knew about Powers’s depiction of Rogers as Proserpine. In 1846, when

49 Lessing points out that “nineteenth-century interpretations of the myth of Proserpine stressed both her anguished separation from her mother, and her growing love for her husband, Pluto.” See Lessing, “Presiding Divinities,” 13–14.
51 Taking a retrospective look at Welter’s essay, Mary Louise Roberts has remarked that Welter “failed to understand the cult as an ideology that performed political and cultural ‘work.’” Lessing, however, takes just such an ideological stance in her study. See Mary Louise Roberts, “True Womanhood Revisited,” Journal of Women’s History 14 (Spring 2002): 151.
Powers was still working on the Martha Rogers bust in his Florence studio, Wetmore’s husband wrote to Powers from Rome, requesting a sitting for his wife. The resulting work, from 1848, shows that Powers depicted Anstiss Wetmore also in the guise of Proserpine, just as he had done for her cousin Martha. However, we find a significant difference: in the case of the Anstiss Wetmore bust, the breasts are undraped and therefore fully exposed, a severe breach of decorum for a mid-nineteenth-century woman (fig. 1.10).

The bust arrived in the United States from Florence in 1849, and as Richard P. Wunder tells us,

[Anstiss Wetmore’s husband] was disappointed when he saw it, and a friend of his, William S. Miller, also had similar feelings when he saw the finished bust in the sculptor’s studio. Miller . . . informed Powers, “You have been probably advised of the bust of Mrs. W. It is exhibited as it came from the studio. And the Lady (as I think I suggested she would) attempts to release herself from the charge of immodesty in the display of the bosom by stating that [it] was your idea; that you advised the ideal form and finish. There is a good deal of talk about it, and I have not hesitated to say that the whole was her own fancy, and that you seriously regretted having engaged to execute her bust in that style. And, am I right?

Wunder then notes, “Unfortunately Powers’s answer to that question was not preserved.”

As Wunder suggests, a further scandalous episode in Anstiss Wetmore’s life indicates that Miller may have been right in his assumption that posing and being depicted with her breasts

exposed was her idea, as she again broke with conventional standards of behaviour – she is reputed to have left her husband, dashing off to Europe permanently with her coachman.

Anstiss Wetmore’s bust remained hidden in the home of her scandalized family, where it was discovered only years later. Also hidden is her motivation for her presumed decision to pose with her breasts exposed before Powers and to have him portray her in such a manner. Yet, while Wetmore’s action is perplexing, it can perhaps be understood as an extreme expression of a mid-nineteenth-century phenomenon recently identified and articulated by Sharon Marcus: the socially sanctioned appreciation and even exploitation of the female figure by women as well as men. Victorian women, Marcus points out, were exposed to pervasive elements in visual culture that emphasized the female form. As a consequence, she argues, women developed an “erotic appetite” for depictions of women – an appetite that became a societal norm and even a societal necessity. For example, women set out to emulate fashion plates in magazine such as Godey’s, learning to dress themselves in an enticing manner designed to attract men. Yet such behaviour could manifest itself in startling forms; for example, Marcus cites the example of a woman who “scream[ed] with delight” over the beauty of other women, an act Marcus characterizes as an “active, aggressive [impulse] towards femininity.” Taking Marcus’s formulation into account, Wetmore’s decision to physically expose herself by way of her marble bust in the guise of Proserpine can be understood as sitting at the extreme end of a standard continuum for female conduct in mid-nineteenth-century society: she aggressively identified with an eroticized female form – Powers’s bust of Proserpine – to the extent of inappropriate emulation.

53 Ibid., 107.
55 Ibid., 111–12.
The sagas of Martha Rogers and Anstiss Wetmore alert us to the possibility that mid-nineteenth-century American women might have sought out other sculptural models to emulate. I believe that Clytie played such a role. Reproductions of the original bust of Clytie in the British Museum were accessible to American women, especially in Boston. As noted above, Francis Calley Gray owned a marble copy of the Clytie bust. While he does not appear to have loaned it to the Boston Athenaeum for public exhibition, we know that Gray invited at least some members of the public into his home to view the bust, Walter Channing among them. However, it was not necessary to enter the inner sanctum of an elite Boston male to come face to face with Clytie. Walter Channing, in his note to his sonnet devoted to the bust, informed his readers that a local sculptor, Richard C. King, had produced another marble copy of the bust: “Mr. King, a sculptor of very high reputation, has recently made in Boston a copy in marble of Clytie from a plaster-cast said to have been taken directly from the original in the Boston Museum.” Channing also remarked that “excellent casts from Mr. Gray’s copy have also been made,” although he doesn’t say by whom.56

How King obtained his plaster-cast version of Clytie remains a mystery, but we can guess that, like Nollekens before him in London, King gauged that there was a market in Boston for the famous work. By obtaining a plaster cast of the original marble at the British Museum, King ensured that any marble reproduction he produced would be the same size as the original, and true to it. Furthermore, for our purposes, it meant that King would always have one copy – the plaster version – and perhaps other marble copies on display in his studio. King’s entrepreneurial initiative allowed the bust of Clytie to move from the private to the

public domain. And this resulted in Clytie’s being accessible to middle-class and bourgeois women of Boston.

While the nineteenth-century “separate spheres” ideology would seem to imply that men occupied public spaces while women were confined to the domestic sphere, the reality is that women actively participated in daily life both inside and outside the house, especially in the urban marketplace.57 Women’s responsibility for seeing that their homes ran smoothly caused them to spend countless hours in downtown shops. The second Godey’s article discussed at the beginning of this chapter is again pertinent. As the story indicates, shopping for clothing in particular was a major preoccupation for women in the mid-nineteenth century. Just providing for their own wardrobes meant endless shopping expeditions.

Etiquette around women’s clothing dictated several changes of costume during the day, and so, as Beverly Gordon has written, “Enormous backstage work was necessary to maintain the proper front or persona. A considerable amount of planning was needed; women were, literally, wardrobe managers.” In part the task was so time-consuming because shopping required travelling from specialty shop to specialty shop. Gordon explains that women “had to work within the constraints of available resources and to assemble many disparate elements of dress from different sources, an activity that required a considerable amount of comparison shopping.”58

In the Godey’s article, the narrator, a Mrs. Watts, is invited by a friend to accompany her on an expedition to a fabric shop. Once ensconced in the store, the friend is engrossed in her

57 For an overview of the historical origins of the term separate spheres as it relates to gendered role divisions, and an analysis of the term’s significance and changing meaning in scholarship relating to the nineteenth century, see Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” Journal of American History 75 (June 1988): 9–39.
selection as a salesperson brings out sample after sample of “silks and satins, ribbons and velvets.” With her friend thus occupied, Mrs. Watts turns her attention to the other shoppers who enter the store over a period of about two hours. She observes and gives a running commentary on two young ladies; a middle-aged woman; an “interesting family group” consisting of a young widow, her sister, a girl, and a little boy; another family group consisting of a middle-aged woman and three younger females (the group shopping for a wedding trousseau, discussed above); and a mother-and-daughter pair. Only one man enters the store on his own within the period the narrator describes: a young sailor who may well have been far away from his family, and therefore without a woman to take on his shopping for him.

Mrs. Watts’s article suggests to us the preponderance of the women who must have regularly descended on Boston’s commercial district. A panoramic wood engraving by Major & Pierce, published in *Gleason’s Pictorial* on May 21, 1853, reinforces the point. It sweeps across the east side of Washington Street, encompassing about two dozen businesses. More than one hundred shoppers go about their business in the foreground, many of them women who shop or stop to chat in various configurations: with their husbands, children, or other female companions, or alone. The engraving portrays a “bustling” economy indeed as women participate actively in the public sphere (fig. 1.11).

Thanks to a rare and informative journal that has survived from the period, we can accompany one such woman on a shopping expedition in Boston. Caroline Healey Dall (1822–1912), a writer, abolitionist, and women’s rights activist, kept a detailed record of her

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59 Watts, “Philosophy of Shopping,” 33.
60 Ibid., 34–35.
daily experiences for much of her life. On November 22, 1847, Dall described in her journal how she moved through the city doing errands. It is in this account that we begin to find a hint about how women could encounter and engage with art while pursuing the quotidian activities that took place outside of the domestic sphere. Indeed, what is striking about her entry is how often she mentions encountering works of art while she moves through Boston’s stores.

While seeking out hardware at a store called Doggotts, Dall recounts that she had the opportunity to view “a beautiful picture by the Lady of Brussels – called Girls of the Rhine, presenting a bridal wreath.” Then, at W. W. Messer & Co., a dealer in “fancy goods,” Dall saw “some fine but voluptuous German pictures on copper. They knew not the Artist’s name.” Recalling the German pictures, Dall writes, “alas, how common art is grown! For these pictures were fine; and on one of them, many persons might be content to build an immortality.” And there is still more to take in: that same day, “at Cotton’s I saw an exquisite pencil drawing, not above two inches square – priced at $1.50 & $2.00. All these things tell plainer than the Census, the immense growth of wealth in B.” Dall appears to take great pleasure in the art she encounters as she goes about her shopping.

N. D. Cotton was a stationery store located at 13 Tremont Row. Dall does not mention it, but Cotton’s also showcased sculpture. On view that month at Cotton’s was a bust by John C. King, depicting Samuel B. Woodward, a Boston medical doctor. The bust was destined for the state asylum in Worcester, Massachusetts, but it made a stop first in Boston for the locals

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62 Ibid., 253–54.
63 The Boston Directory for the Year 1851 (Boston: George Adams, 1851), 307.
to admire it. An article about the exhibition states, “We hope our citizens, who feel an interest in the arts, will pay a visit to this beautiful work of Mr. King.”64 We can get a sense of how the interior of Cotton’s appeared from a brief article published in the Boston Courier on January 26, 1843. Earlier that week, Cotton’s had been broken into, and the robbers made away with “goods to the amount of $300 taken from it. The goods consisted of gold rings, card cases, pocket knives, pencil cases, & etc. . . . When the clerk opened the store in the morning, he found the gas lights burning . . . .”65 We can imagine Dall and other customers at Cotton’s on a dark winter evening in 1847, before the shop closed, stopping to admire the marble bust of Dr. Woodward in the glow of the gaslight as they picked up the small daily goods that they required.

Women shoppers like Dall would of course be reminded of the powerful roles that men played in mid-nineteenth-century Boston when they were confronted by marble busts of local dignitaries such as Dr. Woodward. Dall and other women shoppers would also have regularly encountered the bust of Clytie, for John King’s studio was situated at a busy intersection between commerce and culture. An advertisement in the 1851 Boston Directory tells us that King’s studio could be found in the Tremont Temple, a complex in central Boston that combined lecture halls, offices, and stores on the ground level. The advertisement reveals just what a hive of cultural and commercial activities this institution was: it housed a dispenser of botanic medicines, a hairdresser, a dentist’s office, a taxidermist, a portrait painter, and a music teacher, as well as King’s studio.66 And there, in the public sphere, while purchasing

64 “Mr. King’s Bust of Dr. Woodward,” Boston Daily Atlas, Tuesday, November 30, 1847, col A.
65 “Store Breaking,” Boston Courier, January 26, 1843, news section, col. E.
66 Boston Directory, 68.
daily goods or partaking of needed services, Boston women would find a full-sized copy (or copies) of Clytie produced by King, to gaze upon and consider from their own perspectives.

What did the bust of Clytie signify for them? First of all, it may have inspired thoughts of romantic love and fidelity. Ovid’s account of Clytie tells the story of a water nymph so devoted to Apollo that she sacrificed her freedom in an attempt to attain his love. Forever rooted in her dedicated state, she eventually turned into a sunflower, itself a sign of constancy. In keeping with Lessing’s analysis of ideal sculpture in the mid-nineteenth-century family home, we can justifiably presume that Clytie worked to reinforce in women’s minds the essential precepts of the “Cult of True Womanhood.” In particular, I would suggest that the Clytie bust could inspire thoughts of maternity and nurturing. An Arthurian poem by William Wordsworth from the late 1820s, “The Egyptian Maid, or the Romance of the Water-Lily,” underlines the bust’s significance in this regard.67

At the start Wordsworth’s poem, a ship named the Water-Lily is sailing towards Arthur’s court bearing an Egyptian princess. The ship has a lotus carved on its prow, and Wordsworth notes in a preface to the poem that the carving he describes was inspired by Townley’s prized bust (it was also known in the British aristocrat’s day as a depiction of the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis): “the Lotus, with the bust of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Townley Marbles, and now in the British Museum.”68 Isis’s attribute was the water lily or lotus, and she served as the protector of sailors, making the bust an obvious subject for a

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ship’s prow. But more significantly for our purposes, Isis was also the protector of children. Indeed, ancient Egyptian depictions of the goddess portray her nursing her son, Horus – an iconographical prototype that was adapted in images of the Madonna and the infant Jesus in early Christian art.\(^6^9\)

Initially in the poem, Wordsworth presents the Water-Lily as an object of male desire and domination; at first Merlin admires the ship, but then he becomes jealous of its beauty and destroys it. However, after causing the wreck, he is confronted by a young woman named Nina, who challenges him and sets out to rescue an Egyptian princess who was on board. In Nina’s eyes the prow of the ship becomes instrumental to the rescue process. The poet describes the “carved Lotus” prow as follows, after the shipwreck, when Nina finds it onshore. She first sees a carving of a lotus that obscures the figure within. As the leaves peel back, a Clytie-like figure appears, with one breast covered and one exposed:

Sad relique, but how fair the while!
For gently each from each retreating
With backward curve, the leaves revealed
The bosom half, and half concealed,
Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
On Nina, as she passed, with hopeful greeting.\(^7^0\)

The “divinity” smiles encouragingly, reinforcing Nina’s determination. Under the watchful, encouraging, and nurturing presence of Isis (signified by the exposed breast), Nina proves herself to be a resourceful heroine who rescues the princess. For Wordsworth’s female

readers, then, the semi-exposed state of the Isis/Clytie bust could function as an index of female strength accorded to them through the maternal role. At the same time, however, the sensual and erotic nature of the bust would have been obvious to mid-nineteenth-century women, just as it was to men. Thus the Clytie bust would have had the capacity to reinforce conventional roles, even as it could encourage transgressive behaviour – just as we saw in the case involving Proserpine, Martha Rogers, and Anstiss Wetmore.

While no portrait busts from the period under discussion have survived of women posing in the guise of Clytie, I believe that is exactly what we see in the Southworth & Hawes daguerreotypes of women introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In the images, women assume poses reflective of both the Clytie and Proserpine busts, or sometimes something in between. The remaining sections of the chapter foreground the evolution of this new photographic phenomenon so closely tied to women’s identity formation in the mid-nineteenth century.

Southworth & Hawes’s Daguerreotypes of Sculpture

When Boston’s “marmorean love affair” with sculpture was at its peak, a parallel phenomenon was occurring in that city: an innovative new initiative of daguerreotyping sculpture for commercial purposes, instigated by the studio of Southworth & Hawes. Sculpture had certainly formed a felicitous subject for photography since its invention, as the 2010 Museum of Modern Art exhibition The Original Copy and numerous other studies of photography and sculpture reveal.71 Investigations into the first few decades after the birth of

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71 See chapter 4 for a more detailed examination of issues around the intersection of photography and sculpture in the first half of the nineteenth century. For an overview of the intersection between photography and sculpture from 1839 up to the present day, and a thorough bibliography, see Roxana Marcoci, The Original
photography stress that classical sculpture made an excellent subject for early photographs, as the cameras required long exposure times, high contrast, and steady subjects. However, studies of the intersection of photography and sculpture in the mid-nineteenth century tend to overlook the genesis and circulation of commercial photographs of contemporary sculpture, that is to say, photographs that feature neoclassical or ideal sculpture, produced by living sculptors working in the period, and sold by photography studios. The reception of commercial photographs of contemporary sculpture by the public is even less well understood.

Two studies tentatively explore the terrain of nineteenth-century commercial photography and contemporary sculpture. One relates to the career of the Italian sculptor Carlo Marochetti (1805–67) and the other to the British sculptor Thomas Woolner (1825–92). Neither investigation indicates that daguerreotypes of the sculptors’ work were made available commercially. Though far more work remains to be done in this area, we can glean from the historical evidence that Albert Southworth and Josiah Hawes were pioneers in recognizing the potential for the sale of daguerreotypes of contemporary sculpture to the general public. Their aggressive pursuit of new business relating to daguerreotypes of sculpture – both classical and contemporary – was at the forefront of photographic practices in the United

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Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010). See also Sculpture Review 54 (Winter 2005), a themed issue that addresses the topic of sculpture and photography throughout.

States, Britain, and Europe in the first decade following the introduction of photography on the world stage, in 1839.

Chapter four of this study will delve more deeply into issues relating to the commercial applications of photography of contemporary sculpture and its reception in the mid-nineteenth century. For the time being, we will be concerned with Southworth & Hawes’s development of a trade in daguerreotypes of sculpture, and with how their pioneering activity ultimately provided Boston women with a unique forum for self-fashioning. To start, we will investigate the means by which Southworth & Hawes established themselves as the pre-eminent daguerreotypists of sculpture in the era.

It appears that Southworth & Hawes’s earliest opportunity to exploit the commercial applications of photography and sculpture coincided with the first exhibition of Hiram Powers’s *Greek Slave* in that city, discussed above. Southworth & Hawes’s studio, at 5½ Tremont Row, sat just around the corner from the Horticultural Hall, where *The Greek Slave* was exhibited. Known for their superior daguerreotype portraits, the partners now strove to capitalize on the *Greek Slave* phenomenon by offering their clientele daguerreotypes of Powers’s famous work. The writer of the *Boston Transcript* article noted earlier reports on the new initiative with great enthusiasm. Indeed, the title of the article is “The Greek Slave – Daguerreotype Views.” After describing the attributes of the statue itself, the writer declares that “a beautiful artistic achievement in connection with the statues was shown to us yesterday in an admirable daguerreotype of the ‘Greek Slave’ taken by those very successful copyists, Southworth & Hawes. In this finely executed specimen of light-limning we have
three separate representations of the statue on one plate – the back, the front and side view – each conveying a very perfect idea of the original.”

The reporter’s brief remarks give no hint of the backstage orchestration that must have taken place in order for his timely announcement to appear. Southworth & Hawes would have needed special access to the Horticultural Hall in order to take their daguerrotypes. The firm’s move was an audacious early effort to commercialize photography of sculpture for the benefit of the photographer’s studio, considering that at this point Hiram Powers himself did not approve of the sale of photographs of his work. As early as 1844, Powers gave away daguerreotypes of his *Greek Slave* as gifts. However, it was not until around 1859 – when Powers’s son, Longworth, became a professional photographer and documented his father’s work – that legitimate photographs of his sculpture were available in the open marketplace.

Southworth & Hawes’s project of daguerreotyping *The Greek Slave* was apparently instigated by Kellogg, without the permission of Powers. The end result was that Bostonians had access to daguerreotypes of *The Greek Slave* long before such images were made commercially available with Powers’s approval.

Southworth & Hawes highlighted the *Greek Slave* daguerreotypes in their print advertising. Readers flipping through the advertisement section towards the end of the 1851 *Boston Directory* would come face to face with evidence of Southworth & Hawes’s forceful promotion of their studio, including the availability of *Greek Slave* daguerreotypes. The

*Boston Directory* ad highlights the many services offered by Southworth & Hawes, including

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73 “The Greek Slave,” 2.
“Children’s and Infants’ Pictures” and “Likenesses of the Deceased.” It also outlines the studio’s superior ability in reproducing and enlarging daguerreotypes: “We are perfectly at home in every department of Daguerreotype copying, without reversing. We can copy a daguerreotype head, from the size of a three cent piece to that of life, if desired.” The scope in sizes offered here appears to correspond to the standard sizes for daguerreotype plates: whole (21.6 x 16.5 cm), half (14 x 11.4 cm), quarter (10.8 x 8.3 cm), sixth (8.3 x 7 cm), and ninth (6.4 x 5.1 cm). The one-sixth-plate image was the most common size and sold for about five dollars. Southworth & Hawes’s artistic superiority in the Boston market is indicated by the fact that other, cut-rate daguerreotypists offered daguerreotypes at the much lower rate of twenty-five cents.

It was the studio’s facility in copying that allowed them to offer daguerreotypes of The Greek Slave for sale. The daguerreotype, by its nature, is a single image, as there is no negative. But by daguerreotyping their daguerreotypes, Southworth & Hawes could offer reproductions of The Greek Slave ad infinitum and could also vary the sizes. Beyond that, moreover, as the ad highlights, the studio had developed a method of projecting their daguerreotypes, with apparently remarkable results. Under the heading “Statuary,” the ad states,

Our picture of Powers’ Greek Slave shows our ability in this department; for so perfect is it that, when we exhibited it magnified to the size of the original, artists and amateurs would often suppose it the identical marble, and exclaim in astonishment, “Where did you get Powers’ Greek Slave.” We shall soon show it this way again. In the mean time [sic] it may be seen in our room on a plate 13½

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78 Boston Directory, 32.
79 Romer and Wallis, Young America, 261.
80 John Stauffer, “Daguerreotyping the National Soul: The Portraits of Southworth & Hawes, 1843–1860,” in Romer and Wallis, Young America, 59.
by 16½ inches, having 100 more square inches than any plate shown out of our
room.\(^{81}\)

There is some evidence that other photography studios in the United States also managed to
take illicit daguerreotypes of Powers’s *Greek Slave*; however, it seems safe to say that none
of them marketed their daguerreotypes of the statue with the acuity of Southworth &
Hawes.\(^{82}\) The special projections of the statue undoubtedly captured the attention of cultured
Bostonians. Furthermore, as the ad copy implies, Southworth & Hawes had an exhibition
room where they displayed their most prized works, including an unusually large
daguerreotype of *The Greek Slave*.

In 1851 Powers’s statue became even better known when it stood at the centre of the
American exhibit at the Great Exhibition in London. Never had an American work of art
claimed such a position on the international stage. As Shirley Teresa Wajda has remarked, in
mid-nineteenth-century America the commercial photography studio “was . . . the natural
medium in which to introduce innovations to the consuming public.”\(^{83}\) By exhibiting the
most famous statue of the day by way of the most up-to-date photographic techniques,
Southworth & Hawes ensured a steady stream of customers to their studio. And Southworth
& Hawes used the evidence of their facility in producing daguerreotypes of *The Greek Slave*
for another purpose: to encourage their clientele to have their own works of sculpture
daguerreotyped. On their business card, for example, the firm flaunts its skill in copying

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\(^{81}\) *Boston Directory*, 32–33.

\(^{82}\) Another three-part image of *The Greek Slave* that has come down to us is attributed to the Philadelphia photographer D. C. Collins. See Mary A. Foresta and John Wood Foresta, *Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerreotype* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1995), 172–73.

“statuary.” Assuming that Bostonians took them up on their offer, the exhibition room would have displayed a variety of daguerreotypes of sculpture in addition to *The Greek Slave*. Disconcertingly, however, almost no material evidence of the studio’s daguerreotypes of sculpture appear to have survived. And only two daguerreotypes of *The Greek Slave* are now known, one of which is reproduced in the *Young America* catalogue discussed at the outset of this chapter and is owned by the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 1.12). The other is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.  

The Getty Museum’s quarter-plate image is also reproduced in an earlier catalogue, *The Silver Canvas: Daguerreotype Masterpieces from the J. Paul Getty Museum*, dating to 1999. Along with the image we find an illustration that recreates the original Southworth & Hawes daguerreotype showing the three views of the statue – back, front, and side – simultaneously (fig. 1.13). This was the daguerreotype style that the reporter described in the *Boston Transcript* article. Their special effort here, which would have been a composite copy made from three separate images, attests to Southworth & Hawes’s sensitivity to the challenges of reproducing sculpture photographically. A work of statuary in the round will look quite different depending on the viewing position of the spectator. Presumably in order to give the purchasers of their *Greek Slave* daguerreotypes a more accurate impression of the original work in the round, the partners decided to combine views of *The Greek Slave* from three different perspectives.

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84 The business card is reproduced in Grant B. Romer, “‘A High Reputation with All True Artists and Connoisseurs’: The Daguerrian Careers of A. S. Southworth and J. J. Hawes,” in Romer and Wallis, *Young America*, 31.
85 Romer and Wallis, *Young America*, 486.
For all of Southworth & Hawes’s efforts, their attempts to capture the image of *The Greek Slave* photographically for posterity appears to have failed – from a commercial standpoint, at least – if only two *Greek Slave* daguerreotypes from their studio (that we currently know of) survive today, compared to hundreds of their daguerreotype portraits. But the scarcity of *Greek Slave* daguerreotypes surely speaks more to modernism’s rejection of nineteenth-century neoclassical sculpture – and, consequently, any photographs of that sculpture – than to a lack of trade in such images during the period. Certainly most of Southworth & Hawes’s daguerreotypes of statuary appear to have perished over the past 150 years, but from this fact can we correctly gather that they never existed in any significant numbers in the first place? Given the studio’s ongoing and forceful promotion of the idea that daguerreotypes were perfectly suited to sculpture, and Bostonians’ “marmorean love affair,” it is reasonable to conjecture that daguerreotypes of sculpture were in fact in wide circulation in mid-nineteenth-century Boston, but that generations since have not appreciated their value and either discarded them or stashed them in attics or basements, where they remain hidden today.

Studying the scant evidence for Southworth & Hawes’s trade in daguerreotypes of sculpture bears significant rewards, however, for among the modest number that have come down to us are two daguerreotypes of the bust of Clytie, dating to circa 1850.87 One, a whole plate, shows the bust in three-quarter view. The other, a quarter-plate, shows the bust in profile (figs. 1.14 and 1.15). Both are exquisite two-dimensional reproductions of the popular bust, which, as we have established above, could be found in both marble and plaster versions in Boston. Whether or not the daguerreotypes depict Francis Calley Gray’s copy of *Clytie*, we

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87 For reproductions of the *Clytie* daguerreotypes and other daguerreotypes of sculpture by Southworth & Hawes that have survived, see Romer and Wallis, *Young America*, 468, 470, 484–86.
do not know. But it is certainly tempting to speculate that Calley had his bust “copied” by Southworth & Hawes. If so, he may have been following the lead of Sidney Brooks, for textual evidence reveals that Brooks had his copy of Powers’s *Proserpine* daguerreotyped by Southworth & Hawes in 1849.

Albert Southworth’s sister, Nancy, was married to his partner, Hawes. On August 24, 1849, Nancy wrote to Albert, who had temporarily left the firm in an attempt to cash in on the California gold rush. In her letter Nancy mentions that *The Greek Slave* had returned to Boston, along with the other works by Powers noted above. “The Proserpine is called very beautiful,” she remarks, “and is the same as the one Mr. Brooks offered you to copy.”

While Southworth & Hawes’s daguerreotype of Brooks’s *Proserpine* has not come down to us, their two versions of *Clytie* give an idea of how the daguerreotypes of *Proserpine* would probably have looked. Both reproductions of the *Clytie* bust emphasize the statue’s delicate beauty, although the impression we have is somewhat different with each one. The three-quarter view, with its slightly turned head and lightly draped breasts, reinforces the bust’s sensual qualities. The profile, on the other hand, does not reveal the torso at all but rather emphasizes the covered right shoulder. Yet the erotic nature of the bust is not downplayed entirely, as the profile allows for a better view of Clytie’s spiralling curls, which play freely down the back of her neck.

In each case the bust is sensitively photographed, with almost no shadows obscuring the figure on view. Contrast that effect with the heavy shadows we find in the rear view of

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88 Romer, “‘A High Reputation,’” 34. Nancy Southworth Hawes’s letter is reproduced here.
89 The location of Sidney Brooks’s version of *Proserpine* is unknown, if it has indeed survived, but it was probably similar in style to the bust illustrated in Fig. 1.4. For more information about this version, see Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, vol. 2, 191.
Southworth & Hawes’s daguerreotype of *The Greek Slave* (fig. 1.13). It seems safe to surmise that choosing to prevent shadows from obscuring their images of *Clytie* was deliberate on the part of the partners, and a testament to their artistry. It is also reasonable to speculate that they would have photographed the busts from several angles, as they did with *The Greek Slave*, which would result in a series of images, all slightly different and highlighting different aspects of the works.\(^90\) Given the popularity of the Clytie and Proserpine busts in mid-nineteenth-century America, we can be certain that Southworth & Hawes would have displayed their artistic daguerreotypes of the two statues in their exhibition room. We turn to this pivotal social and cultural space for antebellum Bostonians in the concluding section of the chapter.

### The “Vignettes or Heads Simply” Daguerreotypes

The letter from Nancy Southworth Hawes to her brother provides a first-hand view of the busy Southworth & Hawes exhibition room, as visitors come and go:

> Here I am at 5½ Tremont Row as usual, except, that instead of being upstairs, I am staying most of the time in the Exhibition Room . . . . Our last customer today has been Laura Washburn (now Mrs. Maynard) of Tennessee . . . . This morning she is having some work done at Miss Conley’s [the dressmaker next door] and her husband came in to look at the daguerreotypes . . . . Mr. and Mrs. Sherwin were in only last week . . . . Mrs. Sherwin is as pretty as ever. Mr. Dorr is a constant visitor here, whenever in the city.\(^91\)

\(^90\) We can see evidence for this practice in eleven daguerreotypes, taken from different vantage points, of a statue of General Joseph Warren by the Boston sculptor Henry Dexter, dating to 1857. See Romer and Wallis, *Young America*, 484–86.

\(^91\) Romer, “‘A High Reputation,’” 34.
Nancy’s letter conflates the two types of traffic flowing through the studio: those curious to see the daguerreotypes on view in the exhibition room (perhaps with an eye to purchasing) and those who come in to sit for their daguerreotype portraits. Her letter also indicates that in the case of the latter, the studio continually attempted to innovate in order to make their portraits more and more attractive to their customers:

> We have been getting up a new style for pictures, which I think will be rather pleasing. We have only made two, and they are liked well. They are made by covering the middle of a French plate, and copying on the outside one of the borders from a picture in Moore’s Book of Beauty then cover [sic] the border, and in the center take a likeness. It gives a very pretty finish to the picture and . . . I think we shall be able to make some very pretty things this way.\(^\text{92}\)

Nancy’s emphasis on the “pretty” characteristics of the new technique – which apparently involved photographing a border first and then a portrait within the border – suggests the studio developed the novel idea especially to appeal to their female customers.

No doubt Albert Southworth would have appreciated the efforts of his sister and his partner to attract new business during his absence. He may have been less than pleased, however, with Nancy’s description of clients rushing in and out, slipping their daguerreotyping sessions in between visits to dressmakers and other errands. He warns against this very scenario in an article he wrote after his return from California, which was published in *The Lady’s Almanac for 1855*. In “Suggestions to Ladies Who Sit for Daguerreotypes,” Southworth cautions readers that

\(^{92}\) Ibid., 35.
the hour of departure on a tour of travel, a few hasty moments snatched from a shopping excursion in town, or between hurried morning calls and dinner, will not be likely to find one in a sufficiently fresh and quiet mood to yield to the hints the [daguerreotype] Artist may desire to throw out expressly for the sitter’s benefit.\(^{93}\)

With these remarks, Southworth makes his opinion clear: a woman who patronizes his studio should be calm and collected and ready to accommodate the wishes of the “Artist” who is about to capture her likeness.

Southworth’s 1855 article builds upon another, of the same title, published in *The Lady’s Almanac for 1854*. As we can tell from the prior excerpt, Southworth took the dress and demeanour of his female sitters very seriously. In the earlier article he goes so far as to tell them how to accentuate their good features and disguise their flaws, starting with the importance of an appropriate hairstyle:

> The hair in its arrangement should assist the proportions of the head. If the head is too long and the face thin, the hair should widen and round the features. If the cheek bones are too high and too broad, the breadth of the hair should fall lower down so as not to exaggerate features already too large.\(^{94}\)

Southworth’s advice shows great attentiveness to the ins and outs of physiognomy and hairstyling, and his remarks would not be out of place in a fashion magazine today. They alert us to the degree of control that he hoped to impose over his sitters in order to produce the most aesthetically pleasing portraits possible. Obviously he wanted the women to look


their best in their portraits, but at the same time one senses that this desire is as much for his own benefit as theirs. Southworth had his standards and encouraged his female customers to live up to them – and this applied to their bodies as much as to their faces. Indeed, any aspect of the female form that did not meet his standards needed to be covered up. In the case of underweight women, Southworth insists that “thin necks and projecting collar bones require high dresses with lace, whether in fashion or not. The same remarks apply to arms and hands. If not well filled out, with good outlines, let them be appropriately covered in a picture.”95 It seems that for Southworth nearly every woman had to disguise at least some flaws: “If the figure is good the fashion of the dress should show all handsome lines or curves, and hide all that are not so. If the figure is not well proportioned the fashion of the dress should make it appear so as nearly as possible.”96

For a certain kind of sitter, though, Southworth offered some leniency: girls and young women with flawless necks and shoulders could accentuate their lovely features with decorative hairstyles and revealing dresses: “Flowing curls for misses, over a low-necked dress, or for young ladies with handsome outlines of neck and shoulders, are picturesque and pleasing.”97 His comments indicate that Southworth & Hawes’s notion of female beauty did not offer much latitude to their sitters. If one was a “miss” or a “young lady,” a “low-necked dress” was not only allowed but preferred. Everyone else should keep covered up, in the name not only of decency but of aesthetics.

It was presumably, then, for attractive “young ladies” in particular that Southworth & Hawes developed a new style of daguerreotype portraiture, one touted by the ad in the 1851 Boston

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
Directory, that they called “Vignettes or Heads Simply.” The ad copy declares: “This is our own style – we were the first to practice it, and in it are some of our very best pictures . . . . The strength and boldness of the effect can be equalled in no other way.” The critical element of the style? “No drapery attracts the eye from the face and its character.”98 The ad is as interesting for what it doesn’t say as for what it does. Who is this style intended for – men, women, or both? If there is “no drapery,” does that mean the subjects are (or appear to be) unclothed? Is the photograph only of the face, or is the upper body also depicted? If we marry this ad copy to Southworth’s instructions to attractive “young ladies,” however, we begin to get a sense of what the style might entail and for whom it would best be suited: fine-boned beauties in their teens and early twenties. This special demographic appears to have been the primary target of Southworth & Hawes’s ad for the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style.

Now let’s return to the daguerreotypes of women discussed at the beginning of this chapter (fig. 1.1). Surely these daguerreotypes are exemplars of the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style, for, as the 1851 ad copy suggests, “no drapery attracts the eye from the face and its character.” In most of the daguerreotypes produced in this manner, the women have left their heads uncovered, wear little or no jewellery, and reveal their necks and upper shoulders by wearing strapless gowns that sweep across horizontally just beneath the collarbone. The photographers have done the rest by superimposing over the gowns a clouddlike effect that nearly obscures the fabric from which they are made. Often the cloud effect continues up and around the subjects’ heads, providing a pleasing oval composition within the standard rectangular shape of the daguerreotypes. In at least one case the “sky” behind the “clouds” is

98 Boston Directory, 32.
tinted pale blue, suggesting that the subject is floating above the Earth (fig. 1.16).
Occasionally, daguerreotypes in this style feature children (fig. 1.17). But largely, the
subjects are women who pose in the studio in their low-necked dresses.

However, the women do not always conform to Southworth’s decrees. While at first glance
the subjects in these daguerreotypes appear to be remarkably similar, in fact they constitute a
variety of ages and body shapes that they do not always show off to best advantage, at least
according to the suggestions of Southworth. For example, the woman in figure 1.18 has what
Southworth might consider cheekbones that are “too high and too broad,” and her hairdo
exaggerates rather than minimizes that feature. In figure 1.19 we find the opposite situation:
here a woman with a rather long face has her hair styled in a manner that only accentuates
this flaw (according to Southworth) in her physiognomy. Many other women also posed for
the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” daguerreotypes in opposition to Southworth’s well-
publicized wishes. Why would they do so?

Before addressing this question, it is worth considering how Southworth & Hawes came to
develop the style in the first place. The photographic evidence suggests that they
photographed only women in the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style. Yet, in what is certainly
a prototype for the new style, the subject is a male. In fact, it is Albert Southworth himself.
The daguerreotype to which I am referring is, arguably, the best-known portrait to emanate
from the studio. It is a close-up of Southworth’s head, shoulders, and upper torso dating to
circa 1845. Set against a dark background, Southworth’s torso faces forward, but his head
turns slightly over his left shoulder as he gazes off into the middle distance. His upper body is entirely nude (fig. 1.20).  

The Albert Southworth daguerreotype is startling and calls for analysis. John Stauffer has suggested that Southworth’s exposed state is intended to “reveal the passions of his inmost soul.” Grant Romer has hypothesized that Southworth was posing in emulation of portrait busts of Boston’s elite males that he and Hawes might view at the Boston Athenaeum and other local establishments. Building on their comments, I would like to suggest that the image had another possible precedent, in this case, a photographic precedent. I am thinking here of William Henry Fox Talbot’s famous series of photographs from 1843 of the so-called bust of Patroclus, a marble bust of a mythological figure. In the earliest days of photography, Talbot photographed his own plaster cast of the bust, capturing it in nearly fifty calotype prints. He featured two of these in his book of photographs The Pencil of Nature, in plates 5 and 17 (figs. 1.21 and 1.22). Is it conceivable that Southworth & Hawes had a copy of The Pencil of Nature, or that one was available in Boston for them to consult? When we compare the daguerreotype of Southworth to Talbot’s calotype of his bust of Patroclus from plate 5, it seems very likely. In each, the subject’s upper body is nude, the head is turned to look over one shoulder, the eyes gaze off into the middle distance, and, most tellingly, the male figure sports long sideburns that meet under the chin to form a beard. It is

99 There is also a second, similar photograph. See Romer and Wallis, Young America, 262.
100 Stauffer, “Daguerreotyping the National Soul,” 65.
102 The so-called Patroclus bust was, like the Clytie bust, originally part of Charles Townley’s collection and is now housed at the British Museum. In Johann Zoffany’s painting of Townley’s sculpture gallery, the Patroclus bust sits in the middle of a row of busts on the upper right side of the room (Fig. 1.7).
possible that Southworth grew (or applied) facial hair for the purpose of the photograph, for in no other portrait does he sport a similar style.

If my conjecture is correct, what we have in the Albert Southworth daguerreotype is not a portrait photograph that vies with a bust of a male mythological figure but rather a portrait photograph that vies with a photograph of a bust of a male mythological figure. The difference is critical: Southworth and Hawes emulated and experimented with not only the formal qualities of the bust but the compositional and aesthetic qualities of the photograph itself. As evidenced by the fact that Talbot took nearly fifty photographs of his plaster bust of Patroclus, sculpture in the round offers photographers a multitude of choices regarding points of view, angles, light, and shadow. Arguably, in the photograph of Southworth, he and his partner conspired to reproduce with a living model the artistry of Talbot’s calotype print depicting a classical bust.

This seems not to have been their only experiment with Talbot’s Patroclus. A curious daguerreotype of an unidentified woman, dating to circa 1850, bears a startling resemblance to Talbot’s plate 17 from The Pencil of Nature (fig. 1.23). In Talbot’s book, the bust of Patroclus is shown in profile, looking to his right. In the Southworth & Hawes daguerreotype, the woman is also photographed in profile, and she assumes an identical position to the bust. Moreover, her shoulders are truncated as in the original bust (an effect that the daguerreotype of Southworth does not imitate). The white skin of the woman gleams against the deep black background, as in the Talbot calotype. Her rather sharp features can be read as either masculine or feminine, softened only by the flow of curls down the side of her cheek. Of the thousands of portrait photographs of men, women, and children reproduced in Young America, this one is unique, particularly with its suggestion of androgyny. It appears
to have been an effect that the firm tried out and then left behind. And they also abandoned
the idea of photographing men in the guise of Patroclus. That is to say, they took no other
photographs of men with exposed torsos.

Their experiments, however, help us to see the “Vignettes or Head Simply” daguerreotypes
of women in a new light, for surely these also owe their origins to the prototype of classical
sculpture – or, more specifically, photographs of classical sculpture. It is very likely that the
partners studied their own daguerreotypes of Clytie and Proserpine in order to find a new
way to attract female customers, and their action led to the development of the “Vignettes or
Heads Simply” style. As noted above, Southworth & Hawes would have taken
daguerreotypes of both Clytie and Proserpine from various vantage points, as they did with
The Greek Slave, and as Talbot did with his bust of Patroclus. It must have occurred to them
that women imitating photographs of Clytie and Proserpine would make for lovely and
highly artistic images.

And they were right. Three daguerreotypes of unidentified women from circa 1850 make the
case. In the first we find an exquisite mirror image of the Southworth & Hawes
daguerreotype of Clytie taken from the front (fig. 1.24). The second example is a mirror
image of Southworth & Hawes’s daguerreotype showing the Clytie bust in profile (fig. 1.25).
While there is apparently no surviving daguerreotype by Southworth & Hawes of Powers’s
Proserpine, the subject in the third example shares the bust’s pose and graceful tranquillity
(fig. 1.26).
Surely, from Southworth’s point of view, these young women and others like them were most suited for the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style, while others should pose fully covered. Recall how he wrote that underweight women should conceal their exposed parts in “high dresses with lace, whether in fashion or not [my italics].” What Southworth underestimated, however, was antebellum American women’s devotion to fashion and the fashionable. If the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style was the latest fashion in photography, why would any woman want to be left out? As discussed above, fashion consumed a large part of nineteenth-century women’s lives. And despite society’s demands for their proper comportment, an article from Godey’s demonstrates how impervious at least some women were to sanctions imposed by men, or other women.

The April 1854 edition of Godey’s ran a short piece titled “Dress – as a Fine Art,” written by a Mrs. Merrifield. Here the author sets out a number of rules that echo those of Southworth, most notably that women should dress in a manner appropriate to their age and physique:

The style of dress should be adapted to the age of the wearer. As a general rule, we should say that in youth the dress should be simple and elegant, the ornaments being flowers. In middle age, the dress may be of rich materials, and more splendid in its character; jewels are the appropriate ornaments. In the decline of life, the materials of which the dress is composed may be equally rich, but with less vivacious colors.

Mrs. Merrifield adds that older American woman should look to Europe for useful guidelines: “The French, whose taste in dress is so far in advance of our own, say that ladies who are fifty years old should neither wear gay colors nor dresses of slight materials . . . they
should cover their hair, wear high dresses, and long sleeves.”

Her commentary comes down to one thing: the older a woman gets, the more she should cover her aging body. Young women can wear simple dresses, presumably in light-coloured and even flimsy fabric, but their elders should cover their hair, torso, and arms. Furthermore, the dress fabrics women select should become heavier as they advance in years.

Mrs. Merrifield has a final word of advice for her female readers: a woman’s ultimate goal should be to reflect quietly but well on her husband. Indeed, a husband’s approval is the only thing really that matters. She concludes her article with a quotation from a play by the British writer John Tobin (1770–1804) titled The Honeymoon: “She’s adorned / Amply that in her husband’s eyes looks lovely / The truest mirror that an honest wife / Can see her beauty in!”

Mrs. Merrifield’s commands call for submissive women who obey her (and society’s) rules and who act as positive “reflections” of their husbands’ accomplishments and social standing. But lest we think that her audience consumed such directives passively, it should be noted that the author herself acknowledges some resistance on the part of Godey’s readership. When discussing new fabrics that she finds unseemly – the currently fashionable “large and pronounced checks” – Mrs. Merrifield states, “We had hoped that the ladies would show the correctness of their taste by their disapproval of these unbecoming designs, but the prevalence of the fashion at the present time is another evidence of the triumph of fashion over good taste.”

As the daguerreotypes discussed thus far indicate, despite the heavy pressure of convention – pressure continually reinforced in women’s magazines and right in the studio of Southworth

105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
& Hawes itself – dozens of women of all ages chose to pose in emulation of semi-nude marble busts, whether it was in “good taste” or not. Moreover, Southworth & Hawes gave them the means to do so. Southworth’s 1855 article recommended to women that they rehearse their poses before coming to the studio: “a little practice, with a friend to prompt, before a mirror, will save time, and very likely be the means of much increasing the satisfaction of those for whom the likeness is made.”

The fact that they sold their photographs of Clytie and Proserpine meant women could study them in their own homes, making the images that much easier to emulate. Ample proof of women’s experimentation “before a mirror” can be found in Young America: a number of daguerreotypes, framed in a set, show individual women exhibiting an array of facial expressions that they have clearly practised, seemingly with the devotion of professional actresses, as we see in figure 1.27.

Marcy J. Dinius has recently argued that Albert Southworth accorded agency to his subjects through his articles offering fashion tips and suggestions for how to prepare themselves for their portrait sittings. She contends that the subjects themselves were unaware of their own sartorial power, and that Southworth was aiming to “train” them. However, women’s relationship with dress and fashion, enacted through wardrobe planning and shopping, had already accorded them power – power to express themselves through their relationship with the latest trends. As this chapter has shown, deeply implicated in their experiments in self-fashioning was an ever-present awareness of and engagement with models of classical and neoclassical sculpture in their world. Consciously emulating the poses and demeanour of sculpture, women performed in both public and private life overlapping and contradictory

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107 Southworth, “Suggestions to Ladies, No. I.”
roles, from paragon of virtue to object of desire for both women’s and men’s delectation. The Southworth & Hawes daguerreotypes in the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style was one of many means they had for expressing their overlapping identities.

We will conclude with three final daguerreotypes from the studio, dating to circa 1850, that bring this process to life, featuring as they do the same unidentified woman. In one daguerreotype the woman is shown seated in a three-quarters pose and is fully dressed (fig. 1.28). In another, a close-up of her head and shoulders, she is also fully dressed (fig. 1.29). And in the third she poses in the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style (fig. 1.30).

In the seated three-quarters view, the subject has dressed and positioned herself in a way that is typical of many of the daguerreotypes of women by Southworth & Hawes. Although she is obviously sitting on a chair, it is obscured by the fullness of her clothing. From the large lace collar at her neck down to the broad skirt that fills the bottom of the photograph, the woman displays her taste in clothing and her success at purchasing the materials required to create her outfit. She does not exude an aura of wealth; she wears no jewellery other than a brooch pinned at the middle of her lace collar, and the materials of her outfit appear to be humble. However, the long, dark fringe hanging from the upper part of her dress speaks to a certain flair for the dramatic. With her arm draped over the arm or back of the chair, her sideways glance, and her array of fabrics, she comes across as a middle-class antebellum version of a countess as portrayed by Ingres.109

109 It should be noted that the similarity to a painted portrait by an artist would surely not be coincidental. Hawes began his artistic career as a self-taught portrait painter who may have learned from the example of Ingres and others. See Romer, “‘A High Reputation,’” 24.
Next let us turn to the close-up in which the woman is clothed. She wears the same outfit, has her hair styled in the same way, and assumes the same pose, glancing off to one side. The image is cropped just below the fringe, giving the impression that it is a shawl wrapped around her shoulders. As in the three-quarters image, the subject has assumed a serious yet vague expression; a gentle sensibility comes through, and any notion of a forceful or individualized personality is subdued.

Now we come to the third image, in the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style, and the inspiration for her hairdo and demeanour in all three daguerreotypes is revealed. In this daguerreotype she seems to be posing as a cross between the Clytie and Proserpine busts, borrowing Clytie’s hairstyle and Proserpine’s composition. In the mind of Albert Southworth, the subject would not perhaps be considered an ideal candidate for the style. Her wide face is accentuated by the characteristic puffiness of the Clytie-like hairdo. While she positions her head in a manner similar to the bust of Proserpine, her heavy facial features and short neck do not reflect the graceful youthfulness of the sculptural prototype.

Perhaps the subject herself was uncertain about her decision to pose in the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style, for it appears that she did so on a different day from when she posed fully clothed. In the two photographs where she is dressed, her parted hair is slightly flatter and we see a small wave across her brow. In the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” daguerreotype, her hair is puffier and the slight wave is gone. Did she have second thoughts about appearing semi-exposed, and return to the studio to pose again as Clytie/Proserpine, but this time in her respectable middle-class clothing? Or did she start out by adhering to Southworth’s rules and then decide that she too wanted to take part in the newest trend in photography in her city, regardless of his dictates? The answer is lost to us. Nonetheless, the Southworth & Hawes
daguerreotypes that portray her – and other women – demonstrate that, within the intersection between photography and sculpture, antebellum American women found a space to explore all of their various selves.
Chapter 2
Harriet Hosmer’s *Hesper, the Evening Star*
Between Sentimentalism and Androgyny

To view Harriet Hosmer’s first work of original sculpture, you must venture to Watertown, Massachusetts, a town about seven miles outside of Boston. Make your way to the Watertown Free Public Library on Main Street and wind through the ground floor and up the staircase, through the stacks, and then through the newspaper reading room. Open the doors to the historical collection and there, at the back of the room, high on a bookshelf, she sits – *Hesper, the Evening Star* (fig. 2.1). Dating to 1851–52, the marble bust was conceived of, modelled, and carved by Hosmer when she was twenty-one years old, in her backyard studio at her family home in Watertown.110

The location of the bust today is somewhat obscure, and so is the significance of *Hesper*’s genesis and reception. Scholarly chroniclers of Hosmer’s life and work tend to skip over her earliest original creation, and when one views the bust, it is not difficult to see why. It appears to be a work of artistic juvenilia, technically accomplished in terms of the carving but compositionally awkward (fig. 2.2). The virtuosity of the hairstyle and headdress is undermined by the bust’s more perplexing qualities. We are not sure if *Hesper* is meant to be a mature woman or an adolescent girl. The face has a heavy and rather androgynous quality, with leaden features and a slightly oversized nose. More jarringly, the head and neck sit on small, childlike shoulders that terminate abruptly and do not appear to offer enough support

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110 Many works of American neoclassical sculpture were created for and exhibited in libraries, including Hosmer’s later work *Beatrice Cenci* (1856), which was commissioned for the St. Louis Mercantile Library, where it remains today. *Hesper*, however, was a later donation to the Watertown Free Public Library.
to the nodding head above them. More jarringly still, springing forth from beneath the slim shoulders are two well-rounded girlish breasts, which seem threatened by the sharp edge of the crescent moon rising up to meet them. Altogether the bust is unresolved, even somewhat alarming in its physical discrepancies.

Given Hesper’s compositional confusion, it is tempting to touch lightly on the bust as a problematic work by a talented provincial beginner. Rather, why not move on to Hosmer’s far more successful busts, which she produced in 1854 after moving to Rome, depicting the mythological figures of Daphne and Medusa (figs. 2.3 and 2.4)? Nearly all previous commentary on Harriet Hosmer has done just that. But I will take a closer look at Hesper and, in so doing, argue that Hosmer created a conceptually sophisticated work of art therein. As I will demonstrate, she drew on popular contemporary poetry, the most admired marble depictions of her day of female mythological figures, and ephemeral visual culture, including photography, for her conception of Hesper. The resulting work reflected two equally important elements: Hosmer’s own androgynous tendencies and a new interest in, and fascination with, androgynous females more generally in circa 1850 America. At the same time, however, Hosmer incorporated into the bust more traditional and socially sanctioned sentimental elements. Thanks to Hosmer’s apparently conscious manipulations, her neoclassical bust of Hesper was a remarkably contemporary work that, though silent, voiced many of the enthusiasms and anxieties of its female spectators.

**Hesper, Hosmer, and Their Boston Admirers**

To twenty-first-century eyes, the bust of *Hesper* appears awkward and off-putting, to be sure. Remarkably enough, however, Hosmer’s first work of independent sculpture was greatly admired in her day, especially by middle-class New England women. Indeed, *Hesper* gleaned not only positive comments but glowing praise. Lydia Maria Child (1802–80), the famous American novelist and abolitionist, deemed *Hesper* a “beautiful production of Miss Hosmer’s hand and soul.” L. Maria Child, “Harriet E. [sic] Hosmer: A Biographical Sketch,” *The Ladies’ Repository* 21 (January 1861): 4. Child refers to her *New York Tribune* article and quotes from it in this later biographical account of Hosmer’s career. Women’s rights activist and abolitionist Caroline Healey Dall declared that Hesper was “one of the most beautiful works of art, ever produced upon this continent.” L. Maria Child, “Harriet E. [sic] Hosmer: A Biographical Sketch,” *The Ladies’ Repository* 21 (January 1861): 4. Women’s rights activist and abolitionist Caroline Healey Dall declared that Hesper was “one of the most beautiful works of art, ever produced upon this continent.”113 And Ellen Clark, a childhood friend of Hosmer’s, later recalled that *Hesper* was “one of the most beautiful sights I ever saw, in marble, certainly the best.”114

The three women represent a range of ages and positions in society – in 1852, Lydia Maria Child was fifty years old, a well-established national figure; Caroline Healey Dall was thirty and gaining prominence in the public eye; and Ellen Clark was likely in her late teens or early twenties, living a private life. Despite the bust’s leaden quality and its unsettling contrast between the heavy, almost masculine face and the sprightly breasts, the three commentators on *Hesper* considered it a work worthy of high praise, insisting on its feminine “beauty.” This section will demonstrate that the women’s support for *Hesper* stems from two key – and counterintuitive – contemporary phenomena peculiar to the first half of the nineteenth century. The first was a tendency on the part of women to express themselves using highly emotional or sentimental rhetoric. The second was a newly emerging interest in

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114 B. A. (Didama) White, *Three Holes in the Chimney, or, a Scattered Family* (Waltham, MA: Rice & Drake, 1886), 35.
healthy, boyish women, who by their very nature contradicted the typology of sentimentalism typically enforced in the feminine sphere during the era.

Child was the first to go on record with her admiration for Hesper. Invited by Hosmer’s father in the summer of 1852 to view the work in his daughter’s home studio, Child immediately submitted an unsigned letter to the *New York Tribune*. There she announced to readers the birth of “A New Star in the Arts” (an obvious play on the subject of the bust), and described *Hesper* thus:

> This beautiful production of Miss Hosmer’s hand and soul has the face of a lovely maiden gently falling asleep to the sound of distant music. Her hair is gracefully arranged and intertwined with capsules of the poppy. A polished star gleams on her forehead, and under her breast lies the crescent moon. The hush of evening breathes from the serene countenance and the heavily-drooping eyelids . . . . The mechanical execution of this bust seemed to me worthy of its lovely and life-like expression. The swell of cheek and breast is like pure, young, healthy flesh; and the muscles of the beautiful mouth are so delicately cut, that it seems like a thing that breathes. ¹¹⁵

The formidable Child’s support for Hosmer has not gone unnoticed by scholars. In fact, one might say that Child’s enthusiastic advocacy of Hosmer’s early work has proven to be of more interest to scholars than the sculpture that precipitated it. Several commentators point out that Child held up Hosmer’s early artistic accomplishment as a symbol of women’s capacity for public accomplishment more generally. ¹¹⁶ Less remarked upon, however, is the

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lush prose style employed by Child in her description of Hesper. While she emphasizes the bust’s ethereal qualities, she also focuses on the sensuous nature of the figure. She stresses both its ideal beauty and its lifelikeness. Hesper is both soulful and fleshy. Her breasts, eyelids, cheeks, and mouth captivate Child – in fact, her description of the bust is not unlike the descriptions of female mythological figures by male commentators that we encountered in chapter one. What would inspire such strongly emotive prose from this married, middle-aged woman, directed at a youthful female figure in marble?

To begin, Child’s praise for Hesper exemplifies a lavish rhetorical style that flourished throughout the nineteenth century, one that follows on the eighteenth-century discourse around sensibility instigated by the British philosopher John Locke (1632–1704). In the eighteenth century, sensibility emphasized feelings over rational thought. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, sensibility had transmuted into sentimentality, a florid, emotional, and heartfelt rhetorical style that was intended to foreground the sincerity of the speaker or writer. Through this framework, we can understand that Child’s words were intended to sound as if they came straight from the heart, intentionally expressing an open, unmediated, and even ardent response to the bust.

We can further nuance our understanding of Child’s prose style through the work of Sharon Marcus, discussed in chapter one. Marcus identified among mid-nineteenth-century women a particular form of female homoerotics that operated independently of a heterosexual binary. Child’s vaguely erotic descriptions of the physical attributes of the bust – the “swell of cheek and breast . . . like pure, young, healthy flesh,” “the beautiful mouth” – stem from a cultural

117 For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon, see Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).
construct that did not forbid, and indeed encouraged, women’s appreciation of feminine beauty.\textsuperscript{118}

Child was not the only woman to praise Hesper and her creator in sentimental terms. In 1852 The Liberator, an abolitionist newspaper produced in Boston, published a letter from Caroline Healey Dall, then living in Toronto, addressed to Mrs. P. W. Davis.\textsuperscript{119} Following several paragraphs in which Dall sets out her views on the actual and potential achievements of women in the period, she notes,

> It is a significant fact, that, during the past year, one of the most beautiful works of art, ever produced upon this continent, has been conceived and executed by a woman under twenty-one, gone now to perfect her powers in sunny Italy. The bust of Hesper, representing a fair woman, falling asleep to the sound of distant music, crowned with poppies, and bearing a star upon its forehead, speaks with a thousand voices to the human soul. Its eyelids are “drooped in duty / To the law of their own beauty,” and beneath the full breasts and the pensile head hangs waiting the crescent moon.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} The phenomenon of mid-nineteenth-century American women expressing their strong affection for other women through what appear to be love letters was first explored in an important article in 1975 by the historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg. Smith-Rosenberg examined the contents of letters and diaries emanating from thirty-five families and dating from the 1760s to the 1880s. She found that for more than a century, a consistent prose style emerged in communications between close female friends, one that we would today expect to be employed by intimate lovers. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” Signs \textbf{1} (Autumn 1975). The ongoing relevance of Smith-Rosenberg’s analysis and interpretation was upheld in the Autumn 2000 \textit{Journal of Women’s History} (vol. 12), which reappraised her article and confirmed its continuing validity. In 2007 Sharon Marcus refined Smith-Rosenberg’s analysis in her study of female friendships and female marriage in the nineteenth century, by theorizing a form of female homoerotics unique to the period and explaining that “Victorian society accepted female homoeroticism as a component of respectable womanhood and encouraged women and girls to desire, scrutinize, and handle simulacra of alluring femininity.” See Sharon Marcus, \textit{Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 112.

\textsuperscript{119} Paulina Wright Davis would go on to found the feminist newspaper The Una in 1853.

\textsuperscript{120} Dall, “To Mrs. P. W. Davies,” 167. Helen Deese has noted that the quotation in Dall’s article is a modification of some lines from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem “A Portrait.” See \textit{Selected Journals of
Dall’s polished prose is obviously intended, like that of Child, to draw the public’s attention to an accomplished young New England woman through a sincere and sentimental expression of her own appreciation of *Hesper*. She positions *Hesper* as an outstanding specimen of North American art, thus setting it in a league with, or even above, the accomplishments of more established artists who had come before her. *Hesper* communicates directly with the human soul, not merely with one voice but with “a thousand.” Dall’s lavish response to the bust, while sounding strained to our ears, was in keeping with the passionate prose of her day, in which overstatement was a natural mode of expression and exaggeration a sign of sincerity.

More interesting, however, is a journal entry from 1852, in which Dall describes her first meeting with Hosmer, the meeting that inspired her letter to *The Liberator*. Here we find Dall’s response not just to *Hesper* but to Hosmer herself. The entry offers a more personal and less polemical reaction to the young sculptor and her first creation, capturing the writer’s fresh and unmediated response to their meeting. Here we find Harriet Hosmer to be an unorthodox young woman who contradicts the central tenets of the nineteenth-century “Cult of True Womanhood” – and we can detect both the threat and the attraction this circumstance holds for Dall.

On Sunday, August 8, Dall travelled to the Hosmer home in Watertown from nearby Newton Corner. As the entry indicates, Hosmer was in the process of finishing *Hesper* for an exhibition to be held later in the month at H. D. Cotton, the stationery store in Boston.\(^\text{121}\)

\(^{121}\) Caroline Healey Dall, vol. 1, 1838–1855, ed. Helen R. Deese (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2006), 383n17. As noted in chapter 1, H. D. Cotton was a popular location for sculpture exhibitions in Boston.
That evening Dall recorded the details of her first meeting with Hosmer in her journal. She begins with a summary of what she had heard about Hosmer in advance of their meeting:

After tea, Mary had the horse harnessed, and took me in spite of my headache, through a beautiful wooded dell to see Hatty Hosmer, a young sculptress of 21 . . . . I had heard of her, as a masculine eccentric girl who climbed a pine tree to the height of forty feet, saw in hand & sawed off the branch that held a scarce nest, who drew the bolt between two rail-road cars which contained a party of friends, whom she wished to detain overnight – & afterwards had to pay $50 for the joke.¹²²

Dall’s introductory remarks about Hosmer do not dwell on the young woman’s status as budding sculptor but rather on her reputation as a mischievous imp. What intrigues Dall are Hosmer’s youthful exploits, which she recounts almost as if they were tall tales. Yet as soon as she records her advance knowledge of Hosmer’s boyish ways, Dall seems to smooth them over, writing, “I knew there must be some life under all this.”¹²³ It is unclear what Dall means, but the next sentences provide an answer: she is looking for signs of feminine life, which Hosmer at first appears to exhibit when they meet in person: “She came dancing to the door to meet us – sweet & fresh as a Hebe on this beautiful Sabbath eveg [sic].” However, Dall seems unconvinced by her own association of Hosmer with the Greek goddess of youth, for Hosmer is too short, too stocky, and too sturdy: “Under the middle size, she is too plump to suit the American idea of beauty, and there is a masculine freedom in the movement of lower limbs, which tended to disenchant.”¹²⁴ Despite these flaws, however, Dall is entirely captivated by the young woman before her: “Still she took my heart by storm. In the crisp

¹²² Dall, Selected Journals, 382.
¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Ibid.
curl of her light brown hair, and the frank clearness of her blue eyes, I saw a soul that mated mine.”

In her private writing, as in her public journalism, Dall calls upon sentimental tropes in an effort to express her observations about and responses to the young sculptor. Although she has met Hosmer only briefly, she is drawn to the younger woman and is attempting in her diary to encapsulate her feelings. Like other women of her period, she describes her new female friendship in deeply romantic terms. But what is different here is that Dall openly expresses her appreciation of Hosmer’s evident androgynous characteristics.

As the entry continues, Dall emphasizes Hosmer’s predilection for boyish behaviour, as reflected in the young woman’s “study”:

In her study, was a fine case of insects, prepared by herself filling the whole of one large pier. Two shelves of bird’s [sic] nests of her own collecting filled two of the windows. Several skeletons of animals of her own mounting, were ranged about the room, & the walls were hung with . . . anatomical studies.

Dall’s account of Hosmer’s collections provides clear evidence for what, we might imagine, would have been rather outlandish behaviour for the average mid-nineteenth-century girl: she collected and mounted insects and animals, stole birds’ nests from frighteningly tall trees, and undoubtedly knew how to shoot a gun, for how else would she have come by the animals on display? Given Dall’s objections to Hosmer’s rather masculine physical demeanour, noted above, one might expect that her wild ways would disappoint or even scandalize the writer. And yet, in the end, it is the young woman’s robustness that Dall finds so appealing: “I

\(^{125}\) Ibid.

\(^{126}\) Ibid.
parted from Hatty with regret. Her healthy magnetism seemed to take hold of me, & I gave her a kiss, & told her I should look to the East for the Avatar. “

Hosmer’s energetic, eccentric, and androgynous personality and her first independent work of sculpture also made a strong impression on another Boston-area woman, whose reaction is recounted in a memoir published in 1886. Ellen Clark, who lived in Watertown as a girl, tells her own children about her encounter with Hosmer and _Hesper_ at the sculptor’s home studio in the summer of 1852. Clark notes that Dr. Hosmer, Harriet’s father, was her family’s physician. As well, her older brother went to elementary school with Harriet. No doubt curious to know what their girlhood friend had been up to, Clark and others responded favourably to an invitation to the Hosmer home on Shingle Street. With Harriet as their guide, first came a tour of the house, then a visit to the studio. Like Dall, Clark dwells on Hosmer’s study/museum, emphasizing her “peculiar” activities:

> Miss Hosmer had determined to go to the old country and complete her studies . . . so a short time before she left her native town she opened her house and studio to the public, which was a very happy thought. Her father’s house had a long hall passing through the centre; on the left hand side was the doctor’s office, then the staircase, then a large room which she had fitted up as a museum. Here she told us were articles which she had collected herself, and pointing to a nest with eggs in it, she said: “I got this in Concord, Mass.; it was on the highest tree for miles around; this was at the top, and I got it at sunrise, too.” She had ducks, fowls of every description in our climate, insects, curious twigs and branches, grasses, ferns, in

\[127\] Ibid., 383.
fact every thing a resolute girl of her peculiar taste and with such a venturesome
spirit might collect. Clark’s description builds on that of Dall, providing us with a vivid impression of Hosmer’s boisterous personality and her gift for hyperbole. Even with the passing of more than thirty years, Clark is able to recall and reconstruct Hosmer’s staccato, swaggering speech. It is easy to envision the confident young woman, hands on hips, regaling her audience with her outlandish exploits.

As Clark reflects upon her experience in the Hosmer house, she elevates the “study,” as Dall called it, to a “museum” filled with evidence of her host’s outdoor adventures. The term reinforces the notion, merely suggested by Dall, that this special room in the house functioned as a shrine to Hatty’s unconventional hobbies and interests, a shrine clearly supported by her father. Clark confirms that the girl had the keen backing of her indulgent father, as she continues with her description of her visit: “Her father had given her a small, square building fixed up especially for her use, quite a little way from the house among the trees; here she could use her great hammer and tools with which she worked unmolested.” As the group entered the studio, Hosmer’s showboating escalated to an even higher level. Surrounded by the heavy tools she required to carve a marble block into a finished work, Hosmer whisked a dark cover from her creation, dramatically unveiling it to her waiting audience:

We stepped into the room or shop, as it looked to be, as on the bench were the large hammers and different tools. “And now, ladies,” she said, “I will show you what I have been about the last few months,” and stepping up to something which was in

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128 White, Three Holes, 35.
the centre of the room, she took hold of a dark cloth and lifted it off, and thus unveiled to our astonished gaze one of the most beautiful sights I ever saw, in marble, certainly the best. On a rough pedestal, which she had fixed herself, was placed a beautiful statue which she had made out of a rough slab of marble – a life-size bust which she called “The Goddess of Sleep.” Around the head was a wreath of poppies, most beautifully wrought, so delicate one could see between each leaf, bud and stem.129

Like Dall, Clark is not only awed by the “beauty” of Hesper, she is fascinated by the bold and “venturesome spirit” of Hosmer. Together, Dall and Clark express delight in a young woman whose behaviour seemingly transgressed all acceptable codes of mid-nineteenth-century female conduct. Their response requires deeper investigation.

**Harriet Hosmer: “Adventure Feminist”**

Dall’s observation about Hosmer’s “healthy magnetism” provides us with a key to the young sculptor’s appeal for the two women who visited her home in 1852. For, at just this moment in American antebellum history, a new kind of woman was taking centre stage – what we might call an androgynous type. The rationale for promotion of the new type was to help bring about better health in a languishing female population.

To this point, the nineteenth-century “Cult of True Womanhood” had dictated that mothers and their female offspring remained largely within the confines of the domestic sphere. As we saw in chapter one, caring for the home could involve some degree of public activity, such as shopping. Travelling and visiting relatives also took up a great deal of time. But by

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129 Ibid., 35–36.
and large, at least during the first part of the century, women’s physical activity was limited, and deliberately so. In this patriarchal society, women were considered the weaker of the two sexes mentally. Moreover, the social order promoted physical weakness in women and therefore encouraged indolent behaviour. Over time, though, physical inactivity combined with a poor diet resulted in a health crisis in antebellum America. Women and their offspring became ill, leading to premature deaths. As a consequence, a new way of thinking emerged in the 1840s and 1850s: health advocates and women’s magazines began to encourage girls and women to become more physically active in order to become more robust.¹³⁰

As a child, Harriet Hosmer benefited directly from the new way of thinking about women and health – of necessity. Both her mother and older sister died when Hosmer was a girl. Determined to save the life of his only surviving family member, her physician father prescribed an active lifestyle for his daughter. He encouraged Hatty to boat, swim, run, and hunt. From Hosmer’s day down to our own, Dr. Hosmer’s decision to promote a vigorous lifestyle for his daughter has often been presented by writers on the sculptor as a rare course of action, resulting in a wild girl, wildly different from her female peers. Yet when seen in the light of antebellum women’s health reform, Dr. Hosmer’s dictates, while perhaps in the vanguard, were not entirely without precedent. And therefore Hosmer’s great love for boyish adventures – which we see reflected clearly in the above accounts by Dall and Clark – exemplified simultaneously an atypical and a newly desirable form of female bearing.

Michelle Ann Abate connects antebellum health reform with the emergence of the “tomboy” type, which quickly became a popular protagonist in American fiction. Jo March is no doubt

today’s best-known exemplar of the mid-nineteenth-century tomboy. However, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* was published in 1868. Jo was far from the first such specimen to appear in fiction, and some of her predecessors were a great deal more adventurous than she. By tracking the emergence of young female tomboys in mid-nineteenth-century American fiction, we can demarcate a shift during the period from a sentimental to an androgynous typology.

During the mid-nineteenth century, countless novels known as works of “domestic fiction” were written by American women for American women. Many of these novels sat squarely in the domain of sentimentalism; their protagonists acted as pious exemplars in order to school female readers in proper womanly behaviour. However, they were not the only novels generated for a female readership during the period; indeed, a far more sensational genre existed in which women protagonists flouted society’s conventions, and were admired for it. Within this body of work, we find female warriors and sailors, frontierswomen, and other androgynous females. Because of their unconventional and active lives, they often dressed as men, and they have subsequently been dubbed “adventure feminists.” They too, however, functioned as moral exemplars in their own right. Both the pious protagonist and the androgynous adventurer – and a range of figures in between – captivated and instructed women readers of the era.131

One of the first “adventure feminists” to enthrall the American public was a girl named Capitola Black. She appeared in Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth’s wildly popular novel *The

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Hidden Hand, published in 1859. But a tomboyish – or at least mildly androgynous – female protagonist had also appeared in a book by Mrs. Southworth, The Curse of Clifton, published in serialized form in 1852. The novel features a fourteen-year-old protagonist by the name of Kate Kavanaugh. An impoverished and hard-working shepherdess, Kate has a kind of “rugged beauty” that affords her a special appeal. When we first meet Kate, she helps rescue two young men from a pelting rainstorm. She cares for their horses, feeds the men, and mends their clothes. Finally, in a moment of repose, Kate sits knitting. She is closely observed by one of the young men, Captain Clifton. At first put off by the girl’s sunburnt skin and coarse clothing, he reconsiders as he watches Kate work:

He saw that her features, though certainly not beautiful or classical, were even of a higher order of physiognomy, combining the rarest elements of power and goodness. The broad and massive forehead, straight nose, and square, firm jaws, were the strong and ugly features – the rugged frame work [sic], as it were, of her countenance, and indicated great force of character. But her hair, eyes, and lips were beautiful. Her hair, of rich dark brown, with golden lights, rippled around her forehead, shading and softening its stern strength. Her eyes, large and shadowy, with drooping lashes, and her lips sweetly curved, full, and pensively closed, suggested a profound depth of tenderness.

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133 This is Joanne Dobson’s remark. I was first alerted to The Curse of Clifton in her introduction to Southworth’s The Hidden Hand. See E. D. E. N. Southworth, The Hidden Hand, or Capitola, the Madcap (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), xxii.
Southworth’s description of Kate combines feminine and masculine attributes. Throughout the novel, she depicts Kate as a resourceful and intelligent young woman who takes on many manly pursuits, including running two plantations when her husband is absent. *The Curse of Clifton* was Southworth’s best-loved work before the publication of *The Hidden Hand* in 1859. With the advent of Kate Kavanaugh, the American public had before them a prototype of the emerging tomboy figure, a figure who fascinated them and was cause for admiration.

To help understand Harriet Hosmer’s appeal for her Boston admirers in 1852 – the same year *The Curse of Clifton* was being serialized – it is instructive to compare Southworth’s description of Kate with a drawing of Hosmer from the same period (fig. 2.5). Like Kate, Hatty Hosmer has a broad forehead, a straight nose, and a rather square jaw. At the same time, her features are softened somewhat by the curls of her brown hair. Her eyes are large, her lips are closed, and she stares out at the viewer rather pensively. This is not to suggest that the figure of Kate was in any way modelled on Hosmer, but rather to point out that not only Hosmer’s behaviour but also her appearance conformed to a new type of young woman, one that was gaining popularity within the larger cultural milieu – that is, an androgynous young woman such as Kate. For Dall and Clark, visiting Hosmer in 1852 must have been like meeting the fictional character of Kate Kavanaugh in the flesh.

If Harriet Hosmer can be understood as a living, breathing specimen of the new “adventure feminist” type, we might ask if she was aware of herself filling such a role. Was her personal

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136 For another view on mid-nineteenth-century novels with unconventional female protagonists, see Dobson, “Hidden Hand.”
self-fashioning, as seen through the eyes of Dall and Clark, entirely unconscious, a carefully calibrated performance, or a bit of both? Certainly it seems from Dall’s and Clark’s descriptions that Hosmer aimed to make a strong impression on her guests. From the tour of the house emphasizing her personal “museum” to the fanfare with which she unveiled the bust of Hesper in her studio, Hosmer put on an accomplished show that comingled gentility with eccentricity. But if Hosmer was aware of the power of her own performativity, how did she become so self-aware at such a young age? To arrive at an answer, we need to consider how and where Hosmer spent her teenage and young adult years – and, more important, with whom. From the ages of sixteen to twenty-one, Hosmer encountered a number of individuals, both male and female, who appreciated and undoubtedly encouraged her tomboyish tendencies. Taken together, these individuals can be understood as important catalysts for Hosmer’s bold new “adventure feminist” persona.

We will start with Hosmer’s late adolescent years. As Dall recounts in her journal, the young sculptor had gained some measure of local infamy for her exploits as a child. Dr. Hosmer wanted his daughter to strengthen her mind and body through free and exuberant outdoor activities. But her own mischievous nature often got the better of her, and she became embroiled in some local (albeit minor) scandals. Finally she proved too much for her father to handle, so when she turned sixteen, Dr. Hosmer arranged for her to attend a private boarding school in Lenox, Massachusetts, run by Mrs. Elizabeth Sedgwick. She was in residence at Mrs. Sedgwick’s school for three years. There Hosmer encountered two figures that we can safely assume helped to fire up her natural tendencies towards attention-seeking and androgyne.
After her August meeting with Hosmer, Dall wrote in her journal, “It occurred to me that Mrs. Butler must have exercised a great influence over Hatty & was perhaps responsible for many of her eccentricities.”

Who was Mrs. Butler? This was the married name of Frances Anne Kemble (1809–93), the British-born actress and niece of the great tragedienne Sarah Siddons (1755–1831). Fanny Kemble resided on and off in Lenox during Hosmer’s years there. The British actress had moved to the United States upon her marriage in the 1830s, but the union failed. In subsequent years Kemble indulged in more and more unconventional behaviour and dress, eventually becoming an outcast in American society. Nonetheless, the Sedgwick family stood by her, and therefore she found a refuge in Lenox. In her biography of Harriet Hosmer, Dolly Sherwood includes a reproduction of a lithograph portraying a young and dewy Kemble (fig. 2.6). In the lithograph Kemble is depicted as an ideal specimen of femininity. The inclusion of the image in a biography of Harriet Hosmer is deceiving. By the time Kemble entered Hosmer’s life, she was a stout, middle-aged woman who wore a male-inflected style of clothing called “alternative dress,” as we see in an undated carte-de-visite (fig. 2.7). She was also notorious for donning men’s clothing.

Kemble met regularly with students from Mrs. Sedgwick’s school. The actress read Shakespeare’s plays to the Lenox students; furthermore, the girls themselves participated frequently in amateur theatricals, with her encouragement. Hosmer exhibited a particular star quality and became a great favourite of Kemble’s. Dall was therefore correct in her assumption that Kemble, a woman who regularly transgressed gender boundaries, could have

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137 Dall, Selected Journals, 383.
139 For more on “alternative dress,” see chapter 3. For an account of Fanny Kemble’s life and career, see Deirdre David, Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
been partly responsible for Hosmer’s “eccentricities” – and also her flair for performance. Matilda Hays, whose profile of Hosmer was published in 1858, confirms this view: “Mrs. Fanny Kemble[’s] influence [on Hosmer] tended to strengthen and develop her already decided tastes and predilections.”

During the same period, the novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789–1867) – Elizabeth Sedgwick’s sister-in-law – also took a special interest in Hosmer. Surely it is worth pointing out that Sedgwick is acknowledged to have written one of the first novels featuring an “adventure feminist” protagonist – *Hope Leslie*, published in 1827. We can assume, then, that she too must have been fascinated by the bold and lively being thrust into their midst, and that she too would have valued and encouraged Hosmer’s unconventional behaviour.

Hosmer returned to her hometown in 1849, at the age of nineteen, and with the avid support of her Lenox mentors, she decided to pursue formal training as a sculptor. Up until then, drawing lessons, attempts at modelling in clay, and a fascination with dissection and anatomy had provided some basic groundwork for Hosmer’s artistic aspirations. However, there is nothing in the commentary about Hosmer’s girlhood years to indicate that she would have had any direct experience with the process of creating a full-fledged sculpture in the neoclassical style. Now was the time.

As discussed in chapter one, Boston had a lively local economy in sculpture by the late 1840s, with active sculptors’ studios. One local practitioner, Peter Stephenson (1823–61), took Hosmer on as a student in his studio on Tremont Row. Hosmer trained with Stephenson

141 For more on Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s female heroines, see Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, 347–50.
between her return to the Boston area from Lenox in the autumn of 1849 and her departure for St. Louis to study anatomy the following fall. Dall’s journal entry suggests that Hosmer was ensconced in Stephenson’s studio for about three months. In the commentary on Hosmer, Stephenson’s role in her early training has been almost completely overlooked. However, it is likely that the talented sculptor offered his young student all the fundamentals she required to progress from enthusiastic amateur to dedicated professional.

Only seven years older than Hosmer, Stephenson had already demonstrated strong determination to become a professional sculptor by the time she joined him in his studio. Born in Yorkshire, he lived in the United States from the time he was four years old, when his family moved to New York State and then to Michigan. Self-taught as an artist, Stephenson first took up watch-making and cameo-cutting. He eventually moved to Boston, the “Athens of America,” in 1843, at the age of twenty, to make his professional mark. There, through his cameo-cutting, he raised enough money to leave for Rome on a study trip in the early spring of 1845. When he came back to Boston in late 1846, he set up his sculpture studio, where he began to create works modelled on antique prototypes.

Stephenson’s most accomplished sculpture from this period was also to become his best known: The Wounded Indian, which he began in 1848 and completed in 1851 (fig. 2.8). Stephenson obviously modelled his life-sized reclining statue of a heroic but dying American Indian on The Dying Gaul, which he would have been able to study at Rome’s

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142 Dall, Selected, 382.
143 It was not until 1997 that the details of Stephenson’s career, such as they are, came to be mapped out in scholarly circles. That year, in anticipation of the opening of the new Ricau Gallery of American Sculpture at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, H. Nichols B. Clark produced a publication on the collection, including an entry on Stephenson. The Ricau Gallery’s holdings include Stephenson’s The Wounded Indian, now considered one of the most outstanding works of American neoclassical sculpture. See H. Nichols B. Clark, A Marble Quarry: The James H. Ricau Collection of Sculpture at the Chrysler Museum of Art (New York: Hudson Hills Press and Chrysler Museum of Art, 1997), 184–89.
Capitoline Museum, and also as a plaster reproduction at the Boston Athenaeum. Upon completion of *The Wounded Indian*, Stephenson arranged for the work to be exhibited at Balch’s, a shop in Boston, in 1850. The *Wounded Indian* and other works by Stephenson were also exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum. Most notably, in a significant coup for the artist, his *Wounded Indian* represented the United States at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, where it stood near Hiram Powers’s *The Greek Slave*.

After this major international success, Stephenson’s career was confined to Boston, where, despite such early promise, it foundered. Stephenson never gained the patronage he hoped for in his adopted city. And despite a generally cheery nature and promising early success, the sculptor’s life ended prematurely and tragically: Stephenson died in 1861 at thirty-seven after becoming mentally ill and entering an insane asylum. The writer of his obituary speculated that Stephenson died from overwork, because he laboured alone in this studio, without any help from stoncutters or carvers.

When Hosmer entered Stephenson’s studio in 1849, however, his career was on the ascendant. Having returned from his study trip to Rome three years earlier, Stephenson was busily engaged with numerous works directly inspired by his time abroad and was in the process of creating his clay model for *The Wounded Indian*. We cannot be certain what motivated Stephenson to take on Hosmer as a student, but Virginia Penny’s *The Employments of Women* provides a hint. It includes a section on cameo-cutting, in which Penny notes that she has been in communication with Stephenson:

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144 The exhibition of Stephenson’s *Wounded Indian* at Balch’s is mentioned in a poem by an anonymous author, apparently self-published, titled “Boston and Boston People in 1850.” Over the course of the forty-five-page poem, the narrator visits many Boston landmarks and comments on the citizenry, sometimes crossing over into ridicule. The poem has been publicly attributed to Harriet Hosmer since at least 1858. See below for more details. For the reference to Stephenson, see “Boston and Boston People in 1850” (Boston, 1850): 20.

Peter Stephenson, of Boston, had cut in 1853 between 600 and 700 cameo likenesses. He writes me, “Cameo-cutting might be done by girls, especially the finishing process – polishing. When in Italy, some years ago, I employed girls to polish my cameos, and paid from 12 to 50 cents apiece. I think they earned about $1 a day. The employment is not unhealthy, but confining.”

Judging from Stephenson’s note to Penny, he felt comfortable working collaboratively with women.  

It is likely that the talented sculptor offered his young student all the fundamentals she required to begin on her path as a professional sculptor. Under Stephenson’s guidance, Hosmer practised modelling and drawing, and she reportedly produced two works: a head of Byron, modelled in wax, and a bust of a child. Furthermore, since he had been to Rome, we can imagine that Stephenson shared his experiences with Hosmer and inspired her to begin to plan her own journey there. More significantly, she was exposed to a professional sculptor’s studio, where presumably she discovered rather quickly that suitable work clothes were required for the dirty, dusty environment. Eleanor Clark’s recollection of her encounter with Hosmer in her studio in 1852 suggests that Hosmer had indeed devised her own working outfit. Clark tells us that the day of the tour, Hosmer wore a dress of lawn (linen) featuring a brown and white pattern. Yet Clark makes an interesting aside: “Her working suit hung up near the door, and pieces of marble and dust from her work lay around as if she had just finished working.”

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146 Virginia Penny, *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopaedia of Women’s Work* (Boston, 1863), 52.  
147 Penny also suggests sculpture as a career for women, and she holds up Harriet Hosmer as an example. See ibid. 94–96.  
Clark does not say what elements constituted Hosmer’s “working suit.” However, it is possible to determine what Peter Stephenson might have worn in his studio. While unfortunately no portraits of Stephenson have come down to us, images from the era of other sculptors in their working clothes have survived, and we will consider two. The first is a photograph dating to circa 1861 of Hiram Powers, the American sculptor who lived and worked in Florence. In the image he poses beside his bust Proserpine, dressed in his work clothes (fig. 2.9). Starting from the top and moving downward, we can see that Powers covers his hair with a cylindrical cap that does not sit flat, like a typical artist’s beret, but stands upright all the way around at a uniform height. He sports a white shirt with a tie at the neck. Over the shirt is a dark waistcoat, and over that, a light, knee-length coat. Long pants puddle around his boots. A painting by Tompkins H. Matteson (1813–84) from 1857 depicts the Albany, New York, studio of Erastus Dow Palmer (1817–1904). Shown modelling a clay bust, the New York sculptor is dressed in a similar fashion to Powers, with a circular cap on his head, a knee-length jacket, and long trousers falling over his boots (fig. 2.10).

Stephenson most likely combined similar components for his working outfit, and as such would have provided a model for Hosmer. Given her predilection for boyish mannerisms, Hosmer presumably would have had no qualms about adopting the standard sculptor’s outfit for her own purposes. And indeed, after she moved to Rome in 1852, Hosmer sat for a portrait in which she wore her working outfit, and all the expected elements are there: round cap, white shirt, waistcoat, and jacket, although she appears to have substituted a heavy skirt for the long pants (fig. 2.11). I will analyse this portrait of Hosmer in more detail in chapter three, but for the moment I will simply note that the photograph demonstrates that Hosmer,
when dressed for work, strongly asserted a boyish side. Thus, under Stephenson’s aegis, she took an important step in developing an androgynous professional identity.

As we can see, by 1850 Hosmer had experienced informal theatrical training, exposure to a woman who dressed in male clothing, contact with the woman known for the earliest American “adventure feminist” novel, training as a professional sculptor, and the opportunity to devise androgynous studio dress. Still another formative event in her life occurred that year. The aspiring sculptor knew that she needed to study anatomy to excel in her field. The Boston medical school refused to allow her to attend anatomy classes, so arrangements were made for her to study anatomy in St. Louis. She arrived in that city in the fall of 1850. There she stayed with the family of Cornelia Crow (1833–1922), a friend from her Lenox days, and took anatomy lessons with Professor J. N. McDowell, who had previously taught anatomy to Hiram Powers and Shobal Clevenger, both native sons of Ohio.

Upon the completion of her anatomy studies, in early 1851, we first find signs of Hosmer’s development into a true “adventure feminist,” and her adeptness at performing the role. She decided that she would travel both north and south on the Mississippi by steamboat. An incident from Hosmer’s northbound trip, described forty years later by a fascinated observer, makes it obvious that she knew precisely how to play the role of the “adventure feminist” and to attract the maximum amount of attention for her performance. In 1888 a Lansing, Iowa, man wrote of her visit to the vicinity:

Near this place is the highest bluff in the valley of the great Mississippi. It has an elevation of five hundred feet and is named Mount Hosmer, from an old-time association with Harriet Hosmer, the world-renowned sculptor. The affair was a
romantic one and imbued with the individuality of the artist . . . Miss Hosmer was then a gay, romping, athletic schoolgirl. All that existed of our beautiful little town of Lansing was the pine wood of which is it built, then in process of growth in the virgin forest. During her ascent of the river, as the steamboat was nearing the tall, precipitous height, several young men of the party boasted they could soon reach the top, and said that if ladies were not so awkward in climbing, they would propose a match. Miss Hosmer proffered a wager that she could reach the summit more quickly than any of them, whereupon the captain “tied up” the boat and they went on shore. The race was made, and Miss Hosmer was the victor.150

As a consequence of the race, the mountain was deemed “Mount Hosmer,” the name it retains to this day. The writer goes on to note that at this stage in her life, Hosmer was not yet famous, but “known only to those whom she knew.”151 Yet she obviously made an impression on the commentator, and it is not difficult to see why. In the Iowa wilderness, a young woman challenged a group of boys at their own game, made a bet that she could beat them, raced up a steep incline that she had never experienced before, charged through trees and underbrush, and won! In addition to this feat, Hosmer also met with local Indian tribes and, reportedly, smoked a peace pipe with them.152 She was indeed a larger-than-life character when she wanted to be, intriguing to friends and strangers alike. But as we will see in the following section, as a young woman in her early twenties, Hosmer’s performance was not consistent. Rather, she pivoted between a persona with a sensitive and sentimental soul and an assertively androgynous self.

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151 Ibid., 13.
152 Ibid., 11.
The Two Faces of Harriet Hosmer

In February 1851, on her steamboat trip down the Mississippi, Hosmer wrote to Cornelia Crow back in St. Louis. In her correspondence with her good friend, she drops all pretense of being an “adventure feminist” and fashions herself instead as an articulate and refined young woman who is rather fatigued by the trials of her boat trip:

We were aground not five minutes after we started, but we got off during the night. We have been so several times since, but as there is a barge alongside to take off the freight in such cases, the delay is not great. We are all well and happy enough, though tired to death with being on any kind of a boat for so long. I shall not go to Galveston, for I want to get home and to studying.  

Later in November, when Hosmer was back in Watertown, she sent another letter to Cornelia. Here an even more sensitive, sentimental, and artistic side of Hosmer’s personality presents itself. She is discussing her regular trips into Boston, where she takes in the local cultural opportunities that present themselves:

You can’t imagine how delightful are the musical rehearsals in Boston every Friday afternoon – once a week, at least, I am raised to a higher humanity. There is something in fine music that makes one feel nobler and certainly happier. Fridays are my Sabbaths, really my days of rest, for I go first to the Athenaeum and fill my eyes and mind with beauty, then to the Tremont Temple and fill my ears and soul with beauty of another kind, so am I not then literally “drunk with beauty”?  

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153 Ibid., 10–11.
154 Ibid., 14.
Here Hosmer is concerned with transmitting to Cornelia her finely tuned sensibilities, and her appreciation of the music and fine art Boston offered. She describes her regular Friday activities: first she pays a visit to the Boston Athenaeum, where she is able to study that institution’s permanent collection of painting and sculpture (mostly copies of European masterpieces, along with a smattering of work by American artists) and special exhibitions. Then she moves onto the Tremont Temple, a theatre owned by the Baptist Church, presumably taking in music rehearsals for the weekend’s religious services.\textsuperscript{155} Her prose is reminiscent of Caroline Healey Dall’s description of Hesper, discussed earlier, and certainly falls within the same sentimental tradition. While Hesper speaks to the human soul, according to Dall, Hosmer attests that her encounters with art in Boston fill her soul with beauty. Like Dall, Hosmer recalls her experiences through a romantic gauze. Indeed, Hosmer alludes to Lord Byron’s \textit{Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage} through her inclusion of the phrase “drunk with beauty.” She thus signals to her reader that her description of her visits to Boston, and especially the Athenaeum, is a conscious construction, in which she is deliberately emulating both the prose and the sentiment of the Romantic poet. Her imitation of Byron is specific, in that the phrase from his poem refers to the emotional aftermath that Childe Harold experiences after he gazes upon the Venus de’ Medici in Florence’s Uffizi.\textsuperscript{156} In a parallel fashion, Hosmer is discussing her own feelings upon her return from the Boston Athenaeum, which at the time housed copies of several statues of Venus.

But Hosmer aims to demonstrate more than just her feelings about art; she also wants to demonstrate her knowledge, and her knowledge about sculpture in particular. In the same letter Hosmer goes on to engage in her own version of the \textit{paragone} between painting and

\textsuperscript{155} This is the same facility that housed Richard C. King’s studio, discussed in chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{156} George Gordon Byron, \textit{Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage} (London: John Murray, 1842), 219.
sculpture, in which she insists upon the superiority of her chosen métier in pseudo-Winckelmannian terms: “And now I am moved to say a word in favor of sculpture being a far higher art than painting. There is something in the purity of the marble, in the perfect calmness, if one may say so, of a beautiful statue, which cannot be found in painting.”

Over a long paragraph, Hosmer constructs an articulate argument in defence of sculpture over painting. She concludes by stating that paintings are, by and large, easier for the uninformed observer to appreciate, unlike “high sculpture,” which requires a more sophisticated response, presumably from a sophisticated individual such as herself.

In her letter to Cornelia, Hosmer presents herself as a well-educated member of Boston’s bourgeoisie, or at least its aspiring middle class. She demonstrates that she is partaking of all the cultural activities the city offers, and that she has acquired a patina of erudition from her experiences and her related studies. While we know that at this point she was actively planning her trip to Rome to broaden her education and opportunities as a sculptor, she espouses here a sentimental fondness for the city and indicates that it – and presumably its denizens – have provided her with a good and proper foundation for her future plans.

It is rather confounding, then, that just a year before Hosmer praised Boston in her letter to Cornelia, she ridiculed the city in a long satirical poem titled “Boston and Boston People in 1850.” Hosmer (or someone on her behalf) published the poem anonymously in the form of a small booklet. While the printed text has no author’s name attached to it, over the years

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158 Ibid., 15.
159 [Harriet Hosmer], “Boston and Boston People in 1850” (Boston, 1850).
it has been convincingly attributed to the twenty-year-old Hosmer, to the point that it is now catalogued by libraries under her name.160

Hosmer structured the poem as a walking tour around Boston. In her narrator she created a bold, brash, and decidedly androgynous persona that contrasts greatly with the genteel young woman, so admiring of Boston and its cultural offerings, we find in her letters. The narrator, who could be male or female, sees very little of merit in either Boston or its people, instead ridiculing both the city and its populace. Early on the narrator declares, “Coming home, / In Boston I intend to roam. / I freely shall express my views / Of men, and things; and if I choose, / At them shall laugh, as others do . . .”161 And laugh the narrator does, poking fun at a Cambridge student, a woman walking down the street, educators, ministers, lawyers, fashionable women, and the local cultural scene. Indeed, one of the few persons, places, or things to merit praise is a “youthful sculptor” whose monument of “The Dying Indian” is on display at Balch’s, a local store. Although the narrator does not name the sculptor, the title of the work indicates that it was by Peter Stephenson, Hosmer’s sculpture teacher.162 Following the narrator’s praise of Stephenson, though, Boston itself comes in for a lengthy trouncing, primarily as a consequence of the city’s lack of support for the arts – according to our tour guide, Boston’s populace is too mercenary to adequately support working artists.

In the next section the narrator mocks the life of married women, whose most important job in life appears to be shopping, when not taking care of the home or unruly children. Not all

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160 For example, as noted earlier, Hosmer’s friend Matilda Hays wrote a profile of the sculptor that was published in 1858. In it she mentions the poem and writes that, “Justly or unjustly, an anonymous squib upon Boston and Bostonians was . . . attributed to Miss Hosmer.” Given that Hays and Hosmer knew each other well, and that Hosmer presumably sanctioned her comments, we seem to find here confirmation that Hosmer did, indeed, write the poem. See Hays, “Harriet Hosmer,” 299.
161 [Hosmer], “Boston and Boston People,” 6.
162 Ibid., 20.
woman are unappealing, though; indeed, the narrator expresses a distinct preference for the company of women, or at least one in particular: “There is one whom I admire! / No class of females can stand higher, / In my esteem – who am inclined / To friendly be with woman kind.”\textsuperscript{163} The woman who meets with the narrator’s approval eschews the domestic life, preferring “to be a single miss,” “that saint on earth – a good Old Maid.”\textsuperscript{164}

The contrast in writing style and content that we find between Hosmer’s cultivated letters to Cornelia and her aggressive poem is striking. Even more striking is Hosmer’s rhapsodic appreciation for Boston’s cultural scene in her letter to Cordelia and her mocking of the same in her poem about the city. How can the two distinct styles be reconciled? How can two such different and contradictory points of view reside in the same being? And how could Hosmer – even anonymously – express her preference (and presumed desire) for “woman kind” in the public sphere?

First, the question of style. Based on the examples of Hosmer’s letters to Cornelia and the snippet of dialogue that survives from Ellen Clark’s encounter with Hosmer in 1852, I have suggested that Hosmer had a strong command over her ability to express herself according to her personal whims, social and cultural conventions, and contemporary rhetorical styles.

“Boston and Boston People” further attests to her talent in this regard. Here she experiments with another rhetorical model, a form of urban humour published in American books, magazines, and newspapers at the midpoint of the nineteenth century that consciously employed satire to skewer the pretensions of the urban citizenry, especially its elite. As David S. Reynolds explains, “urban humor was produced mainly by popular North-eastern

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 31.
authors who were consciously trying to create a new kind of humor that possessed the subtlety of the British but also the brashness and strangeness of the American.\textsuperscript{165} Taking Reynolds’s formulation into account, it seems that in “Boston and Boston People,” Hosmer consciously worked to combine the model of the Romantic wandering poet – for example, Wordsworth’s seventh book of The Prelude, “Residence in London” – with the “brashness and strangeness” of the particular form of American urban humour identified by Reynolds.\textsuperscript{166}

It is possible, then, that the poem’s harsh (though lighthearted) condemnation of Boston does not necessarily reflect Hosmer’s real feelings about the city. But then, perhaps, neither does the romanticized account she offered to Cornelia in her letter. Rather, what we appear to find here is a young woman whose intelligence and wit allowed her to playfully try out a new style of poetry, peculiar to her time and place, which she did with gusto.

As for the narrator’s declaration of affection for “women kind” – what are we to make of that? Hosmer does not indicate in the poem whether the narrator is male or female, and moreover it was published anonymously, so the gender of the author was obscured. While the putative anonymity of the author might suggest that Hosmer was trying to keep her affections for other women under wraps, it is likely that her “confession” would not have raised eyebrows in any case. In the first instance, we can assume that many people in her Boston circle must have realized she was the author, given that Matilda Hays more or less admits it in her 1858 article. Moreover, there existed in society at the midpoint of the nineteenth-century a tolerance for intimate relations between women, as long as those relationships were conducted with propriety. As Sharon Marcus notes, Charlotte Cushman (1816–76), the

\textsuperscript{165} Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance, 466.
famous American actress and one of Hosmer’s most important mentors, juggled both a hidden affair with a younger woman and a public, socially acceptable “female marriage” in the late 1850s and into the 1860s. Rules of decorum could be overstepped, risking scandal, to be sure, but with a proper understanding of the line that could not be crossed, women had far more latitude in their interpersonal relations and gender role play than we might expect.\footnote{Sharon Marcus, \textit{Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 196–201. For an introduction to Hosmer’s relationship with Charlotte Cushman, see Culkin, \textit{Harriet Hosmer}, 22–24.}

Yet one cannot help but wonder if the chasm between the two sides of Hosmer’s nature sometimes threatened her acceptance among genteel members of antebellum American society. If that is the case, an article in \textit{Godey’s Lady’s Book} possibly showed her a way forward. In April 1852 the magazine ran a brief article about Hosmer’s earlier stay in St. Louis. The article is notable because it emphasizes both her unusual effort to study anatomy and her ladylike demeanour. In a section titled “American Artists at Home,” the editors of \textit{Godey’s} commend Hosmer for her serious and successful study of anatomy. They apparently based their admiration on comments from her teacher, Professor McDowell:

\begin{quote}
While the lectures [on anatomy] were in progress at the medical school, Professor McDowell says that Miss Hosmer sought an interview with him, and stated that she had resolved to cultivate a taste for sculpture; preparatory to which, she desired to understand thoroughly the science of anatomy. She requested therefore to be instructed by him, and promised indefatigable attention to the study of this difficult branch of learning. Struck with the novelty of such a proposition, from a highly
educated young lady, he supposed at first that she was jesting; but, upon being satisfied that she was in earnest, he readily undertook to instruct her.\textsuperscript{168}

Hosmer obviously impressed McDowell with her sincere, serious demeanour, and his faith in her was rewarded: she proved to be such a keen pupil that McDowell declared she was more proficient at anatomy than either Powers or Clevenger. Furthermore, “he paid a glowing compliment to the enthusiasm of her genius, her love of art, her brilliant talents, and the maidenly dignity and purity of her character. He predicted for her a brilliant career as an artist, if she should continue to devote her talents to such pursuits.”\textsuperscript{169} These remarks indicate once again the youthful Hosmer’s chameleon-like ability to emphasize different parts of her character under differing circumstances. It is hard to believe that this is the same person who was described that same year as “a romping, athletic schoolgirl.” Or perhaps Dr. McDowell knew both sides of her nature well and simply decided to emphasize her more traditionally feminine characteristics.

The editors take Dr. McDowell’s views on Hosmer a step further. While she may have been known in Lansing, Iowa, for running up a mountain and smoking a peace pipe, to the magazine editors back east she functions as a paragon of female accomplishment – and not because of her budding career as a sculptor. Rather, the editors remark that what is really impressive about Hosmer’s accomplishment is her success at studying anatomy:

> Whether she does continue to devote herself exclusively to this pursuit of art, so as to win the highest renown, is of less consequence to her sex and to the world than is the example of energy in the pursuit of excellence she has already displayed. She

\textsuperscript{168} “Editors’ Table,” \textit{Godey’s Lady’s Book} 44 (April 1852): 293.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
has shown the superiority of the female mind in the study of anatomy, thus pointing to woman’s true profession in the sciences, viz., the medical. In this science, females will excel whenever they are permitted to enter on the study.¹⁷⁰

The *Godey’s* article, written in the typical sentimental prose of the era, portrays Hosmer as a female exemplar. She is intelligent, educated, and genteel. Her engagement with anatomy is not scandalous; it is instead a serious act that represents new levels of female attainment. What she is not, in the magazine’s account, is a rough and ready “feminist adventurer.” Hosmer’s escapades on the steamboat trip are pointedly ignored in favour of a treatise on her good character and intelligence. Meanwhile, though, she is applauded for taking up a traditionally masculine pursuit (that is to say, studying anatomy). *Godey’s* commentary, then, may have demonstrated to Hosmer that she could – and should – be able to “perform” over a wide spectrum of possible behaviours. She could be a rambunctious tomboy, but should also be a sincere art lover; she could be a “genius” in the study of dead bodies, but should also be a “pure” and “dignified” maiden. She could be a sculptor, but should also be a model of female accomplishment. Androgynous pursuits were acceptable on the part of women – whether in sculpture or in the sciences – as long as they were sugar-coated with feminine virtue and sentimentalism.

The Making of *Hesper*

Harriet Hosmer’s self-awareness – about her desires, her ambitions, and her unconventional persona – is strongly evidenced in the way she employed contemporary rhetorical styles to her own advantage, and in the way she introduced her bust of *Hesper* to her local public. We might ask, then, if such self-awareness, and such an ability to manipulate and merge

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.
contemporary typologies for her own ends, could have been at play in Hosmer’s creation of her bust of *Hesper*. Is it possible that *Hesper’s* awkward composition, noted at the outset of this chapter, was a deliberate construction on the part of Hosmer? In fact, by engaging with important early-nineteenth-century textual and cultural barometers, we can find convincing evidence that Hosmer may well have *deliberately* imbued her bust of *Hesper* with its uneasy mixture of classical, sentimental, and androgynous qualities. In *Hesper* she created a work of art that reflected both the prevailing sentimental and the concomitant androgynous typologies of mid-nineteenth-century America.

Let us begin by reconsidering Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth’s description of the character of Kate Kavanaugh, but now in relation to Hosmer’s bust of *Hesper* (fig 2.2). Like Hosmer herself, the bust of *Hesper* shares physiognomic characteristics with Southworth’s Kate: a broad forehead and a straight nose. The hairstyle can be said to “ripple around the forehead,” adding a softening element. The lips are “sweetly curved,” and most significantly we find, just as in the case of Kate, “eyes, large and shadowy, and drooping lashes.” Southworth’s further remarks about Kate could be applied to the bust as well: “Indeed the brooding brow, the downcast eyes, and the compressed lips seemed to be habitual with her, and gave her an expression of grief and care beyond her years, and of thought and intellect above her station.”

While the drawing of Hosmer we saw earlier and her bust of *Hesper* share physical characteristics with Southworth’s descriptions of Kate, we could not go so far as to say that Hosmer and her Hesper bust bear a strong resemblance to each other. It would be hard to argue that *Hesper* is a literal self-portrait of the far more robust-looking Hosmer. But

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conceptually, it can be agreed, there is a strong similarity; in both the bust and the bust’s creator we find the hybrid of masculine and feminine qualities that Southworth also accords to Kate Kavanaugh. How could Hosmer have come to create such a remarkable amalgamation? As we shall see in the final section of this chapter, she drew upon traditional and contemporary inspirations to develop a marble bust of a female mythological figure that reified both the mid-nineteenth-century fascination with women who acted like men and its insistence that those women retain a pleasing dose of femininity.

To begin, Hosmer needed to find a novel subject for her first work of independent sculpture. Margaret Thorp has characterized American neoclassical sculptors as “literary sculptors,” as much of their subject matter derived from figures that originated in mythology, fiction, or poetry. However, the viewing audience also looked for an original artistic conceit, regardless of the source. It would not do for a mid-nineteenth-century neoclassical sculptor to simply mimic a work of antique sculpture; the artist’s job involved selecting a subject and then depicting it in a new form.

Hosmer, in the artistic fashion of the period, turned to a literary source for her subject matter. Alfred Lord Tennyson’s In Memoriam undoubtedly sparked her notion of portraying Hesper, the Evening Star. Published in 1850, In Memoriam consists of 131 short poems written by Tennyson as a tribute to his deceased friend Arthur Hugh Hallam. In July 1851, writing to Cornelia, Hosmer speaks rhapsodically of her passion for the poem: “I have been learning much of the ‘In Memoriam’ and have lost my wits over it. I think the ‘sad Hesper’ one of the most exquisite poems, containing some of the most beautiful ideas in the English

language.”173 Full of sensibility and sincerity, Hosmer expresses to Cornelia her emotional response to Tennyson’s Hesper, a response that proved to be the foundation for her choice of sentimental subject matter for her first unique marble bust.

But who was Hesper, exactly? In mythological terms, Hesper (or its variation, Hesperus) is the Greek name for the evening star. Thus the figure of Hesper can be understood as a figure of sacrifice, giving up life in order to be reborn as Phosphor, the Morning Star. This is the aspect of the figure that Tennyson plays upon in the section of the poem Hosmer is describing, which begins: “Sad Hesper o’er the buried sun / And ready, thou, to die with him, / Thou watchest all things ever dim / And dimmer, and a glory done.”174 Tennyson’s “sad Hesper” operates as a metaphor for the sense of despair one feels upon the death of a loved one. We might expect that Hosmer would empathize with this section of the poem. While in her correspondence she rarely alluded to her own family tragedy – the death of her mother and two siblings when she was a girl, leaving only Hatty and her father – undoubtedly Tennyson’s poem held particular resonance for her. Her decision to choose the figure of Hesper as the subject of her first original work can thus be tied to its personal meaning for the young artist, as we can assume from the wording of her letter to Cornelia.

Hosmer must have been well aware, however, of another popular, and very romantic, personification of Hesper during the period – one that arose virtually on her doorstep. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the American poet, was during the 1840s and ’50s a professor at Harvard and resident of Cambridge. In 1845 a collection of his poetry, The Belfry of Bruges, was published. Among the poems is a sonnet titled “The Evening Star.” It is dedicated to his

second wife and known to be Longfellow’s only love poem. In Longfellow’s touchingly
romantic tribute to love and marriage, the figure of Hesper is transformed into the
personification of feminine beauty:

Lo! in the painted oriel of the West,
Whose panes the sunken sun incarnadines,
Like a fair lady at her casement, shines
The evening star, the star of love and rest!
And then anon she doth herself divest
Of all her radiant garments, and reclines
Behind the sombre screen of yonder pines,
With slumber and soft dreams of love oppressed.
O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!
My morning and my evening star of love!
My best and gentlest lady! even thus,
As that fair planet in the sky above,
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,
And from thy darkened window fades the light.  

While in Tennyson’s poem Hesper is an amorphous being, a stand-in for a human emotional
condition, Longfellow equates Hesperus with his “best and gentlest lady.” Moreover, the
sonnet hints at the sexual passion shared between husband and wife, thus reinforcing the
heterosexual nature of the relationship between the narrator and the female subject. Hesperus

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is the female beloved, and a figure who conforms readily to the “Cult of True Womanhood,” according to which a woman’s place is in the domestic sphere, wherein she fulfils all the duties of a devoted wife.

While the connection between Hosmer’s Hesper bust and the Tennyson poem has long been acknowledged, the possibility that Hosmer also looked to Longfellow’s poem has heretofore been unremarked on. The conceivable connection, however, speaks to the sculptor’s predilection for marrying topical and contemporary literary sources to her own work – a trait that she exhibited throughout her career. More important, by drawing upon these two contemporary literary sources, Hosmer hit upon a truly original subject for her first independent work. The mythological figure of Hesper had never before been the theme of a work of sculpture, from antiquity onwards.¹⁷⁶

Having come up with such a unique concept for her first original work in marble, how did Hosmer set about to create a physical manifestation? The question becomes more pressing when we realize that she had no sculptural prototypes of Hesper to draw upon. However, as we saw in chapter one, examples of the most popular busts of female mythological figures of the era were available for Hosmer to study in Boston – the putatively antique bust Clytie and Hiram Powers’s Proserpine (figs. 1.3 and 1.4).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Alicia Faxon confirms that “the subject of Hesper appears to be unique to Hosmer, and the sleeping or respiring aspect is also unusual.” See Alicia Faxon, “Images of Women in the Sculpture of Harriet Hosmer,” Woman’s Art Journal 2 (Spring/Summer 1981): 26.

¹⁷⁷ Carol Zastoupil has suggested that another prototype for Hosmer’s Hesper was available to her in Boston: the head of the plaster cast of Michelangelo’s Night, held by the Boston Athenaeum. From a strictly formal standpoint the notion has merit; however, Zastoupil does not pursue the question of androgyny in her brief discussion. I have chosen to confine my discussion to neoclassical busts of female mythological figures in Boston, but certainly Zaspoutil’s observation lends further credence to the notion the Hosmer looked for visual sources in her immediate milieu that would allow her to imbue Hesper with both masculine and feminine qualities, as in the case of Night itself. See Carol Zastoupil, “Boston: The Milieu and Two Sculptors It Produced,William Wetmore Story and Harriet Hosmer” (MA thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1990), 74.
The original bust of Clytie was (and still is) held by the British Museum, but by circa 1850 a number of copies could be found in Boston. Local sculptor John C. King capitalized on the popularity of Clytie by offering copies for sale at his studio, located in the facility that housed the Tremont Temple. While Powers’s Proserpine does not appear to have been in any collections in Boston circa 1850, it was available in photographic form. As discussed in chapter one, the daguerreotype studio of Southworth & Hawes photographed the bust when it was on tour in Boston in 1849, and the studio no doubt exhibited daguerreotypes of the work for years after. We also saw in chapter one that the studio produced daguerreotypes of the bust of Clytie.

We can be certain that Hosmer was very familiar with the Clytie bust. We know from her letter to Cornelia, noted earlier, that she frequented the Tremont Temple every Friday afternoon, so she would probably have noticed the copies of Clytie displayed by John King in his studio. Furthermore, upon returning to Boston from St. Louis, Hosmer took a sculpture class in which she produced a model (either in clay or wax) and then a plaster cast of the Clytie bust. Given that King specialized in producing reproductions of Clytie, it is reasonable to speculate that Hosmer’s classes may have been with King himself.

We can also be confident that Hosmer would have seen Southworth & Hawes’s daguerreotypes of Proserpine and Clytie. Their daguerreotype studio was located in the same building as the studio of her sculpture instructor, Peter Stephenson, at 5½ Tremont Row. An article published in 1896, based on an interview with a then elderly Josiah Hawes, connects Hosmer’s tenure in Stephenson’s studio to the studio of Southworth & Hawes, and shows that the work of the latter attracted the attention of the city’s artists:

178 Sherwood, Harriet Hosmer, American Sculptor, 39.
Tremont Row was the centre for the artists of the city. Here fully one-third of the portrait painters of Boston lived; here, too, were most of the sculptors, several engravers, and a goodly number of art-supply stores. In the building where Southworth and Hawes took their quarters, Greenough and Story both had studios, and in this same building Harriet Hosmer worked. All of the fraternity up and down the Row were deeply interested in the new discovery and were constant visitors at the gallery.\footnote{Mrs. D. T. Davis, “The Daguerreotype in America,” \textit{McClure’s Magazine} 8, no. 1 (November 1896): 4–16. Reprinted in “The Daguerreian Annual 1993,” \url{http://daguerre.org/resource/texts/davis/davis.html} (1995–98). Accessed September 15, 2012. In an essay in \textit{Young America}, Grant Romer suggests that Hosmer had her own studio at 5 ½ Tremont Row, but the evidence indicates that Mrs. Davis’s remark refers to the period when Hosmer was studying with Stephenson. See Grant B. Romer, “‘A High Reputation with All True Artists and Connoisseurs’: The Daguerrian Careers of A. S. Southworth and J. J. Hawes,” in \textit{Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth & Hawes}, ed. Grant B. Romer and Brian Wallis (Göttingen, New York, and Rochester, NY: Steidl, International Center for Photography, and George Eastman House, 2005), 51.}

The writer paints a vivid picture of the scene in Southworth & Hawes’s studio, its showroom crowded with customers and local artists interested in keeping up with the latest photographic innovations of the partners. Like everyone else in Boston, Hosmer must have been fascinated with Southworth & Hawes’s accomplishments – in particular, their daguerreotypes of \textit{Proserpine} and \textit{Clytie}.

By 1851 Southworth & Hawes had specifically positioned itself as a resource for local artists. That year, an advertisement in the \textit{Boston Directory} trumpeted “Something New”: a means for projecting daguerreotype images – in any size desired – onto large sheets of paper. The studio specifically invited artists, “free of expense, [to] avail themselves of the use of this Apparatus to trace outlines from our daguerreotypes.”\footnote{The \textit{Boston Directory for the Year 1851} (Boston: George Adams, 1851), 32.} We can easily imagine Hosmer among them, taking full advantage of Southworth & Hawes’s offer as she developed her...
conception of Hesper, “tracing” the tilted head, the slightly turned shoulders, and the
downcast eyes of the two most popular busts of female mythological figures in the period.

The notion that Hosmer turned to the prototypes of Clytie and Proserpine when developing
her own concept of female mythological busts is confirmed in an article from November
1854, most likely written by Caroline Healey Dall. Cotton’s, a store in Boston, exhibited the
first two works Hosmer created in Rome: her busts Daphne and Medusa. A review of the
exhibition appeared in the Boston Telegraph and was then republished in The Liberator. The
writer comments that aspects of Medusa (fig. 2.4) in particular resemble the famous bust
Clytie and Powers’s Proserpine.\footnote{See “Miss Harriet Hosmer,” The Liberator, November 3, 1854 (reprinted from the Boston Telegraph). Although the review was published anonymously, Dall notes in a journal entry from the same day that she went to a party that evening where she encountered Harriet’s father, Dr. Hosmer, who was “very much pleased to hear my praise of the Daphne & Medusa.” This exchange suggests that Dall may have written the review. See Dall, Selected Journals, 499.} While Hosmer may have had the chance to view both of
these works in Europe, the odds are very good that her familiarity with them came from her
formative years in Boston, where she could examine both at her leisure, in detailed
photographic reproductions at the Southworth & Hawes daguerreotype studio.

The Southworth & Hawes studio would have offered Hosmer more of value than just these
daguerreotypes, however. As detailed in chapter one, the studio attained its greatest renown
for its portraiture. The partners promoted a special type of portrait daguerreotype, one that
appealed to women, known as the “Vignettes or Heads Simply” style. In these images,
women posed in the guise of mythological female figures and, as I have argued, they were
fashioning themselves especially after the busts of Clytie and Proserpine. We can imagine
middle-class Boston women sweeping in and out of the studio as they had their “Vignettes or
Heads Simply” portraits taken. For an eccentric young woman such as Hosmer, raised as a
tomboy and later mentored by unconventional women like Fanny Kemble and Charlotte Cushman, the feminine culture that must have predominated in the Southworth & Hawes studio would have offered her a rare opportunity for immersion in a world rich with sincerity and sentimentality.

A similarly feminine world could be found in the pages of Godey’s Lady’s Book, as we have seen earlier, and it is there that I believe Hosmer discovered another important visual prototype for her bust of Hesper. In January 1850, just when Hosmer may have been starting to develop her ideas for the bust, the magazine published a hand-tinted steel engraving depicting a female personification of the evening star. The illustration accompanied another poem by Longfellow titled “The Evening Star.”182 In this shorter work, the evening star is gender-neutral – Longfellow refers to the star as “it.” However, on a nearby page, readers could admire an illustration of a figure of the Evening Star, floating in the sky on a balcony of what appears to be silver filigree (fig. 2.12). She wears a simple white dress adorned with a necklace of stars. A similar band of stars encircles her head and two smaller bands with stars adorn each wrist. In her left hand she holds a bottle, perhaps containing perfume. As she glances off to one side, her eyes are large, round, and dreamy. Stars float through the air around her, and the glow of a halo surrounds her head. The illustration is rather confounding, as it seems to have nothing in common with Longfellow’s poem. Nonetheless, it is significant, because at this moment the mythological figure of Hesper, the Evening Star, entered the world of nineteenth-century visual culture as an exemplar of female charm and delight, thanks to the frothy concoction of femininity that readers found in the illustration

accompanying Longfellow’s poem.\textsuperscript{183} The Godey’s engraving is a masterful work of contemporary ephemera – a combination of the latest fashion, classical prototypes, and sentimental romanticism.

We cannot know for certain if Hosmer saw the Godey’s illustration. However, a strong case can be made that it was a model for Hosmer’s Hesper. Note the similarity between the long, aquiline nose and the pursed lips below it, the hairdos decorated with stars, the softly rounded shoulders. Indeed, Hosmer appears to have adapted the headband in the illustration for her own purposes, transmuting the series of stars into a single star on the head of her Hesper, surrounded by poppy capsules. Stars can be portrayed in many shapes and sizes, of course, but in both the illustration and the bust they are of the same shape and size relative to Hesper’s head.\textsuperscript{184} One need only imagine the Godey’s Evening Star with head upright, eyes closed, and bosom exposed to see how Hosmer could have transformed the image from the engraving into marble.

Still, if the magazine’s sentimental portrayal of the evening star was a visual prototype for Hosmer’s bust of Hesper, we must account for the androgynous elements of the finished sculpture. Another depiction of Hesper that formed a part of antebellum American visual culture provides the answer. We find this image in one of the most famous books of the era: the Columbiad, a book of epic poetry by Joel Barlow about the founding of America.

\textsuperscript{183} It is difficult to pin down the moment that Hesper was converted from a male to a female persona beyond Longfellow’s poem. The transition proved definitive, in any case: by the mid-nineteenth century Hesper had become a popular women’s name, as evidenced by a novel published in 1858 in which the main female protagonist is named Hesper. See Lizzie Doten, Hesper, the Home Spirit: A Simple Story of Household Labor and Love (Boston: Abel Tompkins, 1858).

\textsuperscript{184} The poppies functioned as a symbol of sleep, death, and resurrection, appropriate to the mythological origins of Hesper.
published in 1807. An encyclopedia of American literature from 1855 provides us with a brief description of the massive project, a sense of the *Columbiad*’s reception by the mid-nineteenth century, and Hesper’s prominent place in the publication:

In 1807 the magnum opus of Barlow, the *Columbiad*, appeared, dedicated to the author’s intimate friend Robert Fulton; the most costly work which had been published in America. It was issued in Philadelphia. It has eleven engravings after original designs by Smirke, executed by the best line engravers in London, Goulding, Parker, Anker Smith, Raimbach, and others. Of these, Hester [*sic*] Appearing to Columbus in Prison [and three others] may be instanced for the force of the conception and beauty of handling.

The encyclopedia’s account establishes the stature of Barlow’s “magnum opus” in Harriet Hosmer’s day, and also the significance of the illustration of Hesper. The book is recognized as a major American publication, and special admiration is accorded to the engraving that showcases the personification of Hesper (fig. 2.13). In fact, the illustrations for the *Columbiad* were undoubtedly the most accessible part of the massive publication. The “epic” itself, loaded with arcane allusions beyond the scope of the average antebellum American, was probably for the most part left unread. If one could not afford the luxury of perusing

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186 Robert Fulton (1765–1815) would go on to launch the first steamboat that proved commercially successful.
187 Robert Smirke (1752–1845), an English painter and illustrator.
189 Steven Blakemore, in his recent of study of the poem, attempts to discern the publication’s status in the period and comes to the following conclusion: “My own sense is that it was basically a coffee-table book, not really read but positioned in some prominent or available space.” See Blakemore, *Joel Barlow’s Columbiad*, 16.
the publication in one’s own home, it was also available to admire in American libraries, including the Boston Athenaeum.\footnote{Charles Ammi Cutter, \textit{The Catalogue of the Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1807–1871}, part 1 (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 1874), 211.}

The figure of Hesper plays a central role in the poem, acting as a guide for Columbus. Indeed, Hesper appears in the first engraving that illustrates the epic. A slim, youthful figure draped in flowing fabric is positioned before a middle-aged Columbus, who is temporarily imprisoned in Spain. The glowing, ethereal being stands in stark contrast to the defeated Columbus. Hesper is a figure of great physical beauty, but obviously male, as the exposed chest makes clear. The Hesper we find here is an amalgamation of the classical and the Romantic \textit{ephebe} – that is to say, an idealized androgynous male youth. The body of Hesper is reminiscent of countless ancient statues depicting young male Greek gods. The head, more effeminate than the body with its long, flowing locks, reminds one of Girodet’s \textit{Sleep of Endymion}, painted just fifteen years earlier, in 1791. Floating above Hesper’s head is a bright eight-pointed star.

Assuming that Hosmer knew of the engraving, we can infer that she incorporated some essential elements into her conception of Hesper: the slightly downturned head, the elaborate hairstyle, the eight-pointed shining star, and the figure’s fundamental androgyny. Can we assume, though, that Hosmer would have known the engraving? More proof of the status of the engravings from the \textit{Columbiad} in the mid-nineteenth century can be found in a newspaper article from 1841. It suggests that antebellum Americans must have been quite conversant with the \textit{Columbiad} engravings. On January 30 of that year the elderly president-elect, General William Henry Harrison of Ohio (1773–1841), departed by boat from
Cleveland for Washington. A letter published in the *Cleveland Daily Herald* reported on the ceremony that marked the event, when thousands of spectators lined up along the banks of the Cuyahoga River to see off the general. Intent on signalling the sombreness of the event and the concern the crowd had for the newly elected politician’s well-being, the writer remarked that “every beholder seemed to feel that the occasion was big with the fate of his country, and on every face was depicted an anxiety as intense as is given to Caesar in Barlow’s *Columbiad*, at the moment he is spurring on his steed to leap into the Rubicon.”

The writer’s reference to the *Columbiad* engraving of Caesar signals the prominent place the engravings held in the mid-nineteenth-century American cultural imaginary.

To return to the *Columbiad* Hesper, then, we can now safely speculate that the illustration may have been a potent source for Hosmer’s *Hesper*. Hosmer, in her quest to create a deliberately androgynous Hesper – what we might call a female *ephebe* – surely looked to the engraving for inspiration. Like her bust of Hesper, the Hesper figure in the engraving is a curious anomaly. The head, with its long, soft curls, and the face, with its delicate features, could certainly be taken for that of a young female. The semi-exposed torso, on the other hand, is most definitely that of a young, fit male. The strange – indeed, rather uncanny – juxtaposition between head and torso is exactly what we find in Hosmer’s *Hesper*, but in the reverse: a heavy, rather masculine face sits above the breasts of a nubile young female (fig. 2.2). In both cases, gender is not stable but mutable. And both cases reflect the very nature of Hesper – which in the mid-nineteenth century could be understood as male, female, or gender-neutral. For while Hesper appeared as a female figure in 1850, thanks to

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191 A. Sojourner, “Departure of Gen. Harrison,” *Cleveland Daily Herald*, January 30, 1841. The citizens’ concern was legitimate. Harrison, the oldest American president so far to be elected, died from pneumonia only thirty-two days after taking office.
Longfellow’s sonnet and the engraving of Hesper in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, Hesper was, in fact, traditionally a male – albeit a beautiful male.

An entry from a mid-nineteenth-century classical dictionary indicates that Hesper’s male identity was well-known during the period. It declares him to be the son of Iapetus and Asia, and brother of Atlas. And yet the same entry makes Hesper’s androgynous aspect clear, noting that “another version of the story makes Hesperus to have been the son of Aurora and Cephalus, and so remarkable for beauty as to have contested the palm of Venus.” Hesper’s inherent androgyny functions at an even deeper level: because of Hesper’s beauty, “the beautiful star of eve was called after him, and the name Venus was also given to the same planet.” That is to say, the evening star is not a star at all, but simply another name for the planet Venus. Hesper is male, Venus is female, and the two are one.

Two contemporary elements of visual culture that portrayed Hesper – the *Godey’s* engraving and the *Columbiad* engraving – surely provided Harriet Hosmer with a means to conceptualize and create a bust that was both ladylike and masculine. By amalgamating Hesper’s contemporary status as an entity of slippery gender with more traditional representations of female mythological figures from the era – that is to say, the bust of Clytie and Powers’s *Proserpine* – Hosmer successfully negotiated between sentimentalism and androgyny. In attempting to reflect her own desires and those of antebellum American women around her, Hosmer created a work that was appreciated and understood by admirers of her day but whose appeal nearly eludes detection in the twenty-first century.

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193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
Chapter 3
Performing for the Camera

Hands, Hats, and Hair Ribbons in Harriet Hosmer’s Portrait Photographs

The sculptor’s studio is a theme that runs through the narrative of Harriet Hosmer’s professional life in Rome. When she first arrived in that city in 1852, a novice sculptor with great professional ambition, she soon found herself exactly where she hoped to be – ensconced in the studio of the British sculptor John Gibson, located at 6 and 7 Via Fontanella, near the Spanish Steps. She worked in a small room on an upper floor. The arrangement suited both Hosmer and Gibson for about six years, until Hosmer’s sculptural ambitions exceeded the space she occupied within Gibson’s domain. In 1858, with no commission in hand, Hosmer decided to create a monumental sculpture of the ancient figure of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, and she needed a studio large enough to accommodate her new project. It was time to move.

Hosmer’s new workplace, located at 5 Via Margutta, sat less than five minutes from Gibson’s studio on Via Fontanella. The space consisted of a large, loft-like room with a skylight, a stove for heat, a few potted plants, some sculptural fragments, and plaster casts. Here, in 1859, Hosmer created both *Zenobia in Chains*, as she called the final statue, and her next work, a monumental statue of the American senator Thomas Hart Benton (figs. 3.1 and 3.2). But even though Hosmer worked productively under these circumstances, she apparently craved an entirely new studio, larger and of her own design. This she finally obtained the mid-1860s, at 116 Via Margutta, a large, multi-room setup with ample space for Hosmer, her sculpture, and the numerous Italian workers she employed.

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When Hosmer greeted visitors to her studio, she wore her practical and androgynous studio outfit. Open and friendly, she made a striking figure, not much different from the popular and good-humoured tomboy whom friends and family had known back home in the United States. It is puzzling, then, that in photographic portraits of Hosmer taken throughout her career, the sculptor rarely posed in her working outfit. Photographs of Hosmer in her studio dress are far outnumbered by portraits that depict two other – mutually contradictory – personae. The first is a serious female artist who defied tradition by assuming the dark and masculine “alternative dress” of a mid-nineteenth-century emancipated female. The second is a mid-nineteenth-century middle-class woman, pleasing of expression – sometimes to the point of flirtatiousness – and embellished in the latest feminine fashions. Focusing on portrait photographs of Hosmer taken from the early 1850s to the late 1860s, I will show that she intentionally experimented with gender roles, changing clothes and accessories, facial expressions, and physical demeanour before the camera’s lens to help carve out her career.

Aiming to control the reception of herself and her work in the Anglo-American cultural milieu, Hosmer continually refined and redefined what it meant for her to be a woman sculptor in the mid-nineteenth century, both in and out of her studio, as she sought a way to balance her androgynous inclinations with society’s demands for feminine decorum.

**Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man?**

We will begin our discussion with a salted paper print, today housed in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington and dated to circa 1855 by that institution (fig. 2.11). I would suggest, however, that it originates from 1853. That year, Hosmer sat before a photographer in Rome shortly after moving there to become a professional sculptor. In a letter she indicates that she had the photograph taken to send to family and friends back home in the United States, in
what she calls her “daily costume.” It is very likely that the National Portrait Gallery photograph derives from that sitting. While she no doubt posed in the photographer’s studio and not her own, she was dressed for a day at work. What do we see?

Hosmer sits before a blank backdrop. She is twisted sideways on a chair of a simple design. She stares straight out at the viewer with a slight twinkle in her eye, and a hint of a smile that could be interpreted as sardonic. In her right hand she holds her modelling tools. On her head is an artist’s cap, typically worn only by men. Likewise, her sack-style jacket, buttoned-up vest, and shirt resemble the clothing worn by male sculptors, as we can see in a photograph of the American sculptor Hiram Powers from around the same time (fig. 2.9). And yet, beneath such masculine indicators, the fabric of a wide, heavy skirt fans out. Altogether, the Hosmer we find here is an unconventional and androgynous being of her own design – a “charming hybrid,” as Lydia Maria Child later called her – who exudes pride in her unique persona as an independent young (female) sculptor, living and working far away from home.

The androgynous persona on display in the photograph accords remarkably well with descriptions of Hosmer during her early years in Rome. The artist, whom Margaret Thorp characterized as one of the “literary sculptors” of the period, derived many ideas for her busts

196 Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, ed. Cornelia Carr (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1912), 27. In her letter Hosmer writes that she had commissioned “a Daguerre of myself in daily costume.” However, daguerreotype portraits were a specialty of American photographers in this period, and the process was unlikely to have been used in Rome, where the salted paper print was preferred. Moreover, Americans at this time had a tendency to refer to all photographs as daguerreotypes, regardless of the process used. Therefore it is reasonable to speculate that the salted paper print now held by the National Portrait Gallery in Washington is one that Hosmer sent back to America in 1853. At the time of writing, I believe this image is the earliest surviving photograph we have of Hosmer.

and statues from stories of the past. Simultaneously, upon her arrival in Rome Hosmer provided fodder for a whole new set of stories – these ones about her life, circulated by some of the foremost writers of the period. As Sara Fosse Parrott has commented, “Hosmer’s contemporaries traded ‘Hatty stories’ because her spirited life provided excellent material.”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Nathaniel Hawthorne both befriended the young artist. So telling are their remarks that we find them repeatedly reproduced in the literature on Hosmer, and they merit repetition again. In 1854 Barrett Browning wrote that Hosmer “lives here all alone (at twenty-two) as Gibson’s pupil, (while her father lives in America), – dines & breakfasts at the caffes [sic] precisely as a young man would, – and works from six oclock [sic] in the morning till night, as a great artist must.”

For Barrett Browning, Hosmer was a source of fascination precisely because of her tendency to behave “as a young man” who lived independently in Italy, away from her father, and took up the rituals of other expatriate (male) artists, such as eating out in public rather than in the confines of home. Hosmer also worked unenviably long hours. The young sculptor appeared to her friend to be entirely undomesticated, the antithesis of the conventional nineteenth-century woman. But Barrett Browning accepted that such circumstances were necessary in order for Hosmer to reach her goal of becoming a “great artist.”

Reporting on his first meeting with Hosmer, in 1858, Nathaniel Hawthorne provides us with a vivid textual portrait that is a nearly perfect match to the 1853 photograph discussed above, including the ambiguous nature of the clothing covering the lower half of her body:

We found Miss Hosmer in a little up-stairs room. She is a small, brisk, wide-awake figure, of queer and funny aspect, yet not ungraceful . . . She had on petticoats, I think; but I did not look so low, my attention being chiefly drawn to a sort of man’s sack of purple or plum-colored broadcloth, into the side-pockets of which her hands were thrust as she came forward to greet us . . . She had on a male shirt, collar, and cravat, with a brooch of Etruscan gold, and on her curly head was a picturesque little cap of black velvet; and her face was as bright and funny, and as small of feature, as a child’s.201

One gets the impression that upon encountering Hosmer, Hawthorne’s eyes darted about uncomfortably, not quite certain where to land. Decorum, however, kept him from peering below her waist. Fortunately he found the style in which her upper body was clothed to be so intriguing that he had somewhere else to focus. Here, certainly, Hawthorne found ample evidence of Hosmer’s predilection for masculine attire, stating that at the end of their visit, “I shook hands with this frank and pleasant little woman – if woman she be, as I honestly suppose, though her upper half is precisely that of a young man.”202 But Hawthorne also commented that Hosmer appears childlike, an observation other acquaintances made

201 Hawthorne, “French and Italian Notebooks,” 158.
202 Ibid., 159.
frequently about the sculptor. As noted by Joy S. Kasson, Hawthorne’s remark suggests he is searching for a way to characterize her behaviour and demeanour as non-threatening.\footnote{Joy S. Kasson, “The Problematics of Female Power: Zenobia,” in \textit{Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture} (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 144–45.}

Indeed, taken together, the comments of Barrett Browning and Hawthorne reveal a level of anxiety about the artist, her appearance, and her conduct, despite their best efforts to mask their concerns. Martha Vicinus puts it this way: “Hosmer’s androgyny was certainly acceptable, even intriguing, but when it tipped into a masculinity that drew attention to itself, it became dangerous.” She adds that “Barrett Browning was fascinated that Hosmer could walk the streets at night alone, like a man, but to be a man was too threatening.”\footnote{Martha Vicinus, “Laocoönning in Rome: Harriet Hosmer and Romantic Friendship,” \textit{Women’s Writing} 10 (2003): 356. Vicinus adds: “it is easy to mock Hawthorne’s refusal to look below Hosmer’s waist. But he looked where Victorian men \textit{could} look, and he did not see that essential attribute of the mature woman, her breasts. Hosmer’s jacket covered her bosom; combined with her short hair, she seemed like a boy to him.” Ibid., 357.} Still, both writers adjusted themselves to Hosmer’s peculiar tendencies, and Hawthorne even offered his qualified approval: “[S]he was indeed very queer, but she seemed to be her actual self, and nothing affected nor made-up; so that, for my part, I give her full leave to wear what may suit her best.”\footnote{Hawthorne, “French and Italian Notebooks,” 158.}

Hosmer revealed her inclination to do just that in her 1853 portrait. However, by posing for the camera in her worker’s garb, she not only defied standard codes of dress for women, she also defied standard codes of mid-nineteenth-century portrait photography. In the 1850s and 1860s, women rarely posed for their portraits in working clothes. Rather, they composed themselves to best advantage, aiming to create a pleasing image, as we saw in chapter one. Men, on the other hand, often wore work clothes before the camera. In such images they subtly poked fun at the serious business of sitting for the photographer. In her two books on
nineteenth-century clothing and photography, Joan Severa highlights a number of such portraits, and we will consider one representative example (fig. 3.3) in tandem with the 1853 photograph of Hosmer. Dating to circa 1855–60, it depicts a housepainter whose hat and clothing are covered with paint splatters. His messy demeanour echoes Hosmer’s and his pose is nearly identical. Against a blank backdrop, he sits sideways in a plain chair. Like Hosmer, he rests his right arm on the back of the chair and his left hand on his left thigh. And, like Hosmer, he gazes out at the viewer with just the slightest hint of sly humour, with bright, sparkling eyes and a barely suppressed smile. Both sculptor and painter assume the position and demeanour of a sophisticated mid-nineteenth-century male, yet concurrently destabilize that impression through their choice of rustic dress. The housepainter is just one of many mid-nineteenth-century working men who posed in such a subversive fashion, and it is evident that Hosmer deliberately emulated such photographs here. In addition, the 1853 portrait suggests to viewers that her work is not far off, that she has merely taken a momentary break to have her portrait taken, like many men before her.

In the 1853 portrait photograph, Hosmer insists – through her clothing, her gaze, her demeanour, and her pose – that she is an independent, unconventional, transgressive, androgynous working artist. Given her bold act of self-fashioning, we might expect to find other, similar photographs of Hosmer. But in the some two dozen distinct portraits of Hosmer that have come down to us, only two others depict her in her “daily costume.” Indeed, based on the photographic evidence that remains, Hosmer avoided having her photograph taken in her working outfit for nearly a decade.

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Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman?

In 1857, four years after she sat for her portrait in Rome, Hosmer crafted a new image for herself before entering the photographer’s studio. The occasion for another photographic portrait was her first return to the United States since she had left in 1852. She came back home for an American exhibition of her most recent work, her reclining statue of the Italian historical figure Beatrice Cenci (fig. 4.3). The statue had already gained great acclaim in London, admired by visitors at the Royal Academy. Now the work was on its way to its final destination in St. Louis. But first the statue was exhibited in New York, where large audiences congregated to see it. While in that city, Hosmer posed for the prominent New York photographer Mathew B. Brady (1822–96). Today Brady is best known for his dramatic photographs from the American Civil War. Less recognized, however, is his enormous trade in portrait photography, especially of famous people. Brady’s portraits of “eminent Americans” brought him international recognition as early as 1851, when he won a prestigious jury award at the Great Exhibition in London. Brady’s 1857 photograph of Hosmer takes the form of one of his magisterial “Imperial Portraits” (fig. 3.4).

The splendid representation of Hosmer is a salted paper print with ink enhancements that give it a luxurious, painterly quality. At 45.5 x 36.5 cm, the photograph has a sense of grandeur that reinforces its association with portrait painting. If the 1853 photograph portrays a rather sloppy, boyish sculptor, the 1857 photograph depicts a cultured young woman. Certainly we find elements in common: in both images, Hosmer has her hair cut short – the mark of an “emancipated female” – but it is styled with feminine waves in the Brady image, not partially stuffed under a hat. She does have a hat in the Brady photograph but carries it as

207 For a perspective on Brady’s career, see Alan Trachtenberg, Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).
a prop that replaces the modelling tools she holds so proudly in the earlier photograph. She wears a buttoned-up shirt in both images, and a jacket over that, and a skirt below, but there the similarities stop. In the first image, the jacket is baggy. In the second, the jacket, in the “basque” style of the day, is exquisitely tailored and emphasizes her trim waist. Though striking rather than classically beautiful, Hosmer cannot be mistaken for anything but the independent professional female artist she has become. The existence of the Brady photograph indicates that Hosmer had developed, as part of her sartorial repertoire, an alternative to the “daily costume.” Just as she “borrowed” from the male artist’s closet to devise her studio dress, she adopted the styling of the mid-nineteenth-century emancipated woman to create a new, more generally palatable persona. Undoubtedly not entirely conventional, and veering towards a masculine take on female clothing of the day, the second persona still rejects the outright androgyny of the 1853 salted paper print.

Hosmer’s model for her more dignified, serious, and professional demeanour as exhibited in the Brady photograph becomes obvious when we look to a daguerreotype of Charlotte Cushman and Matilda Hayes from circa 1855 (fig. 3.5). This daguerreotype of the two women was produced by the studio of Southworth & Hawes in Boston. Cushman, the famous American actress known for her “breeches” roles, spent time performing in that city from 1850 to 1853, when Hosmer first met her; she returned in 1857. Presumably it was during one of those stays that Cushman and Hays were photographed by Southworth & Hawes. As we can see in the daguerreotype, the two women are dressed nearly identically, each in a long, dark jacket nipped in at the waist, collared shirt, ribbon tied at the neck, and a full, dark skirt.
Hosmer adopts a remarkably similar sartorial program in the 1857 Brady photograph, part of a broader movement during the period that Diana Crane has called “alternative dress.”

Popular with a wide range of women, alternative dress was characterized by the adaptation of elements of men’s clothing in order to counter the inherent frivolity of feminine dress. Yet alternative dress does not mean dressing like a man, and in the portraits of Cushman, Hays, and Hosmer the overall effect is not one of blatant masculinity. Rather, the women have adapted the slightly militaristic – that is to say, the uniform and tailored – elements of women’s riding habits from the first part of the nineteenth century. As a consequence, Cushman, Hays, and Hosmer cannot be mistaken for men; rather they inspire admiration as confident and competent-looking women.

Hosmer’s “emancipated artist” outfit undoubtedly owes a great deal to Charlotte Cushman’s example, but surely it was also shaped by another important female exemplar from the period: the French painter Rosa Bonheur (1822–99). Writing to Hosmer from Paris in January 1856, Robert Browning declared, “I don’t think any new friend of mine would please you like Rosa Bonheur, who is a glorious little creature with a touch of Hatty about her that makes one start.”

Apparently Hosmer did not meet Bonheur, but nonetheless she held the older artist in high regard. In 1861 Hosmer wrote to her friend Miss Dundas, then in Paris, remarking, “If you have not already been, pray go and see Rosa Bonheur and write me all about her. Mrs. Browning excepted, I do not know a woman for whom I have more respect and admiration than for her. I was greatly disappointed at not being able to find her when I

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209 As we saw in chapter two, Hosmer’s supporter in Lenox, Massachusetts, Fanny Kemble, also wore alternative dress, which undoubtedly would have influenced the younger woman’s sartorial choices as well.
210 *Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories*, 60.
was in Paris, but she was in the country, and so of course I couldn’t even catch a glimpse of her studio.”

The fact that Bonheur attempted to negotiate her status as both a transgressive female artist and a respectable woman through her choice of clothing must have been of great interest to Hosmer, and she may well have looked to Bonheur’s example for guidance. Consider the famous portrait of Bonheur dating to 1857, by the French painter Edouard Louis Dubufe (fig. 3.6). Dubufe exhibited his portrait of Bonheur at the Paris Salon that year. While we cannot say with certainty that Hosmer saw the 1857 portrait, or any print reproductions of it, before she posed for Brady in the fall of that year, the resemblance between the two women is extraordinary. They sport similar short, simple hairstyles. They both gaze off into the middle distance on their left, with earnest, unsmiling faces. Both wear white blouses under jackets that appear to be fabricated from velvet and are nipped in at the waist, over long, silky skirts. And both wear softly looped ties. There are differences, of course. Bonheur carries the tools of her trade: a portfolio of some sort in her left hand and a paintbrush in her right. She leans against a bull, a symbol of her career as an animal painter. She appears to be standing out of doors. Hosmer carries no attributes of the arts but rather holds a hat at her right side, and she poses in a photographer’s studio. But otherwise, the deportment and dress of the two women are similar, and it is reasonable to suggest that in matters of style, Hosmer may have modelled herself after Bonheur.

Photographs of Bonheur from the same period reinforce the notion that Hosmer looked to the French artist for guidance around the issue of her artistic self-fashioning. In one, a carte-de-visite dating to circa 1858 from the studio of André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819–89) in

\[^{211}\text{Ibid., 169–70.}\]
Paris, we see Bonheur in an outfit almost identical to the one worn by Hosmer in the Brady photograph (fig. 3.7). Given that Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning formed a close friendship with Bonheur and remarked upon the natural resemblance between the two women, they could very well have shared photographs of the painter with Hosmer, providing her with a model for dressing when in the public eye.

In addition to her desire to emulate female role models, Hosmer most likely had another reason for rejecting the unkempt persona of her 1853 photograph. As discussed above, that image foregrounded her role as a working artist, surrounded by the dirt and dust of the sculptor’s studio. By 1856 she may have realized that exposing the less than salubrious environment of the studio was not to her advantage. Contentious discourse about the “untidiness” of the sculptor’s studio extends from at least the Renaissance through to the Baroque period and then to the birth of neoclassicism. Recall Leonardo’s disparaging remark during the Renaissance paragone debate. The sculptor’s art, he wrote,

> is a most mechanical exercise accompanied many times with a great deal of sweat, which combines with dust and turns into mud. The sculptor’s face is covered with paste and all powdered with marble dust, so that he looks like a baker, and he is covered with minute chips, so that he looks as though he has been out in the snow. His house is dirty and filled with chips and dust of stones.  

Leonardo’s critique of sculpture is in the interest of showing the ease, the sprezzatura, with which the painter works, compared to the laborious efforts of the sculptor (that is to say, of his rival in the paragone debate, Michelangelo).

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By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the leading neoclassical sculptors, Antonio Canova (1757–1822) and Bertel Thorvaldsen (1789–1838), physically set themselves apart from the production of their large studios – to the extent that critics suspected they let others do all their work for them. Both sculptors, in fact, oversaw large operations with many workers, a necessity in order for them to meet the great demand for their work. However, they insisted that their primary artistic role was to “conceive” the work either in drawings or clay or wax models, rather than to execute it through brute labour. This was the function of the unimaginative labourers whose role was merely to “copy” the artist’s ideal as the work progressed from model to final marble monument. To further emphasize their distance from the hard labour of producing neoclassical sculpture, Canova and Thorvaldsen dressed fastidiously when posing for their portraits whether inside or outside of the studio.

Following Canova and Thorvaldsen’s lead, the majority of nineteenth-century sculptors, when depicted in portraiture, deliberately erased any trace of the dust and dirt that Leonardo ridiculed centuries earlier from their images. When we come to understand the neoclassical sculptural enterprise in these terms, it becomes apparent that when Hosmer presented herself as a somewhat unkempt studio labourer, as she did in the 1853 photograph, she broke not only the codes of gender behaviour but the very sartorial imperative of her chosen form of artistic expression. In the 1853 photograph of Hosmer, we wouldn’t be surprised to find marble dust on the surface of her jacket or streaks of clay on her face. By 1857 she appears to

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have realized that to stay in good standing with her supporters and patrons, the only thing she should have on her face was the blush of good health.214

Fashioned after both Charlotte Cushman and Rosa Bonheur, whose wardrobes appropriated elements of male tailoring and women’s riding habits, and consciously stepping out of her untidy studio, the “Brady Hosmer” predominated in the Anglo-American consciousness in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Textual and visual evidence from the period suggests that Hosmer sat for other photographers in the United States in 1857, dressed much the same as in the Brady portrait. For example, the illustrated weekly journal *Ballou’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, published in Boston, produced a front-page profile of Hosmer on December 5, 1857 (fig. 3.8).215 The flattering article is illustrated with an engraving of the artist who, though seated, otherwise looks and is dressed in the same style as in the Brady portrait. The publication offers readers the genesis of the illustration, stating that it is an engraving by Damereau (a French wood engraver) derived from a drawing by a Mr. Ward, which in turn was based on a photograph by Whipple and Black (a popular Boston photography studio). A similar illustration, presumably also taken from a photograph, appeared in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* a month earlier, on November 7, 1857.216

Other photographs have also survived from around this time, in the carte-de-visite format.

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214 For two views on the nineteenth-century *paragone* between sculpture and painting and its impact on sculptors’ self-fashioning and portraits in the context of France, see Anne Middleton Wagner, *Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux: Sculptor of the Second Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 21–28; Susan Waller, “Fin de Partie: A Group of Self-Portraits by Jean-Léon Gérôme,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 9 (Spring 2010), http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/spring10/group-of-self-portraits-by-gerome. The work of both these scholars influenced my discussion in this chapter. I have attempted to build on their analyses by situating my chapter in the Anglo-American context and also by examining these issues as they relate to a woman sculptor. For another perspective on the processes of neoclassical sculpture as they relate to the deliberate separation of the sculptor from the working processes of his or her own studio, see Martina Droth, “The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics c. 1851-1900,” *Journal of Design History* 17 (January 2004): 221–35.


216 For more on these articles and images, see chapter four.
with Hosmer in a similar guise, including head-and-shoulders vignettes taken from the Brady photograph and sold by E. Anthony in New York (fig. 3.9). Despite the variations in her wardrobe, Hosmer’s manner and expression are consistent: bare-headed, with short hair parted in the middle, pulled tightly across the top of her brow, and loosely curled over her ears, she directs her gaze outward and maintains a sombre expression.

The “Brady Hosmer” appears to have been a prudent and successful persona for the sculptor to adopt. It was serviceable, not highly controversial, and suggested just a hint – an acceptable hint – of gender ambiguity. Hosmer comes across as dignified, serious, and poised, a confident young woman who has abandoned, or at least reined in, the scrappy, boyish charm of her earlier days. She exemplifies the mature, sophisticated artist, respected for her artistic conceptions rather than for her manual labour. And yet an article about the sculptor published in 1861 reinforces Hosmer’s sturdy “adventure feminist” persona discussed in chapter two and suggests that, even at the age of thirty-one, Hosmer’s childlike enthusiasm and rough-and-ready manner remained intact.

Lydia Maria Child, the important American writer and long-time friend and neighbour of the Hosmer family, contributed a profile of the sculptor to a magazine, *The Ladies’ Repository*, in January 1861. In it Child looks back on the young woman’s rise to fame over the previous decade. She also recounts a visit that Hosmer paid to her home when the sculptor was on her American tour with *Beatrice Cenci* in 1857:

Miss Hosmer herself arrived in Boston a few days before the Cenci, after an absence of five years. But neither the attentions lavished upon her in Italy and England, nor the compliments that greeted her on her return home, appeared to produce any
injurious change in her character. I was delighted to find her the same frank, unaffected child who parted from me that summer evening [in 1852]. Contact with society had softened her manner, but she was still earnest and direct. Her vivaciousness was so contagious that she renewed my youth, and made me also believe in the possibility of accomplishing great things. But her confidence in herself was modest. There was no tinge of pretension to mar the beauty of her enthusiasm for her art. She was not satisfied with what she had done, but was always aiming at something better; and I found that she was more desirous for discriminating criticism than for wholesale praise.217

Child’s comments seem to dismiss the “Brady Hosmer”: so poised, so still, so confident. Indeed, she says outright that the Hosmer before her is friendlier, more accessible, and more charmingly androgynous than her recent photographs (“likenesses” in mid-nineteenth-century parlance) suggest:

Though still young in years, her medium hight [sic] and slender figure make her seem younger than she is. Her face is more genial and pleasant than her likenesses indicate; especially when engaged in conversation, its resolute earnestness lights up with gleams of humor. She looks as she is; lively, frank, and reliable. In dress and manners she seemed to me a charming hybrid between an energetic young lady and a modest lad.218

Child’s description continues with a discussion of Hosmer’s outfit, and it is a particularly edifying passage, for we can see that the young sculptor is wearing the type of outfit in which

218 Ibid.
she posed for the Brady photograph: “Her ample silken skirt was womanly, but the closely-fitting basque [jacket] of black velvet buttoned nearly to the throat, like a vest, and showed a shirt-bosom and simple linen collar.” In the Brady photograph, Hosmer lives up to her sophisticated “emancipated female” attire by carefully composing herself as a model of accomplished comportment. She stands tall, with her left arm bent at the elbow, her hand resting securely on her hip – a position that exudes an air of authority. In her right hand her hat hangs demurely at her side, suggesting that she has removed it gently from her head to keep her carefully coiffed hair intact. Such poise, though, apparently disappeared during her visit with Child. According to Child, the living, breathing Hosmer reverted to – and perhaps even played up – her unconventional tomboy persona for her appreciative audience of one. Here we are offered a description of a bravura performance in which Hosmer’s hand gestures, head covering, and hairstyle once again played a role:

[The jacket] had pockets, into which she occasionally thrust her hands, as boys are wont to do, and she carried her spirited head with a manly air. Her broad forehead was partially shaded with short, thick, brown curls, which she often tossed aside with her fingers, as lads do. When she saluted me from the chaise, she touched the front of her hat and raised it from her head in gentlemanly fashion. When I praised the picturesque effect of the hat with its drooping plume, she answered, carelessly, “O, it’s merely a lady’s riding hat – I’ve not worn a bonnet these five years.”

As Child tells it, Hosmer brushed off the older woman’s compliment about her hat with childish bravado, as if she were the only young woman of her era bold enough to give up wearing a more conventional bonnet. However, as we know from the Brady photograph, the

219 Ibid.
riding hat with its long plume was a vital part of her carefully constructed wardrobe. And it was part of a more general rejection of bonnets on the part of many women who adopted a form of alternative dress derived from women’s riding habits. Yet Child plays down Hosmer’s conscious construction of her new, more palatable image. Rather, the writer reinforces Hosmer’s youthful “adventure feminist” persona, discussed in chapter one. Her actions suggest that among woman readers of The Ladies’ Repository, there was still a great appetite for such rambunctious female characters.

Let us now consider the portrait of Hosmer that accompanies the article. Here we find an engraving of Hosmer’s head and shoulders in the Brady photograph mode (fig. 3.10). According to the caption on the page, the image in the magazine was engraved by J. C. Buttre of New York “from a drawing by Miss Stebbins . . . expressly for the Ladies’ Repository.” “Miss Stebbins” refers to Emma Stebbins (1815–82), another American sculptor who joined Hosmer’s orbit in Rome (and who eventually became Charlotte Cushman’s partner, replacing Hays). A letter that Hosmer wrote to her friend Cornelia Crow Carr in 1859 indicates that she approved of Stebbins’s portrayal of her, in that case in the form of a “crayon sketch” that she included with the letter. Hosmer also notes in the letter that Stebbins was in the process of creating another sketch, and it is possible that she sent this one to Lydia Maria Child.220 Perhaps it was even Hosmer herself who suggested that the sketch by Stebbins would be a suitable accompaniment for the Repository article.

At first glance, the Stebbins portrait appears merely to portray a truncated version of the Brady photograph type. Hosmer’s short, curly hair is neatly styled. She stares out at the

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220 Dolly Sherwood provided quotations from Hosmer’s letter in her biography of the sculptor. See Sherwood, Harriet Hosmer, American Sculptor, 184.
spectator with a serious expression on her face. She sports a large, floppy ribbon at her neck. But rather than hanging down loosely, as it does in the Brady photograph, the ribbon is arranged like a large bowtie. And as the drawing shows only her head and a portion of her upper torso, we do not find the key signifiers of femininity that are revealed in the Brady-type images: the full bust, nipped-in waist, and wide skirt. These small changes are significant, for the resulting image has at least as much in common with contemporary portrayals of young men as it does with the Brady prototype, demonstrating that Hosmer could still be determinedly androgynous when she chose to be. I am thinking of a portrait photograph of a sixteen-year-old boy from New York, dating to 1855. As Joan Severa describes it, “For the occasion of this portrait, young Mr. Broom is nattily attired in his three-piece dark sack suit. He wears his horizontal silk necktie smartly wide and horizontal under his wing-tipped collar and sports rather long, wavy hair” (fig. 3.13).221 In both clothing and demeanour, the head-and-shoulders vignette of Hosmer is virtually identical to the head and shoulders of “young Mr. Broom.”

The Repository article and illustration offer solid evidence of Hosmer’s ongoing and seemingly irrevocable androgyny and its continuing popularity with even conservative middle-class American women. How, then, can we explain the emergence of a third, and distinctly new, Harriet Hosmer in the same period – a feminine and girlish figure who gazes flirtatiously at spectators beyond the camera’s lens?

**Properzia de’ Rossi and Harriet Hosmer**

As I have argued above, Hosmer’s “makeover” in the Brady portrait and related images in the mid-1850s and early 1860s came about as a result of two factors: her recognition that her

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221 Severa, *My Likeness Taken*, 228.
friends and supporters felt threatened when she appeared too masculine, and her realization that even male neoclassical sculptors eschewed the messiness of the studio. As we have seen, her Brady mode seemed to serve her well. And yet in 1860 she entered a photographer’s studio for her portrait in still another guise: as a positively girlish figure who contrasts dramatically with both the 1853 salted paper print and the 1857 Brady photograph (fig. 3.12). She does not project the image of a sloppy, boyish sculptor or of an accomplished professional female artist. Rather, we find a pretty and even seductive young woman. How and why did she devise this new version of herself? To answer this question, it is instructive to look back from Hosmer’s day to the Renaissance, when the challenges women sculptors faced were little different. Despite Hosmer’s vaunted status as a female artist unfettered by the conventions of society, in many ways not much had changed since the days of Properzia de’ Rossi (1490–1530), a sculptor who lived and worked in Bologna three hundred years earlier. In Renaissance Bologna and nineteenth-century Rome alike, female sculptors threatened their male counterparts and were perceived as unworthy competitors who could steal prestigious commissions from more deserving men.

Properzia de’ Rossi is the only woman artist to be given a full biographical entry by Giorgio Vasari (1511–74) in his Lives of the Artists. When faced with the fact of de’ Rossi’s existence, Vasari presumably found himself in a difficult position. The artist’s choice of medium challenged codes of conduct regarding the role of women artists. To be a woman sculptor in the Renaissance was to commit a transgressive act, one that could not be condoned by the (male) artistic establishment. Yet de’ Rossi, who was well known in her day, could not be ignored. Vasari solved his predicament by writing about her but in so doing undermining the very artistic status to which he drew attention. Vasari’s biographical entry
about de’ Rossi makes short work of her professional life, focusing instead on her victimization by a fellow (jealous) male sculptor and her failed love life. It ends not with a summary of a successful career but with a sad – verging on pathetic – account of de’ Rossi’s death as a defeated artist from a broken heart, the result of a foolhardy infatuation. In the first half of the nineteenth century, as part of a general “Vasari revival,” we find new interest in de’ Rossi that emphasizes her contested status as a female sculptor in a man’s world. A painting by the French artist Louis Ducis (1775–1847), exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1822, portrays her as a pretty and feminine creature displaying her marble relief to a suitor (fig. 3.13). She is dressed in a feminine robe with flowing sleeves and displays her work with a modest demeanour, beseeching the admiration of her male visitor. The painting thematizes de’ Rossi’s pursuit of art as a pursuit of love, and in that regard it follows the spirit, if not the letter, of Vasari’s biography. A poem by the British writer Felicia Hemans (1793–1835), published in 1828 and based on the Ducis painting, presents an equally romanticized account of de’ Rossi’s life.

Like de’ Rossi, Hosmer functioned as an artistic lightning rod, attracting wide-ranging attention not because she was a sculptor but because she was a female sculptor. Also like de’ Rossi, she had detractors who sought to undermine her professional status, precisely because she was a woman doing what was understood to be a man’s work. Women sculptors – hacking away at stone, covered with dust, and perhaps even bulging with muscles – defied all

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notions of gentility. They also threatened to take work away from men. For this they paid a price, and that price was to have their accomplishments as artists questioned, challenged, or undermined.

In her article in the 1861 *Ladies’ Repository* mentioned earlier, Lydia Maria Child indicates the very real envy that Hosmer had to face. Child concludes her retrospective of the sculptor’s career with a mention of Hosmer’s Thomas Hart Benton commission from 1860, to be discussed in more detail below. After quoting from portions of Hosmer’s acceptance letter to the committee (also discussed below), Child goes on to note that the sculptor’s professional success has not protected her from the jealousy of her peers but in fact has instigated it:

A young sculptor once said to me, “There are a dozen young men in Italy who make better statues than she does, without attracting a tenth part of the notice.” [. . .] it should be remembered that a successful woman excites more envy and jealousy than a man whose career is similar. If some are prone to overrate her, others are quite as eager to exaggerate all her defects, whether as lady or artist.²²⁵

How could Hosmer defend herself? The photographic evidence suggests that she added a third persona to her arsenal: an overtly feminine creature, similar to the one we find portrayed in Louis Ducis’s portrait of Properzia de’ Rossi, and one perhaps modelled on nineteenth-century perceptions of the Renaissance sculptor as an inoffensive and romantic female rather than a bold and talented artist. While Hosmer is not as subdued as Ducis’s version of de’ Rossi, she takes on the appearance of a woman who is concerned with her

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position vis-à-vis the male viewer and seems determined to appear non-threatening. Just as de’ Rossi courts male attention in Ducis’s portrayal of her, Hosmer appears intent on charming male spectators. In both cases, the female sculptor comes across as a disempowered entity, hoping to oblige the opposite sex.

As suggested above, the emergence of this new, rather coy and more overtly feminine Hosmer in 1860 coincided with her being chosen by government officials in the United States to create a monumental sculpture of the deceased American senator Thomas Hart Benton (1782–1858), destined for a park in St. Louis. As early as January 9, 1854, Hosmer openly stated her desire for such a prestigious commission. That year she wrote to her most important patron, St. Louis businessman Wayman Crow, and prodded him about the possibility of working on a monumental statue back home. Employing her typical jovial writing style, she remarks, “Now if you hear of anybody who wants an equestrian statue ninety feet high, or a monument in memory of some dozen departed heroes, please remember that man-like [my italics] I am ready for orders.” In this sentence Hosmer declares herself to be “manlike,” and her words sound as if they might emanate from the rough-and-ready young sculptor we met in the 1853 salted paper print. It is curious, then, that in the next line of her letter Hosmer retreats from her own entreaty, adding modestly and even formally, “However, to be moderate and in earnest, I mean that if anybody wants any small, decent-sized thing, I should be delighted to furnish it.” Perhaps afraid of offending Crow with her exuberance, she reins in both her prose and her ambition, switching personae midstream in the same letter. We can be quite certain, nonetheless, that Hosmer continued to impress upon Crow her desire for a major government project; six years later she got what she wanted. In

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226 Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, 30.
June of 1860, Hosmer received word that, thanks to Crow’s efforts, she had secured the prestigious task of producing the first political monument to be created for the state of Missouri: an over-life-size bronze statue depicting Benton, who had died two years earlier. Hosmer was undoubtedly proud of her accomplishment: for an American neoclassical sculptor, the true mark of status was to win a government commission for a monument of a contemporary figure.

Later that year, Hosmer wrote a formal thank-you letter to the Thomas Hart Benton selection committee. And here the “feminine” Hosmer appears: “I have . . . reason to be grateful to you, because I am a woman, and knowing what barriers must in the outset oppose all womanly efforts, I am indebted to the chivalry of the West, which has first overleaped them.”²²⁷ Hosmer may have achieved her goal but her words show that she is determined not to alienate the committee at the very outset of the project. Rather, she plays up the “chivalry” of the committee, a strategy that emphasizes not only her debt of gratitude to its members but also the traditional heterosexual roles at play in the transaction.

With Hosmer’s words in mind, let us return to the 1860 photograph of Hosmer, a carte-de-visite that originated in the studio of J. A. Scholten of St. Louis (fig. 3.12). After the commission was granted, Hosmer travelled to St. Louis to meet with committee members and do research for this important project. We can assume, then, that she sat for her photograph in St. Louis at this time. The strictly tailored velvet basque jacket from the Brady photograph is replaced by a shorter, less severe jacket that stops at the waist and shimmers with satiny detailing. The long skirt is embellished with a layer of shirred fabric, a new, feminine touch. The bold bowtie from the Brady photograph has morphed into a girlish hair

²²⁷ Ibid., 362.
ribbon, softening her hairstyle and lending a perky, lighthearted quality to her portrayal. But it is Hosmer’s gaze that is most captivating and most perplexing: with her head posed on her hand, her finger gently touching her lower lip, she looks out appealingly, straight at the spectator. Her expression is soft and enticing – indeed, she seems to be attempting to seduce the viewer. This is a new, more feminine Hosmer posing before the camera. And the photograph is a visual match for the way Hosmer attempted to appeal to and appease the Thomas Hart Benton committee. In the photograph, Hosmer has indeed fashioned herself in much the same way Properzia de’ Rossi was fashioned by Vasari and Ducis: not as an independent artist but as a weak female, reliant on male support and admiration. But in this case it is Hosmer herself who has created an overtly feminine creature, an expedient move that she presumably thought would help to further advance her career.

The emergence of this new Hosmer persona speaks again to the sculptor’s remarkable ability to assume guises that drew upon the standard conventions established in photographers’ studios in her day. We find with this photograph more evidence of her willing and skilful manipulation of gendered codes telegraphed through dress, poses, and facial expressions. How is it, then, that within the next year or so Hosmer recast herself for the photographer once again – this time as a bold and androgynous professional sculptor who flaunted her status as the chosen artist for the Thomas Hart Benton commission?

**Fighting Back with Photography: The Return of the Sculptor’s Studio**

Sometime in late 1861 or early 1862, when the clay model for her monumental Benton statue was complete, Hosmer invited a photographer into her Roman studio, and a carte-de-visite image is the result. Proudly wearing her androgynous “daily costume,” she climbed up a
ladder so that she was positioned at the midpoint of the monument. She placed her right hand on the colossal statue’s left shoulder, proclaiming her artistic agency and authority (fig 3.14).

With the Thomas Hart Benton photograph, Hosmer broke what I have suggested was her own rule to banish all signs of the sculptor’s messy work from her photographic portraits. However, if she simply wanted to be photographed with one of her works, she had another, less confrontational option. She could simply have posed in a photographer’s studio standing next to a smaller work and wearing her “emancipated women artist” outfit – very much as the British sculptor Mary Thornycroft (1814-95) did in an undated carte-de-visite housed today at the National Portrait Gallery in London (fig. 3.15). Instead, Hosmer chose to expose herself before the camera in her unconventional and controversial studio dress, and moreover to reveal the behind-the-scenes workaday world in which nineteenth-century sculpture was created, in direct defiance of the defensive position more commonly taken by sculptors of the period. This section posits a number of possible motivations for Hosmer’s rather startling move – a move that resulted in what is surely one of the most striking photographs of a sculptor to emerge in the nineteenth century.

I would like to suggest that Hosmer was motivated in part by an episode that occurred when she was working on another monumental work in the late 1850s. Just prior to learning of the Benton commission, Hosmer was in the midst of a new project: her over-life-size statue of Zenobia, the queen of ancient Palmyra (fig. 3.1). Writing to Cornelia Crow Carr, Hosmer comments, “I am busy now upon Zenobia, of a size with which I might be compared as a mouse to a camel.” She continues, “My mass of clay in its present humanized form is

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stunning. It certainly does make a larger piece of putty than I had anticipated, but I am consoled by, and rejoice in the fact, that it will be more grandiose when finished.”\textsuperscript{229} This is Hosmer in March 1858. The boyish bravado we associate with the 1853 salted paper print is in full evidence. Hosmer in her studio is happy, at home, and not concerned with softening her image to court the support of others. In her studio in Rome, Hosmer is in charge.

As Hosmer started to model her full-scale clay figure of Zenobia, her studio attracted friends and strangers alike. One illustrious guest arrived in early 1859, a member of the British royal family. The young Prince of Wales had come to Rome, and while he was there, Queen Victoria’s son toured sculptors’ studios, guided by Hosmer’s teacher and mentor John Gibson. While in Hosmer’s studio, the prince admired her monumental statue of Zenobia, then in progress. As well, he decided to purchase another of her works, a small statue depicting Puck from Shakespeare’s \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream}, which had already proven to be a great success for the sculptor. This was a major coup for Hosmer. Back home in the United States, on May 7, 1859, the popular periodical \textit{Harper’s Illustrated Weekly} issued a lengthy report on her success.\textsuperscript{230}

The article offers a standard, and flattering, account of Hosmer’s life – how she left her father’s home behind and moved to Rome, how John Gibson agreed to become her teacher, and how she had produced many remarkable works to date. It is accompanied by a large woodcut engraving that takes up half the front page of the issue and depicts the prince’s visit (fig. 3.16). The illustrator has portrayed Gibson standing towards the centre of Hosmer’s studio, between the Prince of Wales and Hosmer’s monumental work. Gibson holds out his

\textsuperscript{229} \textit{Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories}, 122.

\textsuperscript{230} “Miss Hosmer’s Studio at Rome,” \textit{Harper’s Weekly} 3 (May 7, 1859): 293–94.
hand, explaining the *Zenobia* statue to the prince and a crowd of spectators gathered to the right. Meanwhile, Hosmer stands primly to the far left, in the shadow of her own work.

While Gibson holds forth on Hosmer’s creation, Hosmer is cast as a bit player, rather than the star, in her own studio. As Joy S. Kasson has remarked, “The story being told in *Harper’s* could have been titled, ‘Prince of Wales views quaint female sculptor’ rather than ‘sculptor creates colossal statue.’”

Assuming Hosmer saw the illustration – and surely her American supporters would have made sure of that – she may have been delighted with the exposure the article brought her back home. After all, she needed commissions for *Zenobia* and would have been looking to the United States for buyers. But at the same time she might have been deflated by her minor role in the image, especially since this is arguably the first portrayal of Hosmer in her studio to go before the public eye. We can imagine that Hosmer might have preferred that circumstances allowed her to show off her own work, and that the illustration may have instilled in Hosmer a desire to portray herself in her studio on her own terms.

Three years later, Hosmer’s urge may have been reinforced as she struggled against mounting backlash in the face of her ever-increasing success. As noted earlier, other American sculptors resented Homer’s attainment of the Thomas Hart Benton commission. I believe that as she worked on the Benton statue – her next major project after *Zenobia*, and the most important work of her career to date – she devised a plan to re-establish her

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232 There is another candidate for the first portrayal of Hosmer at work in her studio: a wood engraving from an unknown periodical. The sculptor is shown in her “daily costume,” but her protruding bosom and waspish waist suggest an air of feminine delicacy that the photograph from the National Portrait Gallery in Washington (fig. 2.11) sharply contradicts. Here, too, it is possible that Hosmer found motivation for her Thomas Hart Benton photograph. The engraving is reproduced in Melissa Dabakis, “The Eccentric Life of a Perfectly ‘Emancipated Female’: Harriet Hosmer’s Early Years in Rome,” in *Perspectives on American Sculpture before 1925*, ed. T. Tolles (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 34.
authority in her studio and simultaneously to answer those critics who did not think she deserved the significant government contract. In so doing she may have looked to the pre-eminent American sculptor of the period, Hiram Powers, when considering how to fashion herself in her photograph. This was one mid-nineteenth-century sculptor who preferred to dress for the camera in his working outfit – dirt, dust, and all. In a paradigmatic image he poses, holding modelling tools, in his artist’s cap, long apron, and dusty shoes, beside his bust of Proserpine (fig. 2.9). Eschewing the route taken by the vast majority of sculptors in the face of the nineteenth-century paragone debate, who aimed to elevate the sculptor’s art, Powers refused to clean up and dress up for the camera. Hosmer and Powers were friends, and she certainly may have seen photographic portraits of the senior sculptor before she began to conceptualize her Thomas Hart Benton photograph. Perhaps in some way, by choosing to revert to her studio dress in her photograph, she wanted to align herself with the leading American sculptor of the day.

Hosmer differentiated herself from Powers, however, by posing next to her colossal creation. As we shall see below, Powers was also working on an over-life-size monument of an American figure at this time, but he did not exploit the potential for a vivid photograph in the same way that Hosmer did. Her innovation was to use the monumentality of the Benton statue as a metaphor for the monumentality of her own professional triumph.233 Her

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challenge was to determine how she could stand next to and still assert control over the giant clay figure. I believe that contemporary fashion trends, new forms of public entertainment, and inventive photography techniques showed her the way forward.  

Let us begin with her studio outfit. In the Thomas Hart Benton photograph, we finally see for the first time the whole of Hosmer’s working costume, or at least the variation she had devised by 1861. On her head is a cap, now in a beret style. A shirt is covered with a smock-like top with wide sleeves that is tucked in at the waist. A broad skirt flares out, cinched at the waist by a belt. Peeking out beneath the skirt is a pair of short pants, the same colour as the skirt. Under these she wears light-coloured tights, and on her feet we see ankle-high boots. Compare her outfit here to that in the Harper’s illustration, where she comes across as demure and ladylike, even meek, and wears a voluminous skirt with a bustle that would never allow her the freedom to move that she needed in the studio. That was not what she wore in her studio. As she wrote in a letter to her friend Cornelia when discussing work on the clay model of Zenobia, “To-morrow I mount a Zouave costume, not intending to break my neck upon the scaffolding, by remaining in petticoats.” Not to be confused with the women’s reform dress known as bloomers, the mid-nineteenth-century Zouave outfit consisted of short, baggy pants worn under a wide, knee-length skirt; it was adopted by professional women, such as doctors, who needed practical working outfits. It is notable, however, that the Zouave costume had much in common with children’s dress of the period. Consider, for example, a photograph from circa 1848 of a young girl, probably around five years old.

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235 Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, 122.
years old (fig. 3.17). The girl wears a simple white shirt with a V-necked jacket over it, a belt at the waist, a short, wide skirt with pants underneath, white tights, and ankle boots. By emulating the dress of a child in her studio garb of 1861, Hosmer emphasized her essential innocence rather than the more threatening androgyny she projected fourteen years earlier in the 1853 portrait. This doll-like quality is vividly enhanced by the disjunction in scale between Hosmer and her over-life-size statue.

Hosmer may well have realized that the visual dichotomy between her own small figure and that of her colossal statue would resonate with the photograph’s viewers in another regard. Thanks to the influence of P. T. Barnum (1810–91) and his newly emerging sideshow aesthetics, Anglo-American spectators in the mid-nineteenth century were highly attuned to – and amused and fascinated by – physical anomalies in the human body. Born in Connecticut, Barnum moved to New York in 1834. By 1844 his American Museum featured a range of “human curiosities.” The most famous was Charles Sherwood Stratton (1838–83), a young boy who was only sixty-four centimetres tall when Barnum met him in 1842. Barnum gave Stratton the stage name “General Tom Thumb.” Under the impresario’s tutelage, the boy learned to perform and impersonate famous figures, including Napoleon Bonaparte, Hercules, and others. He became a major celebrity in the Anglo-American world, touring in the United States and travelling to Britain, where he performed for Queen Victoria.

General Tom Thumb’s fame was reinforced through the 1840s and ’50s by daguerreotypes and other elements of visual culture depicting the diminutive star. These images deliberately inverted the viewer’s traditional notion of human scale and power dynamics. Consider, for example, a daguerreotype dating to circa 1850 by Samuel Root, an American photographer (fig. 3.18). Here tiny Tom Thumb is positioned next to Barnum. The boy looks somewhat
timid, it is true, and Barnum signals his power over his protégé by means of his proud smile. At the same time, though, Tom Thumb’s confident pose, hand perched on hip, and his military-style uniform signal a sense of authority. Who is really in charge here?

The odds are very good that Hosmer would have seen this daguerreotype, or something similar, when she visited the studio of Mathew Brady in New York in 1857 to have her portrait taken. Brady’s studio was near Barnum’s theatre, and Barnum and Brady were by then collaborating on creating photographs of Barnum’s crew. Hosmer may have encountered photographs of Tom Thumb in Brady’s studio, or she may have seen the Root photograph at that photographer’s studio, just down the street. This is not to suggest that Hosmer consciously emulated the Root photograph when she devised the Thomas Hart Benton composition, although there are obvious similarities between the two – in particular the way the smaller figure places its hand possessively on the shoulder of the larger figure. What I am more interested in, however, is the way that the advent of “General Tom Thumb” as a modern-day celebrity allowed for the ironically humorous privileging of the physically diminutive human.

Take, for example, an advertisement that appeared in a Cleveland newspaper in 1848, promoting the forthcoming appearance of General Tom Thumb (fig. 3.19). The notice announces the “exhibition” of a “man in miniature.” The ad copy continues: “Weighing only 15 pounds, 16 years of age [Barnum regularly lied about Stratton’s real age], and but 28 inches high,” General Tom Thumb was “smaller than any infant that ever walked alone.” In the accompanying woodcut engraving, a man’s right hand is pointing to the right, with thumb straight up. A minuscule Tom Thumb stands on his index finger and is the same height as the man’s extended thumb. The engraving depicts an obviously absurd situation, drastically
exaggerating the performer’s small stature. But what is more notable is the confidence exuding from the “man in miniature.” Dressed in his Napoleon costume, General Tom Thumb stands proudly on the man’s finger, the manly master of all he surveys. The fanciful illustration sums up the new power dynamic that Barnum’s sideshow aesthetics introduced to nineteenth-century Anglo-American society. When a major international celebrity is just over two feet tall, the spectator’s sense of scale – and its significance – is inevitably adjusted. Small could now outplay big.²³⁶

I submit that it is this very phenomenon – an uncanny disjunction in scale – that Hosmer exploited in her Thomas Hart Benton photograph. And I more firmly believe this to be the case because she was arguably not the first mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American figure to do so. I am thinking here of the famous portrait photograph of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–59). Brunel was, of course, a renowned British engineer and the genius behind Britain’s most magnificent feats of engineering in the period. He had overseen the construction of the British railway system and much more. But in terms of sheer physical magnificence, the building of the steamship Great Eastern was unmatched by any of his previous accomplishments. Crowds flocked to the giant ship’s construction site and watched with fascination as the project progressed. In 1857 the Illustrated Times of London hired the photographer Robert Howlett to document the ship’s construction. The iconic image of Brunel posing in front of the ship’s giant launching chains was the result (fig. 3.20). The image is arresting and at the same time paradoxical. For, despite the fact that Brunel is physically diminished in size next to the large chain links, he looks confident, in charge, and in command.

²³⁶ Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH), May 15, 1848.
Brunel needed the photograph to exude an image of strength, for at the time it was taken, the project’s finances were in peril and required additional support. It might seem odd that he thought it would be a good idea to appear as a “man in miniature” as he stood with the giant chains as his backdrop. Yet if we consider that General Tom Thumb was at the peak of his fame in this period, it is not so surprising that Brunel and his photographer mimicked the “Tom Thumb” effect for its ironic power. Brunel at another time indicated that he was fully aware of the paradox of big and small at play in his day. When asked what the Great Eastern should be named, he apparently told his questioners that “they might call it ‘Tom Thumb’ if they liked.”

Given Tom Thumb’s massive celebrity in the period, it is far from fanciful to imagine that, consciously or unconsciously, Brunel and his photographer chose to mimic the miniature performer in the portrait photograph. More important for our discussion, however, is the fact that the photograph capitalized on the disjunction of scale naturally found in Brunel’s professional environment. Another photograph taken by Howlett on the construction site reveals that the ship’s giant launching chains inevitably made any humans working nearby look small (fig. 3.21). The Brunel photograph attests to a profound understanding on the part of both the subject and his photographer of the very modern cultural work that photography could take on. By capitalizing on the ready-made dichotomy of scale on the site, Brunel could not only document his professional exploits, he could perform for spectators his extraordinary accomplishments, in the assumed guise of a human curiosity. In so doing he could draw upon the new empathy for “freaks” on the part of the Anglo-American public, thanks to Barnum’s sideshow aesthetics. Such empathy was likely, as Rosemarie Garland

237 The Life of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Civil Engineer (London: Longmans, Green, 1870), 363n1.
Thompson has argued, a longing on the part of “normal” observers “to be extraordinary marvels [themselves] instead of mundane . . .”\textsuperscript{238} I suggest that it is this very impulse – the desire of the viewing public to be extraordinary too – that Brunel and his photographer took advantage of in the 1861 photograph. Could Hosmer do the same? Only if she could find a photographer who was up to the challenge.

Antonio Mariannecci was well known in Rome in the mid-nineteenth century for his ability to produce photographic portraits that hinted at his subjects’ psychological makeup.\textsuperscript{239} His studio on Via Margutta attracted well-known clients, from the Roman painter Cesare Fracassini to Alexandre Dumas père (figs. 3.22 and 3.23). Mariannecci’s portraits are quite distinct from most carte-de-visite images of the era. As we can see in his images of Fracassini and Dumas, they lack the extraneous impersonal props that usually appear, such as the balustrade and book in the Hosmer carte-de-visite by Scholten from St. Louis (fig. 3.12). Furthermore, the portraits convey the unique characteristics of their subjects through their distinctive expressions and poses. Fracassini’s downward glance through half-closed eyelids gives him a supercilious air; his aura of superiority is reinforced by the fact that his standing figure extends from the very top to the very bottom of the frame, as if he were so giant in stature that his head touched the ceiling. While Dumas’ bulky seated mass appears more approachable, his skeptical leonine gaze suggests that the literary master is measuring the worthiness of the spectator. Most notable, however, is Mariannecci’s facility with composition. He manipulates his subjects and their surroundings to emphasize an underlying structural geometry within the images, and to reinforce the fundamental characteristics of his


subjects. In both cases a mottled floor covering grounds the figures, but otherwise they hover before a solid light-coloured backdrop, which stresses the fundamental shapes at play.

Mariannecci also engaged in off-site documentary photography. An image from 1863, for example, shows a ruined building taken on the day that a fire erupted in the Alibert Theatre, just around the corner from his studio (fig. 3.24). By positioning his camera to the far right of the building’s remains and shooting on an oblique angle, Mariannecci once again captured and emphasized the inherent geometry of the structure (particularly the repeating rectangles), creating a portrait of devastation counterbalanced by an unexpected sense of order. It is apparent Mariannecci was adept at taking photographs in unusual circumstances, and at drawing out the most psychologically and formally compelling aspects of the people or physical environments before him. This talent, along with his obvious sensitivity to the character of his sitters, must have impressed Hosmer, for of all the photographers currently working in Rome, her Italian neighbour was her choice.240

When Mariannecci entered Hosmer’s studio at 5 Via Margutta, we can imagine what he saw there, thanks to the description provided by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his journal (noted at the start of this chapter). It was a large, lofty, skylit space heated by a stove and decorated with an orange tree and an assortment of small flowering shrubs. Small works by Hosmer were scattered about, along with casts of antique works. By now a plaster cast of Zenobia in Chains likely also dominated the space, along with the clay model of the Thomas Hart Benton statue. We can also envision Hosmer’s studio assistants working away on one project or another, as we see in Tompkins H. Matteson’s depiction of Erastus Dow Palmer’s studio

240 Antonio Mariannecci is identified as the photographer on the Thomas Hart Benton carte-de-visite, held by the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University.
In other words, the studio undoubtedly buzzed with activity and appeared somewhat congested with people, plants, clay models, plaster casts, stepstools, ladders, and scaffolding. From the clutter, Mariannecci isolated only the most critical elements – sculpture and sculptor, a single modelling tool, angular climbing apparatus – all before a solid background, to form a strong pyramidal composition (fig. 3.14). In the resulting image we know immediately at what – and whom – we should be looking. Indeed, we have no choice. We take in both the petite Hosmer and her giant creation in one glance. We immediately grasp the significance of the statue. It stands dead centre, with its creator neatly appended to its side. The startling disjunction in scale between creator and creation neatly echoes the prevailing sideshow aesthetics developed by Barnum, in which giants, dwarfs, and their fascinated audience commingled.

How did Mariannecci devise such a striking photograph? Once again he relied on his gift of highlighting the geometrical elements at play. To begin, we can see that the height of the Benton statue is already exaggerated, as it stands on a platform about a quarter of its height and its shape is roughly triangular. Mariannecci took these givens and expanded their visual power. If we mentally subtract Hosmer from the image, we can easily understand how Mariannecci extended the pyramidal composition of the statue: he positioned a short stepstool on the viewer’s left and a taller stepladder on the viewer’s right, both facing outwards, and ensured when taking the photograph that their outer edges extended beyond the frame. In so doing the photographer enhanced the sense of gravitas, stability, and power.

241 Martina Droth has pointed out that a photograph from 1895 of the British New Sculptor Edward Onslow Ford in his studio shows him posing with a range of his work, indicating “the diversity of his skills, and a refusal to privilege the grand monumental project over the small ornamental statuette.” Conversely, then, by editing out all signs of smaller work, Hosmer and Mariannecci insist on the pre-eminence of monumental sculpture in Hosmer’s oeuvre. See Droth, “The Ethics of Making,” 231.
inherent in a memorial statue of an important individual. Now if we reinsert Hosmer’s figure, we can see just why she appears so doll-like and incongruous. She is like a little sprite floating beside and attached to the colossal clay model, an unexpected being that surprises and delights.

Nonetheless, Hosmer is fully integrated into the composition through her pose and appearance, which emphasize a strong synchronicity between the two figures, large and small. Both share similar hairstyles, both wear androgynous clothing – Benton in a flowing cloak, Hosmer in a man’s shirt and pantaloons beneath her skirt – and both wear boots and stand with their left toes just hanging over a ledge. Moreover, a strong diagonal line draws Hosmer and her statue together: Hosmer’s downward-pointing modelling tool, in her left hand, not only points to her creation but finds its twin in the scroll held by Benton. Finally, the left arm of the diminutive Hosmer and the right arm of the oversized Benton mirror each other, forming brackets that further draw the two figures together.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this image is that, despite the difference in the figures’ sizes, Hosmer is clearly in control. Because the Benton statue was to be installed in a park on a tall pedestal, it was necessary for the figure’s head to bow slightly downward. Here, however, the pose could be taken as a gesture of submission by the statue to its creator, whereas Hosmer gazes proprietarily at her creation. Together, Mariannecci and his client contrived a powerful, innovative, and humorously ironic image that insisted upon Hosmer’s position of authority in her studio and her right to the Thomas Hart Benton commission.

With Hosmer’s bold return to her studio, was she then ready to relinquish her other personae, particularly the female “seducer” that we first witnessed in the circa 1860 photograph taken
in St. Louis? As we shall see in the following section, she was not. Through the 1860s, this other, more conventionally feminine Hosmer appeared and reappeared in carte-de-visite portrait photographs. But to what end?

**A Career in Crisis**

In a series of carte-de-visite photographs produced in the United States in 1864, a ladylike Hosmer re-emerges. She appears more mature than the “girlish” Hosmer in the St. Louis photograph, and more engaged with typical feminine style than the stern figure in alternative dress in the Brady photograph. As we will see in this section, when she returned once again to America, Hosmer strove to appear both appealing and accessible.

In the mid-1860s, carte-de-visite photographs stood at the pinnacle of their popularity in the United States. One of the advantages they offered was that multiple images of the subject could be produced in the photographer’s studio at the same time. For the purposes of this discussion we will consider four representative carte-de-visite images of Hosmer, the first two emanating from Black and Case in Boston (figs. 3.25 and 3.26), and the second two from J. Gurney & Son in New York (figs. 3.27 and 3.28), all taken during Hosmer’s tour of the United States in 1864 with her monumental statue *Zenobia*.

At this point we need to segue briefly in order to rehearse the exhibition history of Hosmer’s two monumental statues. It is important to note that her *Zenobia*, not the Thomas Hart Benton statue, had a much larger Anglo-American profile through the first half of the 1860s. *Zenobia* made its debut on the world stage at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Hosmer’s first monumental statue brought her the greatest acclaim she had yet received, and a prominent position at the London exhibition: her statue was given its own special niche in a
large pavilion that also featured John Gibson’s controversial *Tinted Venus*. Following that, Hosmer and her *Zenobia* arrived in the United States. The statue went on display in New York, Boston and Chicago, garnering pages and pages of positive press. The Thomas Hart Benton monument, on the other hand, languished at a bronze foundry in Germany until after the American Civil War. The statue was finally installed in St. Louis in 1868. We can get a sense of the professional anticlimax that must have been for Hosmer when we realize that she did not attend the grand daylong event celebrating the statue’s installation in St. Louis.

It was *Zenobia*, then, that brought Hosmer the highest acclaim for most of the 1860s. But it also brought controversy. In 1863, prior to the American tour, articles in two British art journals promoted the idea that Hosmer did not produce *Zenobia* on her own. Rather, the articles implied that Hosmer relied on the talents of the male workers in her studio to both model and carve her work. Accusations that neoclassical sculptors did not carve their own work were occupational hazards for nineteenth-century sculptors, stretching back to the days of Canova. As discussed above, the Italian sculptor is credited with developing what became the common nineteenth-century sculptural process. This included hiring many workers and using a pointing machine in order to allow for the efficient production and reproduction of a work first created in the form of a small clay bozzetto by the sculptor. Visitors to Canova’s studio rarely saw the sculptor himself at work, as he confined himself to a private room where he worked out his ideas in clay, only stepping in at the end of the marble-carving process to provide the final touches. When his successor, Thorvaldsen, faced the charge that he did not know how to carve marble at all, he humorously replied, “Then tie both my hands

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243 For an account of the installation ceremony, which makes clear that Hosmer was not a participant, see Charles van Ravenswaay, “Lafayette Park,” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 14 (July 1858): 371–73.
behind my back and I will gnaw the statue out of the marble better than you can do it with the chisel.”

However, Hosmer’s case was special. To be accused of not even modelling the work – that is, not coming up with the original conception in a small clay bozzetto – was truly to be accused of artistic fraud. She sued for libel, causing the publications to retract their statements. But in 1864 she also opted to respond in writing, generating an article that clearly explained the steps required to produce neoclassical sculpture. Here she emphasized that the process typically involved many stages and a cadre of talented workmen, and had done so since the days of Canova. Reproductions of the article circulated during *Zenobia*’s 1864 American tour, when Hosmer returned to her home country, and it found its way into the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* in December of that year. In the article, Hosmer put her rhetorical skills to work, as she had in 1860 when she wrote to the committee that commissioned her Thomas Hart Benton statue. Once again she adopted a formal, professional tone that best suited her purposes. And once again she attempted to navigate through the rocky shoals of mid-nineteenth-century gender construction by seeking the protection of, and then rejecting, a traditional female role.

She begins by aiming directly at her target – those commentators who suggested that Hosmer and other sculptors neglected their duties in the studio or were committing some sort of artistic con:

244 Helsted et al., *Thorvaldsen*, 26.
I have heard so much lately, about artists who do not do their own work, that I feel disposed to raise the veil upon the mysteries of the studio, and enable those who are interested in the subject to form a just conception of the amount of assistance to which a sculptor is fairly entitled, as well as to correct the false but very general impression, that the artist beginning with the crude block, and guided by his own imagination only, hews out his statues with his own hands.

So far from this being the case, the first labor of the sculptor is upon a small clay model, in which he carefully studies the composition of his statue, the proportions, and the general arrangement of the drapery, without regard to very careful finish of parts.  

While on the surface Hosmer is offering a rationalization for the practices of all nineteenth-century sculptors – particularly since she employs masculine pronouns – in fact her explanation also serves to reduce the threat of a woman sculptor. By rejecting the notion that the sculptor “hews out his statues with his own hands,” she presents a scenario that denies the dirty, difficult, and even dangerous working conditions she herself surely encountered. The studio that she “unveils” would be congenial to delicate feminine sensibilities and talents: the bulk of the work is done on a “small clay model,” which isn’t even fully completed but rather is produced “without regard to very careful finish of parts,” making it sound very much like a sketch produced by nineteenth-century lady who has taken up art as a hobby. Upon the completion of the small clay model, the sculptor “employs some one [sic] to enlarge his work to any size which he may require; and this is done by scale, and with almost as much

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246 Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, 370.
precision as the full-size and perfectly finished model is afterwards copied in marble.”

While Hosmer is primarily concerned to explain to readers that the finished marble sculpture is true to the sculptor’s original conception in clay, she also underplays the heavy, dirty work that must take place to produce the finished work.

As she continues, she attempts to help her readers understand the role of the studio workers. And in so doing, she steps away from her initial reinforcement of traditional gender roles, now insisting on the “originality” of the sculptor’s initial conception:

To perform the part assigned him, it is not necessary that the assistant should be a man of imagination or refined taste, – it is sufficient that he have simply the skill, with the aid of accurate measurements . . . to copy the small model before him. But in originating that small model, when the artist had nothing to work from but the image existing in his own brain, imagination, refined feeling, and a sense of grace were essential, and were called into constant exercise.

While Hosmer still emphasizes qualities associated with an “acceptable” female artist – refinement, feelings, grace – she defies convention when she states that the sculptor begins with a pre-existing image known only to the artist. Traditionally a woman artist could only copy, not generate something original. Thus Hosmer now aligns herself with the masculine ability to conceive of something unique, which she quickly reinforces:

When the clay model returns into the sculptor’s hands, and the work approaches completion, often after the labor of many months, it is he alone who infuses into the clay that refinement and individuality of beauty which constitutes his “style,” and

247 Ibid.
248 Ibid., 371.
which are the test of the greater or less degree of refinement of his mind, as the force and originality of the conception are the test of his intellectual power.\textsuperscript{249}

This sentence not only insists on the sculptor’s (and thus Hosmer’s own) “intellectual power,” it also reveals that, after all, the sculptor (and thus Hosmer) actually does work on a \textit{large} clay version of the original work while dressed in work clothes and climbing on scaffolding. But of course Hosmer had “lifted the veil” on her own work two years before, in the Thomas Hart Benton photograph by Mariannecci discussed above.

We will now return to the 1864 carte-de-visite images. Judging from the photographs, Hosmer planned her American tour wardrobe with deliberation, posing in nearly identical outfits at the two photography studios. For the Boston and New York photographs, Hosmer devised a conventional, ladylike façade, a more mature extension of her younger feminine persona. To put it another way, she presented herself as an exemplar of typical middle-class American femininity, not as a working artist. In so doing, her public persona at this point aligned with her attempts in her 1864 article to distance herself from the more objectionable aspects of the sculptor’s profession.

In the first Black and Case photograph, Hosmer stands next to a balustrade, a typical studio prop (fig. 3.25). Gazing directly out at the spectator, she rests her right cheek on her right hand. In turn, her right elbow rests on a book, held upright on the balustrade by her left hand, at waist level. The upper part of her body is clothed in a light-coloured shirt with either embroidery or braid trim. A wide, darker skirt encases her lower body, and the skirt also exhibits decorative trim. Hosmer’s sartorial choices in this photograph indicate that she

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 371–72.
wanted to position herself as a thoughtful yet stylish woman, aware of the latest trends. Her top, known as a Garibaldi shirt, was eminently fashionable in the 1860s. The skirt, narrow at the waist and flaring out broadly below, was also typical of the period. Another photograph from Black and Case provides us with more details (fig. 3.26). At her waist we find the popular “Swiss belt,” as it was known, and in her hand Hosmer holds a modish hat with a slightly rounded crown and trim at the front. All of these were attributes of what Joan Severa has called “a conservative . . ., though fashion-conscious, young 1860s woman.”

The first photograph from J. Gurney & Son in New York bears a strong resemblance to the first Black and Case photograph (fig. 3.27). Hosmer is wearing the same outfit and is posed in a virtually identical fashion; only the book is missing. She has, however, added two new elements to her outfit. Notice the purse, or small pouch, that appears to be dangling from her belt. Notice also the white hair-ribbon, which is very similar to the black hair-ribbon she wore in the 1860 St. Louis photograph (fig. 3.12). In the second photograph from J. Gurney & Son, we find a slight but undeniable shift in Hosmer’s demeanour as she turns herself into an even more ideal specimen of femininity (fig. 3.28). She leans forward on both elbows onto a curved armrest. Her hands are clasped and she rests her right cheek on them. Her expression is softer and more solicitous than in the other photographs. The overall effect verges upon flirtatious, which the white hair-ribbon only enhances. Taken together, we find here a Harriet Hosmer who sets out not to challenge the status quo but rather to reinforce it. In mid-nineteenth-century terms, Hosmer sought to craft a non-threatening character that was meant to be a paradigm of the “Cult of True Womanhood.” And judging from an article about Hosmer from the Phrenological Journal, published in March 1872, she succeeded. The

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250 Severa, Dressed for the Photographer, 241.
publication, drawing on the popular nineteenth-century pseudo-science of phrenology, profiled prominent contemporary figures and defined their character for readers, based on accompanying illustrations. The article on Hosmer features a head-and-shoulders engraving of the sculptor that is clearly derived from the first photograph by J. Gurney & Sons discussed above – that is, the portrait in which she is seen standing, with the white hair-ribbon tied round her head (fig. 3.29).

The writer of the article acknowledges Hosmer’s well-known childhood exploits, which were “more like those of a boy than a conventional young lady.” Moreover, Hosmer is characterized as an “unconventional woman whose eccentricities have for years been the standing wonder of the Romans.”251 Yet for all that, the writer insists that Hosmer is at the same time a specimen of mid-nineteenth-century “True Womanhood.” Hosmer wishes she could put hearth and home at the forefront, the writer claims, but has forfeited these longings as she nobly pursues her artistic career. At the same time, she has imbued her sculpture with gently feminine traits:

A woman of this order of mind in selecting sculpture, a robust art in itself, weaves into the constitution of her works her feminine delicacy. Her figures exhibit the higher idealism. The breadth of head in the portrait shows comprehensive judgment with reference to things seen and things thought. There is the earnest practicality of the true woman mingled with the warm imagination of the poet. We doubt not that Miss Hosmer, by giving herself up to the prosecution of her artistic employment, has sacrificed many of her most interior yearnings, for in the contour of her face are seen

the evidences of strong affection, and appreciation of all that enters into domestic relationship.\footnote{252}

The *Phrenological Journal* profile, with the accompanying illustration, indicates that Hosmer could convince her public that she was conventional and ladylike, when she put her mind to it.

But we might ask how at ease Hosmer was with her more genteel persona. Indeed, some photographs from this period indicate that, try as she might to project a feminine demeanour, she could or would not keep her natural inclination towards a more masculine, assertive persona completely in check. We see her move in this direction in the second Black and Case photograph, discussed above. In the first image from that studio, Hosmer holds herself upright in a formal and “respectable” pose (fig. 3.25). But in the second she leans casually to her left, her right hip projecting slightly to the side, in a somewhat boyish pose (fig. 3.26). In another photograph, this one taken in Dublin, probably in the mid-1860s, Hosmer assumes a similar stance, but her right hip projects in a manner that is more than just casual (fig. 3.30). There is something rather challenging in her pose and demeanour here, something unsettling. It appears that, at times, Hosmer found her more demure persona too restrictive to maintain.

We might then ask what kind of psychological price Hosmer paid for her efforts to create an orthodox female persona that forced her to suppress her natural energy, androgyny, and independence. Throughout this chapter we have seen much textual and visual evidence to support the theory that Hosmer’s feminine guise in her photographs was a strategic construction. Another comment by an acquaintance of Hosmer’s further reinforces this

\footnote{252} Ibid., 169.
notion. I have emphasized the presence of the hair-ribbon in the discussion of the Hosmer photographs, because it is such a powerful signifier of frivolous femininity. In a book published in 1886, an old friend of Hosmer’s from her Watertown days tells her own children about knowing the famous artist when they were both young. The friend remarks:

You know I showed you a likeness of Miss Hosmer, who is now in Rome, and who represents America as one of the most noted female sculptors. You know I told you that the ribbon which was tied around her hair was quite unlike the girl, as she looked upon ornament as a foolish waste.253

The friend’s comments convey the notion that she cannot reconcile the Hosmer wearing the hair-ribbon with the Hosmer she knew, and that, moreover, she detects an act of deception on the part of Hosmer in the “likeness.” In any case, Hosmer herself seems to have been dissatisfied with – or frustrated by – her efforts to defend her artistic agency by conforming to mid-nineteenth-century gender norms. In 1867, back in her impressive new studio in Rome, she once again raised the veil on her studio and posed in her “daily costume” for all to see.

**Harriet Hosmer and Her Italian Workmen**

A visitor to Hosmer’s commodious studio in 1867 described the artist’s impressive surroundings in a lengthy letter. The writer’s comments reveal that in her workplace, Hosmer created a magical atmosphere and that she regularly welcomed visitors to share in this environment of her own making:

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253 B. A. (Didama) White, *Three Holes in the Chimney; or, a Scattered Family* (Waltham, MA: Rice & Drake, 1886), 34.
It is the prettiest studio in Rome. The little entrance court, with its beautiful flowers and singing birds, is a delightful change from the hot, dusty streets. When we went in, it being the artist’s reception day, she was showing, to some strangers, the fountain in the center of the first room. On the shells, which form the capital of the high pedestal, in the middle of the basin, a siren sits singing. Below, three charming little water-babies are bestriding dolphins . . .

The writer indicates that in her studio Hosmer is indeed the “charming hybrid” that Lydia Maria Child described four years earlier. She has added warm, feminine touches to the cool confines of her workplace – “beautiful flowers and singing birds.” At the same time, the writer leaves us with an impression of an energetic, opinionated being who leavened her bold manner with more than a dash of boyish charisma:

Miss Hosmer has a very vivacious manner, a little abrupt, and very decided. When she speaks with a clear, ringing voice, in moments when you have, or she has, just said something that pleases her, her expression and manner are exceedingly charming, and her laugh, which came often, is most musical. She wore a little velvet cap, which reminded me of Raphael.

The studio that the correspondent describes can be seen, in part, in a witty and striking albumen print dating to circa 1867 (fig. 3.31). Hosmer stands, arms crossed, in her studio dress, at the centre of a group of about two dozen of her studio workers. They are clustered in the entrance court, surrounded by pillars enveloped in vines. In the extreme foreground the photographer has captured a few leaves from a plant of some kind. The subjects stand in the

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²⁵⁴ The letter is quoted in Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, 221–22. The fountain described by the writer was commissioned by Lady Marianne Alford in England.
²⁵⁵ Ibid., 222.
middle ground. Just behind them we can see the uppermost part of the fountain described by
the letter-writer, with the figure of the siren perched above their heads.

We might wonder what motivated Hosmer, who had been accused of not doing her own
work, to highlight in this photograph the number of helpers she had. But the 1864 article,
discussed above, provides the answer: Hosmer felt it was in her interest to make the
processes of sculpture transparent, as a shield against naive critics. Moreover, in the article,
Hosmer emphasized the fact that the sculptor was the overseer of a group of workmen who,
while talented in their own way, relied on skills that were merely mechanical:

   It is . . . true, that, although the process of transferring the statue from plaster to
   marble is reduced to a science so perfect that to err is almost impossible, yet much
   depends upon the workmen to whom this operation is intrusted [sic]. Still, their
   position in the studio is a subordinate one. They translate the original thought of the
   sculptor, written in clay, into the language of marble . . . . [T]he relation of these
   workmen to the artist is precisely the same as that of the mere linguist to the author
   who, in another tongue, has given the world some striking fancy or original
   thought.  

The studio workers, as Hosmer is at pains to spell out, are mere translators of the sculptor’s
unique artistic conception.

The photograph of Hosmer with her workers is a visual manifesto in which she attempts to
elucidate her thoughts originally expressed in print. And with this image, she demonstrates
both an awareness of and sensitivity to the means by which other sculptors of her day

256 Ibid., 373.
employed visual culture to express their position of power in the studio. For example, in circa 1856 Hiram Powers sat for a photograph with his workers and family members in a large exterior courtyard in front of his studio/residence in Florence (fig. 3.32). What do we see here? On the left side of the photograph, tucked into the darkness of Powers’s studio, is the model for his monumental statue of Benjamin Franklin. The standing and seated subjects, about two dozen in all, are outside, spread across the middle ground of the image. Powers, in his artist’s cap, poses at the centre of the group, over which he has ultimate control. It is reasonable to speculate that Hosmer knew about the Powers group photograph and that she decided to emulate the image in order to show how she too was “in charge.” It is notable that in the Powers photograph, however, the “star” – Hiram Powers himself – is quite lost among the other figures. He is nearly obscured by the women and men who surround him. This fact seems not to have concerned the older sculptor, for the image was obviously deemed acceptable by him. It is undeniable, however, that the Hosmer photograph makes a stronger, more powerful statement. As in the Thomas Hart Benton photograph by Mariannecci, discussed earlier, she is both (unthreateningly) doll-like and dominant. And the effectiveness of Hosmer’s group portrait is no accident. Rather, as another photograph attests, it was the result of an effort on the part of Hosmer and her (unknown) photographer to come up with the most effective composition they could.

To orient our discussion, consider again the Thomas Hart Benton photograph (fig. 3.14). No visual or textual records appear to have survived that tell us anything about the process of creating the image – for example, how many tries it took to get the composition right.

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257 Deborah Cherry also remarks on this motivation, noting that the photograph of Hosmer with her workers “enters into dialogue with depictions of contemporary sculptors. Thomas Woolner was photographed with his workmen not in the studio, but on an excursion to the countryside and in a group reminiscent of a family party. His authority is familial and paternal.” See Cherry, “Harriet Hosmer’s Zenobia,” 112.
However, it seems likely that Hosmer and Mariannecci had to work very hard to get the image just the way they wanted it. For an indication of how much trial and error could be involved, let us return to the example of the Brunel portrait by Howlett, discussed above (fig. 3.20). As noted, the extremes of scale naturally present on the construction site would inevitably have appeared in Howlett’s photographs. Nonetheless, it appears that just how to exploit these extremes in order to reinforce Brunel’s professional status was not immediately obvious to Howlett. We can tell this from two other photographs he took of Brunel. In one, the camera takes in a seated Brunel. Filled with visual clutter, the image stresses neither his personal strength nor the massive chain links (fig. 3.33). In the other, Brunel is now standing in front of the chains, but his gaze off to the side is unfocused, his body slightly limp (fig. 3.34). In both photographs our eye is led horizontally across the image as we try to take in all the elements before us, diminishing our attention on Brunel himself. In what surely must have been the last – and certainly the most successful – attempt, all extraneous elements disappear. Brunel is still leaning against the chains, still looking off to the side, but his pose is now upright rather than relaxed. He is an emblem of masculine strength and ability.

The Brunel example demonstrates that this iconic nineteenth-century portrait photograph was surely the result of experimentation and collaboration between the subject and the photographer. Both kept trying until they got the desired – and most powerful – effect. It was very likely the same for Hosmer and Mariannecci in their creation of the Thomas Hart Benton photograph. And it was undoubtedly the case in the photograph now commonly known as *Harriet Hosmer and Her Italian Workmen*, in which we find Hosmer posing with her workers (fig. 3.31). For, in fact, two different versions of this subject have survived: the one we have been discussing, which has been published widely in the literature on Hosmer,
and another that commentators on Hosmer have overlooked (fig. 3.35).\textsuperscript{258} When we examine it, we can see why it has been ignored; compositionally and technically, it is a total failure. Most obviously, Hosmer must have moved when the photograph was being taken, causing her face to be blurred and unattractive. This would be reason enough to redo the image. However, in the group shot, Hosmer is accorded no special status in her own studio. She stands off to the far right in a manner that is reminiscent of the Harper’s illustration from 1859 (fig. 3.16). Her large fountain dominates the scene but the spectator has no sense of who might have overseen the project – perhaps the tall man in the white shirt and tie who stands at the centre of the group? In the second, much improved photograph, Hosmer stands firmly in the centre, with her workers and even her work consigned to supporting roles. The message is now clear.

Unfortunately the photographer behind Harriet Hosmer and Her Italian Workmen remains unknown at this point. But could it possibly have been the same photographer who created yet another image from the period of a sculptor with his workers? I am thinking here of a photograph of Hosmer’s old friend, the American sculptor William Wetmore Story. Story posed with his workers in his studio in Rome, in an undated photograph (fig. 3.36). The remarkable similarity between the two images is enough to make us consider the possibility that the photographer was the same. In each, the sculptor is positioned in the centre. The workers surround the sculptor. A fountain is in the rear. The main difference is that in the Story photograph, he “shares” the centre space with one of his workers. Which photograph came first – that of Hosmer’s studio or of Story’s? Reasonable conjecture suggests that Story

\textsuperscript{258} The published photograph has appeared in, for example, Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories, 250; Sherwood, Harriet Hosmer, American Sculptor, 258; and Kate Culkin, Harriet Hosmer: A Cultural Biography (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), plate 19.
emulated the Hosmer photograph. If Hosmer had simply imitated the Story photograph, she would not have required two tries (at least) for her own. Hosmer and her photographer perfected the studio shot in a vast improvement over the Powers photograph, creating a model for Story to draw upon.

Throughout this chapter we have seen Harriet Hosmer, chameleon-like, exploit the potential of both fashion and photography to reconstitute her image as the occasion demanded. Her ability to assess situations and respond to them by manipulating her persona at will speaks to a strong desire to control her public image, even if consistency was not a part of her arsenal. For Hosmer, posing both in and outside her studio, hands, hats, and hair ribbons all held potential for sending potent signals to spectators.
Chapter 4
Ephemeral Marble
Photographs of Neoclassical Sculpture in Rome and the Rise of Celebrity Culture

In Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library at Harvard University, a handful of tissue-thin sepia-toned photographs sit, tucked into manila file folders, awaiting the attention of researchers. The prints form part of the collection of Harriet Hosmer’s papers, and each depicts works of sculpture by Hosmer in a nearly identical format. Among the photographs we find her Medusa from 1853, her Puck from 1856, and her Beatrice Cenci, also from 1856 (figs. 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). In each starkly lit image, a single ivory-toned statue floats against a brown background. A slight play of light and shadow hints at a chiaroscuro effect. The photographer has positioned the camera directly in front of the statue, ensuring that our eye focuses on the object before us, as if we were facing it, alone, against a dark wall. Striking and subtle at the same time, the photographs both document and memorialize several of Harriet Hosmer’s key monuments from the most important period of her career.

Where did these photographs come from? When were they taken? By whom? What photographic method was used to create them? The Schlesinger does not offer any specific information about the photographs’ provenance; according to the library’s records, the dates of the images range between 1854 and 1892, a time span that does little to help identify their origin, and no photographer is given credit for their creation. The Schlesinger also does not specify the photographic method; however, as we shall see, my investigation of the photographs strongly suggests that they are albumen prints. The Schlesinger Library photographs are complemented by similar prints found at the Watertown Free Public Library,
located in Hosmer’s hometown near Boston, which holds a number of artifacts and
monuments relating to her career (including her bust Hesper, discussed in previous chapters).
Like the Schlesinger, the Watertown library does not provide any details about the
photographs’ origins. Altogether, we find nearly a dozen albumen prints of Hosmer’s
sculpture in these two institutions, and almost no information about their genesis,
photographic method, or provenance.

This chapter undertakes an investigation of the prints featuring Hosmer’s sculpture that are
housed in the Boston area. In so doing it opens out onto a little-known, short-lived, and yet
tantalizing cultural phenomenon – the commingling of contemporary sculpture, commercial
photography, and celebrity in Rome at the midpoint of the nineteenth century. As we will
see, for a period of approximately fifteen years, from the early 1850s to the late 1860s, the
trade in commercial photographs of contemporary sculpture formed a key part of the tourist
experience in Rome. Purchasing photographs of contemporary sculpture while in Rome was,
in fact, integral to a much better-known tourist phenomenon of the period: visits to the
studios of sculptors who lived and worked in the Eternal City. Like their travelling forebears,
tourists on the Rome leg of the mid-nineteenth-century Grand Tour took great delight in
seeing for themselves the studios where neoclassical sculpture was created, and in meeting
the sculptors who oversaw the activities there. But it was only in the mid-1850s that
travellers could purchase, within minutes of their encounters with the sculptors and their
work, photographic mementoes of their experiences that depicted the very statues they had
seen on display in the Roman studios, created by the very sculptors they had met there.

These photographs were not merely two-dimensional mementoes of three-dimensional
statues on view in the sculptors’ studios. Rather, I contend that they were potent evocations
of tourists’ encounters with mid-nineteenth-century celebrities, that is to say, the sculptors who opened their doors to curious visitors. Sculptors in Rome reaped the benefits of the contemporary Anglo-American cultural media, which repeatedly privileged living sculptors over sculptors from the past and introduced readers not only to their work but to their lives. Thus tourists in Rome sought out the sculptors they had read about and came face-to-face with familiar yet fascinating characters. Photographs of contemporary sculpture for sale in Rome stood as potent simulacra for intimate encounters with celebrity – encounters more thrilling for Rome’s visitors than seeing the art itself.259 The commercial trade in photographs of contemporary sculpture in Rome in the mid-nineteenth century has been almost completely overlooked in studies relating to the history of photography and the history of neoclassical sculpture.260 I argue, however, that the Hosmer photographs, and others like


260 Anthony Hamber’s extensive commentary on photography of art in the nineteenth century focuses on the British scene and does not include any remarks on the photography of contemporary sculpture in Rome; see Anthony J. Hamber, “A Higher Branch of the Art”: Photographing the Fine Arts in England, 1836–1880 (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996). Stephen Bann looks to the experience of French photographers and artists; see Stephen Bann, Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001). In both cases, while the authors discuss sculpture in passing, their primary interest is in photographic reproductions of paintings and engravings. The catalogue for the 2010 MoMA exhibition The Original Copy provides a thorough and up-to-date bibliography on the intersection between photography and sculpture, along with illuminating essays, but does not comment on the intersection between commercial photography and neoclassical sculpture in Rome, c. 1850. See Roxana Marcoci, The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010). Piero Becchetti’s extensive investigations into nineteenth-century photography in Rome focus on the photographers’ images of historical sculpture and architecture, as do numerous other publications devoted to the Roman photographic enterprise, but if they address the phenomenon of photography of contemporary sculpture in Rome at all, they do so in passing. See, for example, Piero Becchetti, La fotografia a Roma dalle origini al 1915, 2nd ed. (Roma: Colombo, 1997). Some historians working on the careers of mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American sculptors have begun to broaden our understanding of the ways that sculptors and photographers collaborated in this period, among them Philip Ward-Jackson’s investigations into the career
them, reward careful study, as they demarcate a critical moment in the emerging bifurcation between *fame* and *celebrity* at the midpoint of the nineteenth century.

My analysis is informed by new studies delving into the birth of celebrity culture. Scholars have situated the transition from fame to celebrity in the Anglo-American world to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As they show, at the dawn of the nineteenth century a new distinction began to appear between the terms *fame* and *celebrity*. *Fame*, as had always been the case, was accorded to those of great genius or heroism whose lasting influence continued long after their death. An individual could attain *celebrity* status, however, on the strength of far more whimsical and transient merits.²⁶¹ In this chapter I position the genesis, circulation, and reception of the albumen prints of Hosmer’s sculpture as an episode in emerging modernity – an episode that is specifically keyed to a cultural shift when artistic renown no longer required great “genius” but rather a media-worthy activity or even, simply, a charismatic personality.

²⁶¹ An article by Elizabeth Barry, published in 2008, provides us with a key insight into the birth of modern celebrity – that is, sudden, fleeting fame accrued to those with only a minor talent or even simply a personal oddity. Barry traces the phenomenon to the advent of obituaries in the new print media of the eighteenth century. Whereas accomplished individuals were previously eulogized in formal epitaphs, the advent of the obituary meant that death became “news,” and, as Barry writes, the “dead gained renown for not only historically momentous acts, or lasting works of art or intellect, but also for ephemeral skills and talents such as acting, singing, sports and eccentric feats of memory and agility.” As a consequence, a new kind of short-lived fame became a “feature of British society,” a feature that extended into the early nineteenth century and beyond. See Elizabeth Barry, “From Epitaph to Obituary: Death and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century British Culture,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11 (September 2008): 259. For more on the birth of celebrity culture, see Tom Mole, *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Mole, *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For an analysis of the birth of celebrity culture specifically in the realm of art history, see Martin Postle, ed., *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005).
Photography as a Sculptor’s Tool

Ironically, the photographs’ ultimate significance to mid-nineteenth-century consumers – that is, as stand-ins for encounters with modern-day celebrities – was entirely unpremeditated on the part of the sculptors and incidental to their original purpose. Through my study of the surviving mid-nineteenth-century albumen prints of Hosmer’s sculpture, I have determined that they were, in the first instance, commissioned by the sculptor to document her work for purely private and professional purposes. It is only thanks to the creative and pragmatic intervention of her photographer that images of her work became available for sale to the general public and took on new meaning. The first part of this chapter, therefore, outlines the circumstances that lay behind the initial creation of the Hosmer photographs. It shows that Hosmer commissioned photographs of her works to send to friends, supporters, and patrons, with no intention of making them available for sale to strangers outside her own social and cultural sphere.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, throughout her career Hosmer demonstrated an understanding of how photography could prove advantageous to her formation as an artist. Indeed, a recurring episode in profiles of the artist, from her day down to our own, foregrounds the importance of photography in her efforts to secure a teacher in Rome in 1852. On the advice of the American sculptor Horatio Greenough, she aimed to get the leading neoclassical sculptor of the day, the British artist John Gibson, to take her on as his student.262 But how best to convince him of her talents? She did not, as we might expect, ship her bust *Hesper*, her first work of independent sculpture, off to Rome. Rather, she carried an

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important promotional tool in her baggage: two daguerreotypes of *Hesper* to show to her potential teacher.

Those daguerreotypes have not survived, so far was we know, and we do not know the identity of the photography studio behind them. In the first two chapters of this study, however, I traced the connections between Hosmer and the Boston daguerreotype studio of Southworth & Hawes, and it seems reasonable to speculate that Southworth & Hawes produced the images of *Hesper*. But regardless of the origins of the daguerreotypes, the fact remains that, rather than go to the cost and take the risk of shipping her bust of *Hesper* to Rome as evidence of her professional accomplishments, Hosmer availed herself of the best photographic means available to her in Boston to bring with her two “copies” of the marble bust, which remained behind in Watertown. The earliest biographical accounts of Hosmer’s career differ as to the exact circumstances under which the *Hesper* daguerreotypes made it into the hands of John Gibson. But they all concur that Hosmer did carry the photographs to Rome specifically to show the sculptor, and that on the basis of this evidence of Hosmer’s talent, Gibson agreed to take her on as his student.²⁶³ He invited her to join him in his studio, where she stayed for seven years. The daguerreotypes of *Hesper*, then, played a critical role in Hosmer’s first major step to becoming a professional sculptor. Once she settled in Rome, as I will show in this chapter, she sought out and worked with photographers in that city to document her newest creations.

²⁶³ For example, an article published anonymously in 1857 in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* states that Hosmer visited John Gibson’s studio with her father and they showed him the daguerreotypes together. An article written by Matilda Hays, published in 1858, says that someone – whom she does not identify – showed the daguerreotypes to John Gibson while he was eating his breakfast at the Caffè Greco. And an article by Lydia Maria Child, published in 1861, does not provide a location but says another sculptor showed the daguerreotypes to Gibson. See “Miss Harriet Hosmer,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, November 7, 1857, 1; M. M. Hays, “Harriet Hosmer,” *English Women’s Journal* 1 (July 1858): 303; L. Maria Child, “Harriet E. [sic] Hosmer: A Biographical Sketch,” *Ladies’ Repository* 21 (January 1861): 4.
However, there was one significant difference between the photography scene in Boston and that of Rome in the mid-nineteenth century. While American photographers such as Southworth & Hawes remained committed to the daguerreotype process through the 1850s and ’60s, photographers across the Atlantic experimented more aggressively with processes that allowed for multiple copies of the images they produced – first the salted-paper print and then the albumen print. Both processes resulted in lightweight paper images, much more portable than the fragile and heavier daguerreotypes, and therefore far more suitable for mailing, a situation of which Hosmer frequently took advantage.

Within a decade of her arrival in Rome, Hosmer created approximately twenty works of statuary that established her as a leading sculptor in that city’s artistic community. Hosmer’s correspondence from Rome in the 1850s and early 1860s clearly demonstrates that she had photographs taken of her works at all stages of their development, and that she included them with letters to her friends, family, and other supporters. By mining the letters between Hosmer and her correspondents, we can map out the circumstances under which photographs of her work came into existence. Moreover, we can discern how Hosmer exploited the efficacy of albumen prints in order to advance her career.

We will begin with the photographs she mailed to family and friends. Sending photographs, especially of new work or work in development, could be the force driving Hosmer to get in touch, as we can see in a letter to her friend Cornelia Crow Carr sent on June 30, 1856:

I want particularly to write to you now, to send the photographs of the bassi-relievi I have just finished. One is “Night and the Rising of the Stars,” and the other is
“Phosphor and Hesper,” which your early mythological researches will remind you are the stars of the Morning and the Evening.⁶⁴

Hosmer’s letter indicates that she is eager to share with her friend back home in America the fruits of her most recent labours. She does not appear to expect any feedback from Cornelia, but simply wants to keep her friend up-to-date on her current efforts. Nor does Hosmer provide us with any information about the circumstances of the photographs’ creation.

However, in another letter, to a friend living in Scotland dating to September 1856, Hosmer speaks directly about commissioning photographs of her work, and her opinion of the results. As is often the case in her correspondence, she employs the conceit that her statues are her children. Writing from Albano, Hosmer says,

Yesterday I went into Rome to have photographs taken of my son and daughter [Puck from 1856 and Oenone from 1855]; the latter was successful, the former only partly so, and we must try again. Master Puck’s god-mother, you know, is to be that dear Mrs. Emily [presumably Emily Sartoris], to whom I am going to send the portraits of her devil-born god-child as soon as they can be printed. I shall send, too, the Oenone, which you must dispose of as you like best.⁶⁵

What can we deduce from Hosmer’s remarks? First, that she commissioned a photographer in Rome to take images of her recent works. Second, that she cast a critical eye over the resulting photographs and had them taken again when they were not up to her standards. And third, that the purpose of the photographs was to send them to her friends to show off her work and as mementoes for them to use as they pleased. What do her remarks leave out? She

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⁶⁵ Ibid., 76.
does not reveal the name of the photographer involved; she does not indicate if the photographs were taken in her studio, although from a practical standpoint we can infer that they surely would have been; and she does not specify whether the photographs captured the works in their clay, plaster, or marble states, or which version of any particular work was being photographed (for example, she created several iterations of her statue of Puck).

Hosmer also used photographs of her work to communicate with her patrons, most notably Cornelia Crow Carr’s father, Wayman Crow (1808–85). Several letters indicate that she sent Crow photographs of her work. For example, in a letter from February 1857, she tells Crow that she is enclosing photographs of Puck and also of her reclining statue of Beatrice Cenci, which she completed in late 1856.²⁶⁶ Crow had a special relationship with the Beatrice Cenci statue, as he had orchestrated a commission for Hosmer from the St. Louis Mercantile Library for a monument of her choosing. Therefore he was the de facto patron of the work. Whether Hosmer sent previous photographs of the statue to Crow is unknown, but to be sure, he would have seen the photograph before he saw the actual work. Hosmer states in her letter that the marble monument has just been sent from her studio and is on its way to St. Louis, via a stop in London, where it will be exhibited at the Royal Academy. The photograph, then, both stood in for and introduced the monument to its patron. Unfortunately, Crow’s opinion of the Beatrice Cenci photograph has not come down to us. However, Hosmer seems confident in her letter that the photograph will do the monument justice and that Crow will see her new statue as an improvement over the previous work she created for him, now in St.

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²⁶⁶ Ibid., 79.
Louis: “I am not afraid to say that it beats the Oenone, which I wish were better, for your sake.”

In other letters to Crow, Hosmer specifically solicited feedback about her works in progress. Unfortunately Crow’s responses do not survive. However, a telling exchange of letters between Hosmer and Anna Jameson (1794–1860) about Hosmer’s Zenobia has come down to us. Here we find that a central function of the photographs Hosmer commissioned was to solicit feedback from others while she could still make changes. Jameson was one of the leading writers about art and women’s history in the period, and she was a keen supporter of the young sculptor. She made an ideal mentor for Hosmer’s project, as she herself had written about the historical figure of Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra.

A letter from Jameson to Hosmer, most likely from October 1858, indicates that the older woman had received a request for her opinion of the monumental statue, still in development, from the young sculptor a month before. Hosmer also sent her a photograph of Zenobia at that time. Jameson’s response to Homer notes that “your letter (dated Rome, Sep. 26th) and the photograph enclosed are lying before me, and I will, as truly as I can, fulfil your wishes in advising and criticizing . . .” After turning to other matters, Jameson provides her feedback at the end of the letter: “The diadem is too low on the brow, this taking from the value and dignity of the face and that intellectual look which Zenobia has, I suppose, as indicative of her talents . . .”

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267 Ibid.
Hosmer took her time in replying to Jameson, only writing back the following August. After apologizing for the delay, she notes that she has taken Jameson’s advice, and furthermore that she has already sent photographs to Jameson demonstrating the changes:

> How far I have availed myself and what the result of the ten months study has been, you may already have an opportunity of judging for yourself, for before coming away from Rome I committed to the tender mercies of Mr. Boardman two photographs of different views of Zenobia and destined for you . . . . So if you have not already received them they will soon be forthcoming and I shall leave them to speak for themselves.269

After commenting on how she further hopes to refine the work, which is apparently still in the clay model or plaster stage, Hosmer remarks of the photographs, “if I had had more time I should have had another view taken, showing the back from the right side and the arrangement of drapery which falls like a train on the ground.”270

Hosmer’s letter to Jameson indicates the important role photographs played for her in communicating information about her work in progress to her supporters. Indeed, in this case she allowed the photographs to speak for themselves, without any accompanying text. Furthermore, we also discover that Hosmer had quite definite ideas about how her work should be photographed – that is to say, from what angles. She appears to have been an active participant in the creation of photographs of her sculpture, seemingly art-directing the photographer who came to her studio. The rationale for creating the photographs is hers, and the photographer is working at her behest.

270 Ibid.
In the evidence presented thus far, Hosmer is in communication about her work with individuals who form part of her close personal circle. She initiates the exchange and sends photographs produced for private purposes. Yet we find an interesting turn of events in early 1857, when people who are not part of Hosmer’s immediate circle begin to request photographs of her work from her. The first evidence of this shift occurs in the aforementioned letter to Wayman Crow from February 1857. Hosmer notes that news of her latest work, the statue of Beatrice Cenci, has travelled across the channel: “Lady Waterford, who is an oracle upon art in London, has written for a photograph of it.”

Louisa Stuart, Lady Waterford (1818–91), was an amateur artist mentored by Ruskin. Part of a wide and aristocratic social circle, Lady Waterford was well placed to spread the word about Hosmer’s statue of Beatrice Cenci, a fact that Hosmer demonstrates she is quite aware of when she calls her new supporter an “oracle” in matters of art. A photograph of Beatrice Cenci in the possession of Lady Waterford would ensure that the right people would become familiar with Hosmer’s new work in advance of its forthcoming exhibition at the Royal Academy in May of that year. How Lady Waterford came to know of Hosmer’s new work is unclear, but she may have heard of it through John Gibson. In any case, the episode is significant because the photograph of Beatrice Cenci takes on new meaning, as a promotional vehicle for Hosmer’s most important work to date, a vehicle that would operate entirely independently of Hosmer and her sphere once it was in the hands of Lady Waterford. Furthermore, the incident testifies to the desire of those at a remove from Hosmer to obtain photographic images of her work.

We find a similar situation two years later, when Hosmer received another request for a photograph of her work, this time from a member of the British royal family. In the spring of

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1859, Queen Victoria’s eldest son visited Hosmer at her studio in Rome, where she was working on her monumental statue of Zenobia. While there, he took delight in Hosmer’s statuette of Puck and commissioned a copy to have sent to London. In the letter to Anna Jameson cited above, Hosmer mentions the Prince’s visit and adds that he “asked me to enclose a photograph of Zenobia to show to the Queen which I have done accordingly . . . Wouldn’t it warm the cockles of my heart if she would take it into her royal head to have a copy.” Regrettably for Hosmer, the Queen did not decide to purchase the statue of Zenobia for her art collection, but we can only assume from the Prince of Wales’s request that he felt his mother would appreciate viewing *Zenobia* in the two-dimensional form of a photograph.

As this brief survey of Hosmer’s correspondence demonstrates, over time the photographs that she commissioned of her work in Rome became desirable objects in their own right, appreciated by friends and coveted by strangers. We should note, however, that in every circumstance outlined here, Hosmer controlled the photographs’ distribution. Her letters give no indication that photographs of her work were available in Rome in multiple copies, nor do we get any notion of the photographer’s role other than as a helpmate to the sculptor, hired to do her bidding. Yet, as we will see in the next section, by the late 1850s copies of the Hosmer photographs – and photographs of work by other sculptors in Rome – indeed existed. Moreover, they apparently circulated in a parallel universe, one that was controlled by commercial photographers, and one that operated completely independently of the sculptors themselves.

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272 Erskine, *Anna Jameson*, 244.
Sculpture as a Photographer’s Tool

Hosmer’s commitment to having her work photographed is further confirmed in a short biography of the sculptor from 1861, published in an American magazine called *The Ladies’ Repository*. The author is Hosmer’s family friend and early supporter Lydia Maria Child. Child notes towards the end of the article that she is writing it in the parlour of the Hosmer family home in Watertown, in order to have ready access to Dr. Hosmer’s comments and the memorabilia on display relating to Hosmer’s girlhood and subsequent career in Rome. She then makes a point of mentioning a sheaf of photographs, depicting numerous works by Hosmer, that was kept in the room: “On the piano lie photographs of her various works in marble: busts, monuments, medallions, and statues.”

Child’s list suggests that Hosmer must have devoted substantial time and energy to having her work photographed. Who, then, did she call upon to aid her in her efforts? On this, Hosmer and her supporters remained mum.

It is unfortunate that Hosmer provided no hint of the photographer or photographers involved in the production of her photographs, or the business arrangements she made with them. But the correspondence of John Gibson, Hosmer’s teacher, offers some helpful details. In a letter written in February 1862 to his friend Susan Horner (1816–1900), a British travel writer, he refers to a bust he has been working on of the (now deceased) Anna Jameson: “I have the pleasure to say that marble bust of Mrs. Jameson is quite finished. I have spoken to Mr. Anderson to Photo. it which he will do befor long, & when this is done I will send the bust to England.”

By “Mr. Anderson” John Gibson undoubtedly means the British expatriate

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274 Gibson’s letter to Horner is included with his papers in MSL/1942/862/7, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum. Written in Rome, it is dated February 15, 1862.
photographer James Anderson (1813–77), well known both then and now for his albumen prints of historic monuments in Rome and its surroundings (fig 4.4). Gibson also reveals that he has ordered fifty prints of the photographs, at a cost of five pounds. A subsequent letter to Horner helps us understand how some of the photographs he ordered from Anderson would be distributed; he indicates he will send a set of the photographs to Horner herself (although he does not specify the quantity). As well, he tells her that a visitor to his studio has requested multiple copies of the photograph of the Jameson bust. He gave to a Mrs. Sherwin four copies, but “then she begged to be allowed to order 10 more . . . to give to her sisters & a few others of her old friends.”

Given Hosmer’s close relationship with Gibson, it is not surprising that she too hired James Anderson to take photographs of her work, perhaps as early as 1856, when she sent the photographs of her bas-relief to Cornelia Crow Carr. And, in fact, textual evidence reveals that Anderson photographed work not only by Hosmer and Gibson but by other sculptors as well. Furthermore, Anderson offered them for sale to the public in Rome from at least 1859 and likely earlier. Confirmation of James Anderson’s trade in photographs of contemporary sculpture in Rome is provided, in part, in the publisher John Murray’s series of guidebooks to Rome. Anglo-Americans in Rome turned to Murray’s, as it was commonly designated in the period, for information on lodging, food, sights, and other matters of interest to tourists. Starting in 1853, the guide also included for the first time details about purchasing photographs of sights and monuments in Rome, albeit only by way of the briefest mention. Subsumed within a section titled “Engravers and Copperplate Engravings,” we find the

275 See MSL/1942/862/8, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum. Also written in Rome, this letter is dated April 4, 1862.
following remark: “Photography has been of late years very successfully applied in delineating the monuments of ancient and modern Rome; and such views may be procured at Cuccioni’s [a local shop], and at all the print-shops, at prices varying from 5 to 10 pauls.”

(As a point of comparison, a half-hour open carriage ride for Roman tourists would cost 3 pauls in 1853, and a full day’s carriage ride up to 30 pauls.)

Five years later, in 1858, photography merited its own entry in Murray’s. Three photographers are singled out as producing the best images of Rome and its monuments: the aforementioned Cuccioni and “two of our countrymen, Messrs Anderson and [Robert] Macpherson.” Of the three, Anderson is identified as “the most extensive producer of photographs in Rome.” In the 1862 edition the entry on photography in Rome is largely similar to that of 1858. However, we find one addition that is very significant for our investigation: the writer notes that along with photographs of Rome’s historical monuments, “Mr. A. has also photographed the works in sculpture of the most eminent modern artists, Gibson, MacDonald, Spence, Cardwell, Hosmer, &c.”

The 1862 entry in Murray’s denotes a significant alteration in the function of photographs depicting contemporary sculpture in Rome. Until now we have understood these to be entities commissioned and distributed by sculptors for their own personal and professional purposes. The only commercial transaction we have encountered was between sculptor and photographer, when Gibson ordered photographs of his Anna Jameson bust from Anderson,

\[\text{\[277\] Ibid., 10.}\]
\[\text{\[279\] A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs; from Part II of the Handbook of Travellers in Central Italy. Sixth Edition, Carefully Revised on the Spot, and Considerably Enlarged (London: John Murray, 1862), xx.}\]
also in 1862. Judging from Murray’s, however, by that time anyone with the interest and the
funds could purchase Anderson’s photographs of Hosmer’s and Gibson’s sculpture, along
with photographs of works by a handful of other sculptors. Thus the ability to attain
photographs of sculpture had expanded far beyond the sculptors’ circles. Total strangers
could now purchase two-dimensional representations of their three-dimensional monuments
from photographers in Rome, without the sculptors’ direct involvement.

How did such a significant transition come about? I believe that the process developed
incrementally, and independently of the sculptors themselves. What began privately, at the
behest of the sculptors, appears to have taken a public turn when James Anderson saw the
potential for improving profits for his business by offering for sale albumen prints from the
negatives in his possession. And he was not alone in this. Although Anderson led the charge
to sell photographs of contemporary sculpture in Rome, his main competitor, the Scottish-
born Robert Macpherson (1811–72), did the same, although to a far lesser extent. By briefly
rehearsing the early stages of Anderson’s and Macpherson’s careers and reviewing their
burgeoning marketing strategies, we can trace the steps by which the photographs they
produced at the behest of sculptors became a significant part of their commercial
photography enterprises – a phenomenon heretofore almost completely overlooked in the
careers of both.280

280 For a summary of Anderson’s career, including his exhibition history and a list of further sources, see
Becchetti, La fotografia a Roma, 272–73. For more detailed examinations of Anderson’s career see Becchetti,
Ritter (München: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Neue Pinakothek, 2005), 11-25. An overview of
Macpherson’s life and career can be found in Becchetti, Robert Macpherson, un inglese fotografo a Roma
(Roma: Quasar, 1987). See also Marjorie Munsterberg, “A Biographical Sketch of Robert Macpherson,” Art
Bulletin 68 (March 1986): 143–53; Alistair Crawford, “Robert Macpherson, 1814–72, the Foremost
James Anderson and Robert Macpherson first arrived in Rome as aspiring painters, the former in 1838 and the latter in 1840. Over the years, each man found that newly emerging innovations in photography, perfect for capturing the magnificent sights of that city, supplied them with a far better chance of financial success. Indeed, Anderson and Macpherson had inadvertently stumbled upon a very good thing when they moved to Rome. Already a community of pioneering photographers had established itself there, congregating regularly at the popular spot for local and international artists, the Caffè Greco, near the foot of the Spanish Steps. Sharing information and new photographic techniques, the photographers captured all that Rome had to offer, first in salted-paper prints and then in the more convenient form of the albumen print.  

While debates raged through the first part of the nineteenth century over whether photography was a “mere” science or a form of art, in the Roman context, photography easily outperformed painting in its ability to capture minute details at close range and whole monuments at a distance. As a writer in an 1862 review of Macpherson’s work remarked, “It has been left to photography to picture Rome in such detail as it is not the province of painting to attempt.”

Anderson’s and Macpherson’s original reason for moving to Rome – to become painters – meant that they started off in that city as part of the artistic community around the Spanish Steps. It was there that they remained as their commercial enterprises blossomed. Certainly the initial impetus for their business was to provide visitors to Rome with keepsake images of the city’s historic architecture and sculpture, along with views from the surrounding area of Italy. But inevitably the photographers’ close proximity to sculptors’ studios led them to

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281 For more on photography in Rome at the midpoint of the nineteenth century, see Roma 1850: Il circolo dei pittori fotografi del Caffè Greco intorno al 1850 (Roma: Electa, 2003); Silvio Negro, Seconda Roma, 1850–1870, 2nd ed. ([Vicenza]: Neri Pozza, 1966), 455–75.
photograph their work. We have evidence that Macpherson collaborated with sculptors as early as 1851; that year he was testing a new photographic process. Two decades later, Thomas Sutton (1819–75), a British photographer and editor of *Photographic Notes*, recalled Macpherson’s experiments in an article in the *British Journal of Photography*, and how he had been with Macpherson in Rome when the latter achieved his first success with the new process. We learn from Sutton that the subject of Macpherson’s “first perfect negative” was “a copy of a statue of Washington, modelled by the late Mr. Crawford, to be cast in bronze for one of the cities of the United States.”

Sutton is surely referring to an equestrian statue by American sculptor Thomas Crawford (1814–57) of George Washington, destined for Richmond, Virginia. Crawford won the competition for the Richmond monument in 1849, and it is possible that he commissioned Macpherson to photograph an early model of the work. In any case, Sutton’s recollection makes a direct link between Macpherson and a sculptor actively working in Rome at the beginning of the 1850s. Furthermore, in 1853 William Wetmore Story reported in a letter that “Macpherson had betaken himself to photography & is eminently successful . . . He is to make a photograph tomorrow of my ‘Little Red Riding Hood.’”

Anderson probably started working with contemporary sculptors around the same time.

Additional proof of Macpherson’s and Anderson’s trade in commercial photographs of contemporary sculpture – beyond the mention in Murray’s discussed above – can be found in the photographers’ catalogues. Beginning in 1858, Macpherson produced catalogues from his studio at 192 Via di Ripetta; at least as early as 1859, Anderson’s catalogues were published by Spithöver’s, a bookseller located at the heart of the Spanish Steps and his sole distributor.

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in Rome. Scholars writing about both photographers cite their catalogues as sources of useful information pertaining to their images of Rome’s historic monuments and views. Yet these same writers largely neglect the existence of another category represented therein: photographs of sculpture by sculptors then living and working in Rome. What do we discover if we devote attention to this long-ignored aspect of the two photographers’ enterprises, as documented in the catalogues?

We will begin with Macpherson’s 1858 catalogue. Broadsheet-style, the catalogue lists approximately 150 photographs for sale, beginning with Rome’s historic buildings and monuments and also including monuments from the Roman campagna. Interspersed among these, however, are lists of photographic reproductions of paintings by both Old Masters and contemporary artists. Of greater interest for our purposes, we also find a smattering of work by contemporary sculptors. John Gibson is represented by photographs of two bas-reliefs (The Hours Leading Forth the Horses of the Sun and Phaeton Guiding the Chariot and Horses of the Sun), along with his Marriage of Cupid and Psyche and three views of his Venus; Lawrence Macdonald by a photograph of his Ulysses; Thomas Crawford by a photograph of The Indian; and Holme Cardwell by a photograph of his Sabrina, from Milton’s Comus.285

If one were to go only by Macpherson’s first catalogue, there would be little argument for devoting any attention to photographs of contemporary sculpture produced in Rome in the mid-nineteenth century. After all, their presence here is negligible. James Anderson’s

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285 According to WorldCat-OCLC, only two institutions hold Robert Macpherson’s 1858 catalogue, listed as MacPherson’s [sic] Photographs, Rome: 192 Via di Ripetta (Rome: Robert MacPherson, 1858): Houghton Library, Harvard University, as part of the Horblit Collection (Houghton p Horblit TypPh 825.58.5465); National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum (21.J Box V). For a reproduction of this and the other catalogues produced by Macpherson mentioned below, see Becchetti, Robert Macpherson, 41–51.
catalogue produced in March 1859 is another matter entirely, however. As noted above, Anderson made arrangements to sell his photographs exclusively through the popular German-owned bookseller Spithöver’s. The firm produced the 1859 catalogue, which takes the form of a small thirty-page booklet. More than five hundred photographs are listed, although within this number there is some duplication, as some images are offered in different sizes. More formally organized than Macpherson’s catalogue, this one is broken down into specific categories, starting with photographs offering views of Rome and nearby Rome; of antique statues of Rome; and then of modern statues and ancient and modern paintings. It is in the latter section that we find sculpture represented – and, remarkably, we find more than one hundred works of contemporary sculpture listed here, created by more than two dozen sculptors. This is a significant percentage of Anderson’s output, and yet it has for the most part been overlooked in scholarly commentary on the photographer.

A second, undated catalogue, probably from the late 1860s, has also survived, and the pattern not only continues but is reinforced. This one, like Macpherson’s first catalogue, is a large broadsheet. The selection of photographs on offer has expanded to a total of 664, again with some duplication, and again broken down into categories. But in this case, “Modern Sculptur. [sic]” is now a distinct category. And here we find double the number of photographs of contemporary sculpture from the 1859 catalogue – nearly two hundred!

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286 According to WorldCat-OCLC, only one institution holds a copy of James Anderson’s 1859 catalogue: Houghton Library, Harvard University, as part of the Horblit Collection (Houghton f Horblit Ref-368). The catalogue is in French: Catalogue des photographies de Rome de James Anderson, mars 1859, en vente chez Joseph Spithöver, place d’Espagne, Rome.

287 For example, Becchetti and Ritter, in their essays on Anderson, both mention his photographs of modern sculpture, but they do not investigate the genesis, circulation, or reception of these images. See Becchetti, “Una dinastia di fotografi romani: gli Andersen,” 58; Ritter, 21.

288 According to WorldCat-OCLC, only one institution holds James Anderson’s undated catalogue (probably from the late 1860s): Houghton Library, Harvard University, as part of the Horblit Collection (Horblit TypPh 825.60.1442), listed as follows: Catalogue of Mr. James Anderson’s Photographs of Views of Rome, Its Environs, Galleries and Museums. List of Orders for Spithover’s Library, 85, Piazza di Spagna.
Perusing the photographs of contemporary sculpture listed in the Anderson catalogues, we find an eclectic panoply of subjects created by expatriate sculptors and their Italian counterparts, including mythological, Christian, and literary figures; famous British and American subjects; and plebeian genre figures. Reliefs, political monuments, architectural elements, and sarcophagi round out the list. In the second Anderson catalogue, for example, John Gibson’s work is represented by twenty-eight photographs, depicting, among other works, Cupid, Psyche, Pandora, A Wounded Warrior, and a bust of the Duchess of Wellington. Eight photographs of works by Harriet Hosmer include Medusa, Oenone, Zenobia, and Puck. The American sculptor Chauncey Ives is represented by fifteen works, including Pandora, Rebecca, A Group of Indians, Sherman, Spring, Sappho, and Boy with Pigeon. Seven photographs of work by the Swiss sculptor Im Hoff are nearly exclusively religious figures, including Eve and Miriam. Meanwhile, photographs by the American William Rinehart include a bronze door for the Washington Capitol, a statue of an American judge, the mythological figures of Clytie and Hero, Christ, The Woman of Samaria, and his Sleeping Children. And, as a final example, nine works by Randolph Rogers include his Nydia the Blind Girl, Ruth, a statue of John Adams, and his genre piece The Truant.

Given the undeniable significance of photographs of contemporary sculpture to Anderson’s commercial enterprise, why have they been largely ignored in accounts of his career? We can turn to recent commentary on his main competitor, Robert Macpherson, for a clue. Macpherson never did exploit the possibility of photographing contemporary sculpture to the degree that Anderson did. However, he certainly devoted a large part of his practice to photographing antique sculpture. Indeed, antique sculpture formed a significant part of the subject matter of Macpherson’s overall oeuvre; he produced two catalogues devoted only to
sculpture. One, from March 1, 1868, features more than one hundred photographs of Vatican sculptures (fig. 4.5). The other, from December 1871, features nearly three hundred sculptures from the Capitol Museum.289 Yet in Alistair Crawford’s estimation, Macpherson’s photographs of antique sculpture form the least distinguished part of his enterprise. In an article on Macpherson’s career, Crawford devotes much insightful analysis to his photographs of architecture and landscapes but disparages Macpherson’s photographs of antique sculpture, writing, “They were to be his most unaccomplished and unmemorable work.”290 And while Crawford acknowledges that Macpherson photographed contemporary sculpture, those images merit almost no commentary whatsoever on Crawford’s part.291 Even in their own day, Anderson’s and Macpherson’s photographs of contemporary sculpture could be overlooked, depending on the circumstances. As we will see in the next section, both Anderson and Macpherson frequently exhibited their work in Britain, where reviewers praised their depictions of antique Rome while their photographs of contemporary sculpture merited barely a mention.

Anderson’s and Macpherson’s Reception in Britain

By the mid-1850s, James Anderson and Robert Macpherson were well known and admired in Britain for their photographs of ancient Roman ruins and antique sculpture. Exhibitions of their work elicited generally positive acclaim, thanks to a widespread enthusiasm for photographs of faraway lands. Indeed, images of distant places were often considered the apex of photography’s accomplishments at this juncture. In 1857 an important contribution to the ongoing debate as to whether photography was an “art” or a “science” was made by Lady

289 For reproductions of these catalogues, see Becchetti, Robert Macpherson, 45–48.
291 Although Crawford does speculate, as I have, that Macpherson’s photographs of contemporary sculpture were a “by-product” of photographs commissioned by the sculptors. Ibid.
Elizabeth Eastlake (1809–93), a British writer and art critic. In April of that year, her overview of the medium of photography was published (anonymously) in London’s 
*Quarterly Review*. Eastlake summed up the history of photography to her own day. She also wrote extensively on the fraught relationship between photography and art, coming to the conclusion that photography was not an art in its own right but *was* a valuable tool for documenting “reality,” including architecture and sights in other lands.  

That same year, an article in *The Art-Journal*, the most influential publication on art in the period, also encapsulated the progress of photography at this point in its history. Like Lady Eastlake’s essay, the article sang the praises of photography’s ability to transfer images of far-distant places back to one’s home and pointed out that artistic and architectural monuments had become some of the most popular subjects in photography.

The appeal of photographs from foreign lands was their evocation of a rich and (nearly) unattainable past. Photographs of Rome’s ancient ruins held the premier place in viewers’ and reviewers’ eyes and minds, and so they were frequently exhibited in Britain to popular acclaim. The first major show of Macpherson’s work took place in 1859 in London, in an exhibition sponsored by the Architectural Photographic Association. A report in *The Builder*, dating to February 12, 1859, highlights an evening of lectures sponsored by the association that showcased “no less than 120 beautiful photographs by Mr. McPherson [sic] representing the temples, fora, triumphal arches, basilicas, amphitheatres, aqueducts, churches, fountains, tombs – every one of which had some valuable history attached to it.”

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lecturer held forth for the audience on Macpherson’s photographs, using them as a gateway to extol the unmatched attractions of Rome itself:

In fact, [the speaker] believed no spot on earth had so great and various points of interest as Rome. A holier feeling might attach itself to Jerusalem, and a bright, though transient, literary history to Athens. But Rome was not only the seat of the empire of the world; the home of poets, orators, and statesmen; the cradle of the arts; but here were the footsteps of the first apostles; here was shed the blood of the first martyrs of the Church; hence went forth the missionaries of the truth to the western world; and hence we derived our arts, our civilization, and our religion.  

Each and every photograph of Rome’s monuments by Macpherson functioned as a Romantic index of that great city’s illustrious past.

In 1862 a much larger exhibition of Macpherson’s photographs from Rome was staged in London by the Architectural Photographic Association. A report in the August 15 issue of the Photographic News speaks to both the prolific nature of Macpherson’s work in Rome and the writer’s admiration for the same:

A fine and interesting series of photographs of various treasures of architecture, sculpture, painting, &c, in Rome, produced by Mr. Macpherson, is now exhibiting . . . The number of pictures is between four and five hundred, of which one hundred and thirty are devoted to the Vatican sculptures. The interest of the subjects of these pictures does not require one word of comment, and the photographs are for the

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295 Ibid., 110.
most part very good. We commend such of our readers as have the opportunity, not to lose the chance of inspecting them.\textsuperscript{296}

Here the writer makes special mention of Macpherson’s photographs depicting antique sculpture from the Vatican. Despite Alistair Crawford’s protests noted above, the \textit{Photographic News} review makes it clear that Macpherson’s photographs of antique sculpture were appreciated in his own day. Yet what is missing in the commentary on Macpherson’s exhibitions is any mention of his photographs of \textit{contemporary} sculpture. The aforementioned \textit{Art-Journal} review of his 1862 exhibition is the exception that proves the rule: it does in fact take glancing note of photographs by Macpherson that feature the work of John Gibson: “mixed up with [the images of the Vatican sculpture] we come to some bas-reliefs good enough to have been stolen from Athens during the ‘bloom’ of attic sculpture. They are by one John Gibson, R.A., of greater name in Rome and the sculptural schools of the continent than of his own country.”\textsuperscript{297} Whether or not the writer’s opinion of John Gibson’s fame in his own country is accurate (I believe that it is not, as I will indicate below), he or she makes short work of the photographs themselves.

Anderson’s work did not have quite the same high profile in Britain as Macpherson’s during this period as he did not hold any solo exhibitions. But his work was known through group exhibitions, and as the following remark makes clear, he was held in the same high regard in Britain as his Roman competitor: “Two of our countrymen [are] amongst the chief photographers of Rome…Messrs. Macpherson and Anderson.”\textsuperscript{298} Probably the most

\textsuperscript{296} “Photographs of Rome,” \textit{Photographic News}, August 15, 1862, 396.
\textsuperscript{297} “Photographs of Rome,” \textit{Art-Journal}, 227.
\textsuperscript{298} This remark comes from an article in the \textit{Photographic News} reporting on an exhibition that opened in London at the Architectural Photographic Association in early 1860. Becchetti has suggested that both Anderson and Macpherson displayed worked at this exhibition. However, the \textit{Photographic News} article seems
important showcase for his photographs came in 1862, when they formed part of Rome’s display at the International Exhibition in London. He submitted his views of modern sculpture as well as those of ancient architecture and sculpture. Yet overall, like Macpherson’s, Anderson’s reputation in his native land was for his photographs that evoked Rome’s ancient past.

Macpherson’s and Anderson’s photographs of Rome had two strong factors operating on their behalf. First, they exemplified the highest accomplishment that photography could attain – at least in the opinion of Lady Eastlake and others like her – that is, the faithful and factual rendering of “foreign” sights, and particularly architecture, for the appreciation and admiration of curious spectators. Second, and more important, they conjured up the city of Rome itself, its rich and romantic associations with myth and history, paganism and Christianity, great conquests and equally great defeats. Macpherson’s and Anderson’s images of historical Rome, regardless of their specific subject matter, enticed viewers with the Eternal City’s aura of timeless glory. Therein was the recipe for the photographs’ success.

We must ask, then, with such dependable subject matter on hand, why did James Anderson devote a significant portion of his commercial enterprise to photographs of contemporary sculpture in Rome – photographs that we might imagine lacked the inherent appeal of his images signalling Rome’s ancient past? The answer, as we will see in the next section, lies in

to indicate that only Macpherson exhibited there and that Anderson was mentioned as his professional equal, but not as one of the exhibitors. Becchetti also suggests that Anderson’s work was exhibited in 1857 at the Scottish Society of Photography. See Becchetti, “Una dinastia di fotografi romani: gli Anderson,” 59; “The Architectural Photographic Association,” Photographic News 3 (February 10, 1860): 266. The works from Rome sent to London are listed in a publication that describes Anderson’s contribution as follows: “Un volume di fotografie esprimenti alcune vedute di Rome e sculture antich e moderne.” Specific works are not listed. See Elenco degli oggetti spediti dal Governo Pontificio all’Esposizione Internazionale di Londra (Roma, 1862): 52.

the fact that Anderson’s photographs of modern sculpture (and Macpherson’s, so far as he produced them) represented for viewers not enduring recollections of times gone by but rather exciting touchstones of modern celebrity culture.

Sculptors in Rome: Famous Yet Familiar

No trip to Rome in the mid-nineteenth century was complete without a tour of sculptors’ studios, an activity vigorously endorsed in both the cultural and popular press. As noted earlier, in 1862 Murray’s Rome edition began to promote James Anderson’s photographs of contemporary sculpture to its readers: Anglo-American tourists in Rome. The notice about Anderson’s photographs complemented an ongoing feature in Murray’s that informed its readers about the locations of the sculptors’ studios, so that tourists could visit the artists while they worked. But Murray’s was only a cog in the larger Anglo-American cultural machine that advocated travel to Rome and the desirability of meeting sculptors in their studios. Throughout the 1850s and ’60s, numerous travel-related articles and guides about Rome highlighted the appeal of touring sculptors’ studios and meeting the sculptors themselves.

Certainly tours to neoclassical sculptors’ studios were not a new occurrence. Indeed, an early guide catering to this interest was published in 1841, titled Walks Through the Studii of the Sculptors at Rome. The author, Count Hawks Le Grice, suggests in his preface that this is the first such guide to be published in Rome. Throughout, he moves from studio to studio and describes the monuments he finds there. His detailed, erudite remarks provide the mythological, religious, historical, or literary backgrounds of the works of statuary and their

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301 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).
sculptural precedents. What he does not discuss, however, is the lives of the sculptors. He devotes almost no attention to their training, their exhibitions, or their awards; rather, Le Grice offers long exegeses on their timeless works of “genius.”

A decade later, we find a significant shift in Anglo-American commentary on sculptors and their work, with an emerging emphasis on the careers and personalities of contemporary sculptors. We can track this trend in England at the midpoint of the nineteenth century in the pages of *The Art-Journal*. Originally launched in 1839 as the *Art Union Monthly Journal*, the publication gained new owners a decade later, when it was rechristened with its new title. At this point we also find an increasing emphasis on the promotion of “modern” sculpture in the publication. Each issue includes engravings of recent statues, and each engraving is accompanied by a short article. In some cases, as in Le Grice’s book, these articles focus on describing only the works of art. But through the 1850s we find that the emphasis of many of the articles is increasingly on the careers of the sculptors themselves.

Let us take three issues from *The Art-Journal* in 1855 as samples. In January, readers would have found an engraving of *Sappho*, by the British sculptor William Theed, with an accompanying short article about the work (approximately seven hundred words long, a standard length for these entries). The article begins by discussing Sappho’s special suitability as a subject for sculpture. Next we find a comment on Sappho’s poems, a possible contemporary literary source for Theed’s statue, a note that the statue was commissioned by the Queen, its current location, and finally, in the concluding remarks, a description of the “exquisitely modelled” monument.\(^{302}\) There is no mention of Theed, his career path, the

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location of his studio, or his other works. The emphasis is entirely on the statue of the mythological figure, not the modern man who created it.

In contrast, the February article features an engraving of *The Lion in Love*, from a group by the Belgian sculptor William Geefs, and this one starts not with the work but with the artist. We learn of his birthplace, where he studied and with whom, the first work he exhibited, his first major commissions, and other important works and exhibitions. We even find a quotation from a positive review of his work. Only then do we encounter commentary on the statue itself. The writer concludes that it is “a work of high Art, the production of a man of genius.”

A genius Geefs may well have been, but thanks to this article he would also have been more familiar to the reader than Theed, who remains a nonentity in the January article.

The featured sculpture in the April 1855 issue is *Love Reviving Life*, by Carlo Finelli. This article celebrates both the individual sculptor and, more broadly, contemporary sculptors working in Rome. It begins with a tribute to the founding fathers of neoclassical sculpture – Canova, Thorvaldsen, and Flaxman – and then notes that thanks to their artistic interventions in the first part of the nineteenth century, “Rome is once more the resort of men from all parts of the world who study or practice this the grandest of the Arts.” Finelli is of course one of those artists, and the article goes on to provide a few details about his life and then some comments about the sculpture itself.

Month by month, through the mid-1850s, *The Art-Journal* provided readers with insight into the careers of sculptors living and working in Rome. In April 1857 Harriet Hosmer was the highlighted sculptor, represented by an engraving of her reclining statue of Beatrice Cenci by

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W. Roffè. The description that accompanies Hosmer’s work is both typical and atypical of similar entries in *The Art-Journal* in the late 1850s. It is atypical because of the artist’s unusual status as a female sculptor, which the entry makes a point of emphasizing. It is typical, however, in providing biographical information about her career formation. The writer strives to individualize Hosmer, noting not only her talents but her aims and dreams, creating for the reader a sense of intimacy with the young American woman: “Animated by an ardent desire to devote herself to sculpture, and feeling that in Rome only the knowledge she wished for could best be gained, she, accompanied by her father, set out for Italy about four years since.”305 The writer discusses Hosmer’s close relationship with her teacher in Rome, John Gibson, stressing the congenial nature of their relationship: rather than being his “professed pupil” she is the “artist-friend of our countryman, who offers the lady such advice and assistance as he considers may be useful, but leaving her to follow the current of her own genius and inclination.”306 Readers could form a picture in their minds of Hosmer at work in Rome, staking out an independent career for herself with the support of the best-known neoclassical sculptor of the day. They too would be inspired to befriend the young artist.

There was no actual picture of Hosmer in *The Art-Journal*, but rather an illustration of her work. Later that year, in 1857, two illustrated periodicals in the United States further encouraged the feelings of familiarity readers could develop for Hosmer by including portraits of the sculptor along with flattering profiles. As discussed in chapter three, *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, published in New York, and *Ballou’s Pictorial*, published in Boston, each featured a woodcut portrait of Hosmer on their covers, derived from

306 Ibid., 124.
photographs the sculptor (fig. 3.8). Now readers on a mass scale could familiarize themselves with Homer’s appearance and decode her personality based on her physiognomy.

A consequence of the Anglo-American media’s focus on the lives and careers of sculptors in Rome was that, for a brief moment in history, a visit to their studios became the most popular element of a trip to Rome – better than seeing ancient ruins, classical statues, or Renaissance or Baroque art. A writer named F. W. Fairholt makes this phenomenon clear in a series of articles published in *The Art-Journal* in three parts in 1857, in which he provides readers with a guide to the city. Throughout, Fairholt is an accessible narrator, interested in sharing his experiences with his readers rather than showing off his erudition. In the first part of his series, Fairholt offers readers an account of the places and monuments one would come across on the way into Rome, first impressions once one had arrived, and what one would discover in and around the Roman Forum. The next part focuses on galleries exhibiting ancient sculpture, in particular the Capitoline and Vatican Museums. In the final part, Fairholt is concerned with Rome’s “modern art.”

Fairholt begins the last section with a description of art in Rome from the Renaissance through the Neoclassical periods, touching on the work of Michelangelo, Bernini, and

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308 For a more detailed discussion of Hosmer and physiognomy, see chapter three. Tom Mole has remarked on the impetus behind the new illustrated press and their promotion of contemporary figures through articles and portraits. He interprets this thrust as a strategy on the part of the media to “warm up” the relationship between mass-produced publications and their readers: “The growth of celebrity culture . . . eased the sense of industrial alienation between readers and writers. The celebrity apparatus [Mole’s term for the conditions that led to the birth of celebrity culture at the turn of the nineteenth century] relied on the concealed use of new cultural technologies to construct an impression of unmediated contact.” See Mole, *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity*, 22.


Canova. The section concludes, however, with Fairholt’s commentary on the art of his own day – and it seems that he has saved the best for last. He informs his readers that of everything to see in Rome, “the studios of the modern sculptors – including as they do many who are Romans only by residence – are among the most delightful visiting places within the whole city walls.” Moreover, the sculptors he meets are a friendly and informal crew, ready to welcome strangers into their workplace: “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.” Beyond the studios, Fairholt is charmed by the sense of artistic community he finds in Rome. The international artists living and working there form a “band of brothers” among whom “art is the cement of friendship and peace.” He is also smitten with the sculptor’s lifestyle – or at least his conception of it, consisting of devotion to artistic pursuits and genial socializing:

They have their known resorts, and one famed one is the Café Greco, in the Via Condotti, where coffee, ices, tobacco, and general conversation employ their evenings, and where breakfasts of a simple kind are generally eaten. An artist’s day is passed in his studio, and if his dinner be not sent from a trattoria, he goes there. It would not be easily possible to mention an existence more replete with the elements of happiness than that of a true votary of art.

Ultimately, for Fairholt, the sculptors’ studios in Rome offer the most value of all the city’s offerings because the artists working there provide visitors with a direct conduit to the beauty

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312 Ibid., 154.
313 Ibid.
314 Ibid.
315 Ibid.
of art: “If Rome offered no other lesson, this, that teaches the amenities Art always offers to its devotees, whether the professional or the amateur, is worthy of all consideration.”

Interestingly, in contrast to his praise of the sculptors and their work, Fairholt disparages the work of photographers in Rome who are documenting the city’s antique sculpture to sell to visitors. He declares that many of the photographs of ancient sculpture for sale in Rome are technically inferior, and that the only way to truly experience those same works is to see them in person. Fairholt’s remarks in this regard appear to indicate a kind of anti-photography snobbery on his part, but they do not undermine my larger point; as we have seen, photographs of Rome’s historic monuments by Macpherson and Anderson were widely admired during this period. And, despite Fairholt’s reservations, another travel article about Rome, published in Britain in 1858, makes an unambiguously positive connection between visiting sculptors in their studios and purchasing photographs of their work.

This article appeared in a monthly magazine called Titan. It is the second of a three-part series in which the anonymous author recounts the experiences, in diary form, of his travels from London to Rome. The writer visits all of Rome’s major sights and monuments – its churches, its museums, its palaces, its ancient ruins – and provides readers with his candid opinions about all he encounters. Finally, he makes his way to the studios of sculptors working there, and, like Fairholt, expresses sincere enthusiasm about his experiences:

> The studios are most interesting, especially those of the sculptors. I have been to Gibson’s, Macdonald’s, Tenerani’s, Bienaimé’s, and others. These are the four most eminent. Gibson stands supreme. If his Venus had been dug up in some old

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316 Ibid.  
garden, minus the left hand, or with the point of her nose off, a thousand critics
would have clustered round it and praised it as a masterpiece of art. In his studio
you will see a Puck and some other beautiful work by Miss Hosmer, an American.
Macdonald is very strong in busts. His Bacchante is one of the loveliest statues I
ever saw; the face certainly the most beautiful I have ever beheld in marble. Gatley
is a very promising artist; at present he is at work on a large bas-relief of Pharaoh
and his chariots, which is going to Edinburgh . . . . A young German, Hassenpflug,
has just finished a Cupid and Psyche for the King of Prussia. It evinces wonderful
genius . . . .

Despite his excitement about visiting the sculptors’ studios, the writer’s analysis of the works
he encounters is far from deep. His highest praise is that Gibson’s Venus could be mistaken
for an antique work – the same rhetorical strategy employed by the writer of the review of
Macpherson’s photographs depicting Gibson’s bas-reliefs that we saw in the previous
section. The experience of visiting the studios seems to involve picking out a favourite work
or two in each one and then moving on to the next.

At the end of his discussion of the sculptors’ studios, the writer of the Titan article makes an
explicit link between his visits there and purchasing photographs of the work on view: “All
the best works of the sculptors are reproduced in photographs with surprising skill, by
Anderson and Macpherson.” The writer also alludes to the photographers’ views of Rome
and its “ruins,” but it is the photographs of work by contemporary sculptors that he
specifically suggests his readers seek out. Let us stop, then, to ask a question. For the visitors

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319 Ibid.
to Rome’s studios, what would be the appeal of photographs of their sculpture? Obviously
they would serve as mementoes of tourists’ visits to the sculptors’ studios, but could they
signify something more? Another article, published in the United States, provides some
insight.

A “letter from abroad” by a writer named Candace Vagor appeared in *Graham’s Illustrated
Magazine* in 1857. Through a humorously jaundiced eye, Vagor offers an acid
counterbalance to the sincere sentiments of Fairholt and the anonymous author in *Titan*, but
her article supports their remarks; that is, the opportunity to meet the sculptors was the
primary appeal of the Roman studios. Vagor begins by suggesting, as do Fairholt and our
anonymous author in *Titan*, that the sculptors’ studios were the most popular sights in Rome,
and she has several (ironic) explanations for this. For one thing, by now a trip to Rome is so
strongly identified with invading sculptors’ studios that nothing else equals the uniqueness of
this truly “Roman” experience:

> Rome’s impresses of men are deep – but those of God are deeper. But neither of
these, either in her highest art, or in the master studios of nature, are fully
decyphered [sic] by most travelers here. The studios of modern artists engross
many visitors more than all else Rome contains. They feel that God and time are
working everywhere: they have skies, hills and plains at home – the world’s history
is written on their shelves . . . . But as for the chiseling of marble and the making of
pictures, it is Rome’s specialities [sic], and they must give themselves up to it
here.\(^\text{320}\)

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\(^{320}\) Candace Vagor, “Letters from Abroad, No. 4,” *Graham’s Illustrated Magazine* 51 (July 1858): 50.
Even those who come to Rome determined to appreciate “Art” are drawn to the studios of the living sculptors over the experience of haunting museums filled with antique sculpture. Why? Because visiting a sculptor’s studio is, in a word, simpler. The appreciation of antique art requires study, preparation, and concentration. The appreciation of sculptors’ studios requires only eagerness to meet the artists and a willingness to listen to those same artists promote their work – and themselves:

. . . the studios of sculpture have a more heartfelt, sympathetic interest than the galleries of antique works. The latter are found long and fatiguing, from reasons not always conscious to themselves, since most of their beauties are inappreciable to the uneducated eye, unless pointed out by a profounder connoisseur; and besides, what is done for vanity or fashion, or mere duty’s sake, without the staffs of knowledge and love, soon tires out the soul and body. While in many of the studios, the artist stands ready to explain his works, to interest the visitor as much in himself as in them . . . .

And it is through this exchange – the tourist meets the sculptor, the sculptor entertains the tourist with lively anecdotes about his or her life and work – that the visitor “learns” about art, or at least the art of that particular artist: “the latter comes away full of the artist’s own feeling, and believes he himself has had a spontaneous admiration and appreciation of his works.” Vagor points out, however, that if the sculptor is not available or willing to engage with the eager audience, the impact of his or her art is completely lost:

321 Ibid., 50.
322 Ibid.
It is very amusing to trace these effects, particularly when the artist’s tongue is more potent than his talent, and to see the flat indifference of these same visitors, after a call on Page [the painter] or Gibson, if they have found them better occupied, indifferent or in silent moods. All this simply shows how willing the uneducated taste is in art to receive impressions, and how incompetent it is to do so at first, without exterior aid, just as the child must be led before it can go alone.323

Based on Vagor’s comments, we can easily imagine the enthusiastic and newly converted visitors, awash in the glow of their encounter with an entertaining sculptor, rushing just a few blocks away to purchase photographs of that very sculptor’s work. Which photographs they chose would hardly matter, as the images would be signifiers of their encounters not with the works but with the works’ creators, those “famous” – and entertaining – artists with whom they had now become so familiar. How could they prolong their encounters, in a period just before cartes-de-visite portrait photographs made their mark? It was the tourist’s urge to celebrate his or her brush with celebrity that James Anderson seems to have understood, and that he set out to exploit with his expansive offering of photographs of “modern” sculpture produced in Rome. The photographs would serve as potent reminders of a thrilling event.

But still, one wonders why Anderson did not focus on only the best statuary by the best sculptors, as Macpherson did, rather than offering the eclectic array of images we noted earlier. Why bother with genre works such as Ives’s Boy with a Pigeon or Rogers’s The Truant, when he could have concentrated on more prestigious neoclassical works such as Gibson’s Venus or Macdonald’s Ulysses? Once again Candace Vagor offers an explanation.

323 Ibid.
She makes the claim that visitors to Rome’s sculptors’ studios were just as likely – even more likely – to be impressed by inferior art as opposed to superior art. As she explains,

. . . in art, as in morals and life, worthy objects of interest are not always those that appeal to popular taste; and even among people otherwise conscientious and discriminative in morals, I find those who do love most what is worst in art, and in their visits to studios, I have often remarked their acme of admiration before the frivolous, thoughtless, meretricious productions of a prating artist, who points out, explains, and entitles his works, that you may be sure what they are, as the heading of “Poetry” in a newspaper column does for the verses below; and I have seen this enthusiasm dwindle by successive stages in visiting the better and better studios of sculpture, till finally at Gibson’s they acknowledge themselves utterly disappointed. “They are tired of naked Venuses,” “they dislike colored statues,” and they “did not notice at all the ‘Huntsman.’” Therein first tacitly acknowledging what almost all uneducated in art are alone sensitive to, viz., the faults of good works, and their utter obliviousness of an impression from the most faultless ones.324

Vagor’s comments provide us with a plausible explanation for the breadth of photographs of “modern” sculpture offered for sale by Anderson: visitors to Rome’s studios were not discriminating in terms of what they saw. They did not seek out the best works but only the intriguing experience of meeting sculptors. Art good or bad was of equal interest. Anderson’s strategy, then, was to offer it all. We will probably never know how many tourists purchased Anderson’s photographs. But the number of images he offered for sale through the

324 Ibid., 51.
Spithöver’s catalogues, and the number of tourists who frequented sculptors’ studios in Rome, suggest they may have been in the thousands. And yet this active trade in photographs of contemporary sculpture is barely discernible today. Why, in the end, have these photographs not survived in any quantity, while Anderson’s and Macpherson’s photographs of Rome’s historical ruins and antiquities have?

“My Little, Simple Souvenirs”

An article published in the American magazine *Appleton’s Journal* in 1875 demonstrates just how photographs of contemporary sculpture could act as reminders of contact with sculptors in Rome. The article is titled “My Souvenirs,” and in it the writer, Sallie A. Brock, recalls her visit to Italy some years earlier. At the outset of the article, Brock states that it was instigated by small “mementoes recalling scenes, personages, and incidents.” Among the mementoes she contemplates are a paperweight, pressed roses, and “a portfolio of photographs, all of statuary, and the most of them the work of modern artists.” For Brock, all three stand equal in her mind – they are “little, simple souvenirs.” And they equally serve to remind her of the people she met. Indeed, when she surveys her photographs, she does not comment on the statuary represented there. Rather, the photographs induce memories of a visit to a sculptor’s studio and of the sculptor himself, whom the writer describes with seemingly perfect recall, as if she were gazing at his portrait photograph rather than depictions of his work:

> He was a man of medium size, thin and angular, with a pale, fair complexion, light-brown hair and beard, clearly cut but by no means distinctive nose and mouth, a

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326 Ibid., 77.
327 Ibid., 79.
forehead neither very high, very broad, nor massive, but a pair of kindly, thoughtful blue eyes, which redeemed his face from absolute plainness. Such was William B. Rinehart, whom one in passing would simply pronounce as an indifferent-looking man, but who was acknowledged in Rome to be a diligent student, and the most successful revivalist living of the old Greek school of sculpture.\(^{328}\)

Brock reveals that Rinehart gave her the photographs of his work. But her reaction to them would have been, I believe, just the same as if she had purchased them herself. That is, once home, the photographs operated as signifiers of her face-to-face encounter with a famous sculptor, not merely as two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional statuary. Moreover, they are fundamentally ephemeral: humble memory aids no more precious than flowers pressed between the pages of a book.

In the end, Brock’s article is elegiac, for all three sculptors she discusses have since died:

Yes; here before me are my little, simple souvenirs – my paper-weight . . . my photographs, and my pressed roses – while they who gave them me now lie low in the dust, with the winds whispering above, of their aims, their efforts, and their accomplishments. T. Buchanan Read was the first to go; then, Hiram Powers; and last – Rinehart. Peace to their ashes!\(^{329}\)

The implication of her commentary is, of course, that when Brock herself is no longer living, the meaning of her souvenirs, including her photographs, will disappear with her memories.

Brock’s assessment of her photographs of Rinehart’s sculpture as mere souvenirs goes far in helping us to understand why photographs of contemporary sculpture from mid-nineteenth-

\(^{328}\) Ibid., 78.  
\(^{329}\) Ibid., 79.
century Rome have all but perished over the past 150 years. They would have had little
significance for anyone but the person who obtained them on his or her travels. The fact that
the enterprise of neoclassical sculpture in Rome came to a close by the end of the nineteenth
century further contributed to the photographs’ demise.

We can see clear evidence of the approaching expiration of the neoclassical sculptural
enterprise in Murray’s Rome guide from 1881. Certainly Murray’s continued to promote
visits to sculptors’ studios in this edition. However, the production of neoclassical sculpture
comes across as an increasingly empty pursuit, practised in studios sometimes empty of the
sculptors themselves. As the writer points out, Harriet Hosmer “quitted Rome in 1879, to the
regret of all interested in the higher class of Art.” Her studio remained open and visitors
could still see her earlier work, but the main reason for coming to the studio – Hosmer herself
was gone. And by 1881, Macdonald, Tenerani, and Wolf were all dead, although their
studios continued to operate without them. A further death knell is sounded in the entry on
the Italian sculptor Monteverde, whom the writer describes as “a very talented sculptor in the
new realistic school, as opposed to the school of classic beauty. Monteverde’s subjects are
selected with a view to character and force of expression rather than the repose of
loveliness.” This conversion to realism would have been typical by now of many sculptors
in the 1880s, and the majority of them would have been working in Paris rather than Rome.

Meanwhile, let us turn to Murray’s entry on photography in Rome. As in all previous
editions since 1862, the writer directs readers to Spithöver’s to purchase photographs of

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331 To better understand how much Hosmer’s presence in Rome would be missed, we need only contrast the
1881 entry on her studio to that of the 1875 edition, which notes that “[the studio] is open at all times to the
public, the talented artist herself receiving visitors from 12 to 1, except on Mondays and Tuesdays.” Five days
out of seven, Hosmer took time to meet members of the public. See A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs, 12th
ed. (London: John Murray, 1875), 49.
332 Ibid., 20.
Rome’s antiquities and its modern sculpture by James Anderson. But in 1881 the writer no longer specifically identifies Anderson’s photographs depicting the work of the five modern sculptors he has highlighted in each edition of Murray’s from 1862 to 1875: that of “Gibson, Macdonald, Spence, Cardwell, and Miss Homser.” Gibson, MacDonald, and Spence were all dead; Hosmer had largely left Rome behind, and only Cardwell was still active. The Murray’s writer apparently decided that by 1881 photographs of work by these artists were no longer of great interest to the publication’s readers. With the change to the entry on Anderson in Murray’s, already Rome’s neoclassical sculptors were becoming nameless.

And yet traces of photographs depicting mid-nineteenth-century sculpture from Rome do survive, despite their inherent ephemerality, including the Hosmer photographs introduced at the beginning of this chapter. Let us return, then, to those prints. What can we now determine about their genesis? To start, it should be pointed out that at least some of the photographs preserved in Boston are quite likely the very prints that Hosmer sent home, the ones that Lydia Maria Child wrote about in her 1861 profile of Hosmer published in The Ladies’ Repository. As noted above, Child described a portfolio of photographs depicting the sculptor’s work that sat on the piano in the Hosmer family parlour. Years later, circa 1900, Hosmer returned to the United States and to her home in Watertown. Having fully retired from her career as a sculptor, she intended to produce a memoir. The memorabilia relating to Hosmer’s career that remained in her family home formed part of a collection of materials she assembled for her project. Hosmer died before she could reach her goal, but her friend Cornelia Crow Carr took ownership of the materials Hosmer had accumulated, including her

333 Ibid., 23.
letters and photographs. *Harriet Hosmer: Letters and Memories*, edited by Carr, was published in 1912, four years after the sculptor’s death.\(^{334}\)

Carr’s descendants eventually donated Hosmer’s papers to the Schlesinger Library and to the Watertown Public Library, with the prints among them. However, the photographs presumably arrived without any identifying information about the photographer behind them. Thus their creator has gone unidentified – until now. Based on the findings outlined in this chapter, it seems very reasonable to suggest that at least some of the prints of Hosmer’s work in the Schlesinger Library and the Watertown Free Public Library were generated by James Anderson’s studio in Rome during the 1850s and ’60s.

Additional evidence linking the Hosmer photographs in the United States to Anderson’s Roman studio can be found the article in the November 7, 1857, edition of *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* discussed above, which featured a profile of Hosmer on its first page. The layout includes woodcut engravings not just of Hosmer but also of her *Beatrice Cenci*. The newspaper provided a credit for the original photograph from which the woodcut was taken, attributing it “James Anderson, Rome.”\(^{335}\) The author of the article is anonymous, but there is a very good chance that Hosmer’s ongoing career-booster Lydia Maria Child contributed the text.\(^{336}\) And therefore it is equally possible that Child provided the photograph to the newspaper, with the identifying information about the photographer.

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\(^{335}\) “Miss Harriet Hosmer,” 1.

\(^{336}\) The prose in this article sounds very much like that of Child’s other pieces on Hosmer and contains much of the same information. Furthermore, a coy reference to the influence of Child and her brother is included in the article.
If, as I am arguing, we can associate prints of Hosmer’s work at the Schlesinger and
Watertown Libraries with James Anderson, we then find in these Boston institutions some of
the very rare remains of his commercial trade in photographs of contemporary sculpture in
Rome. To make a definitive claim, further research needs to be undertaken on the relevant
prints. And it must be noted that one complicating factor comes into play: typically a
conclusive means for identifying albumen prints by nineteenth-century photographers is to
see if they correspond with numbers provided in their catalogues. Each image was assigned a
number in a photographer’s catalogue, and that number was also written on the photograph’s
negative or imprinted in the form of a blind stamp on a cardboard mount. Matching the
numbers allows us to associate particular photographs with particular commercial studios.
However, most of the Hosmer photographs in the Boston area do not have numbers on them.
This is not unexpected if they were taken for Hosmer herself. Only photographs offered for
commercial sale would need to have numbers on them. At the same time, however, two
photographs in Watertown are numbered, but even in this case the evidence is slippery. A
photograph of Hosmer’s Oenone is numbered 430. Looking at the Anderson catalogue from
March 1859, we find there Hosmer’s Oenone, also numbered 430. However, the catalogue
lists Hosmer’s Oenone as a bust. Most likely this is an error in the catalogue, as Hosmer is
not known to have produced a bust of Oenone. The other photograph at Watertown with a
number is a bust of Daphne in profile; this is numbered 431. The catalogue, though, states
that 431 is a bust in profile of Oenone.³³⁷ Since Hosmer’s representation of Daphne was in
fact a bust, we seem to have found another error in the catalogue. Such an assumption is
reasonable, as photographers’ catalogues were rife with errors. Therefore it is also reasonable
to attribute these numbered photographs to Anderson.

³³⁷ Catalogue des photographies, 25.
Still, definitive matches between prints of Hosmer’s sculpture – and works by other sculptors
– and Anderson’s catalogues would be desirable. And they can indeed be found. During my
research for this chapter, an online search of nineteenth-century photographs for sale led me
to a cache of mounted albumen prints of mid-nineteenth-century sculpture. Among the
images advertised were prints of Harriet Hosmer’s *Puck*, Im Hoff’s *Miriam*, Ives’s *Pandora*,
and two works by Gibson, *Pandora* and *Venus*. With the exception of Gibson’s *Venus*, the
photographers of the prints were unknown, according to the seller. The photograph of
Gibson’s *Venus*, however, was attributed to Robert Macpherson.

Upon my receipt of the photographs, I found that the Macpherson attribution for Gibson’s
*Venus* was incontrovertible: on the mount was the Macpherson studio’s blind stamp and a
catalogue number written in pencil. The number had been originally pencilled in as 87 and
then corrected to read 86. In Macpherson’s catalogue from 1858, image 86 is identified as a
front view of *Venus*, confirming that this is indeed a rare photograph of mid-nineteenth-
century sculpture from Rome taken by Robert Macpherson.338

Let us return now to the prints by the “anonymous” photographers. On four of these, as it
turns out – Rogers’s *Ruth*, Ives’s *Pandora*, Im Hoff’s *Miriam*, and Hosmer’s *Puck* (fig. 4.6) –
we can identify catalogue numbers.339 And in every case they correspond perfectly to
Anderson’s March 1859 catalogue. Each of these photographs, then, was surely produced by
Anderson’s studio in Rome, and each was very likely purchased by a visitor to that city.
Indeed, below each print, the work and the sculptor are identified in the handwriting of a

338 Becchetti, Robert Macpherson, 43.
339 For example, the number on the photograph of Hosmer’s *Puck* is 427, and this is the number assigned to the
same work by Hosmer in Anderson’s March 1859 catalogue. See Catalogue des Photographies, 25.
long-ago owner. It is not hard to imagine that the photographs formed part of a portfolio very much like the one that belonged to Sallie Brock, and that over the years their significance was increasingly lost, until they were finally consigned to be sold by a family member for whom they held no meaning. Surely other photographs by Anderson and Macpherson of mid-nineteenth-century sculpture produced in Rome also exist in exile, still to be discovered. As awareness of such photographs and the circumstances of their origins and reception increases, hopefully they will be recognized, preserved, and even celebrated as vital artifacts of mid-nineteenth-century visual culture – artifacts that attest to an important moment of emerging modernity, when sculpture, photography, and celebrity collided.
Conclusion

On June 6, 1861, John Gibson wrote a letter to his British friend Susan Horner. In it, Gibson indicated that while he and his protégée, Harriet Hosmer, were working away in Rome, their minds were on greater things: “we go on with our modelling – & think of fame . . . “

What did Gibson mean by *fame*? As discussed in chapter four, traditionally fame meant everlasting renown, that one’s name and one’s work would live on in perpetuity after one’s death. Gibson, more than a generation older than Hosmer, may have meant that very thing, albeit with tongue slightly in cheek. Through the process of working on this dissertation, however, I have come to believe that from the very earliest days of her career, Harriet Hosmer, whether she realized it or not, was far more interested in becoming a *celebrity*.

In part I came to this conclusion by asking myself why Hosmer did not seem to suffer from a sense of artistic belatedness. On the contrary, she appears to have had an unproblematic relationship with her artistic precursors. I observed in her correspondence and reminiscences a decidedly carefree attitude towards art-making, other than on those occasions when she was accused of not doing her own work. Even then she comes across as steadfastly – even stubbornly – loyal to classical precedents and precepts, but she is not burdened by them. Thus I found myself wondering, how could an artist whose raison d’être was to emulate the art of the great masters of the past, right back to antiquity, escape from a sense of futility? Why wasn’t she overwhelmed by the impossibility of living up not only to Gibson but also Thorvaldsen, Canova before him, and even Praxiteles himself?

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340 Gibson’s letter to Horner is included with his papers in MSL/1942/862/4, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum. Written from Paris, it is dated February June 6, 1861.
Henry Fuseli (1741–1825) captured this very sense of artistic belatedness in his famous eighteenth-century drawing titled *The Artist in Despair over the Magnitude of Antique Fragments* (1778–80). Fuseli’s drawing, “a symbolic self-portrait in a sublime confrontation with the Classical past,”

341 shows the despairing artist dwarfed by a gigantic hand and foot, fragments of a colossal statue from antiquity. For Fuseli, the desire for fame equaled the desire for immortality – the dream that one could live on, past death, through one’s art. Fuseli’s drawing depicts his yearning for posthumous fame, while simultaneously portraying the anxiety of influence he felt while sitting in the shadow of looming artistic forebears. His drawing encapsulates the artist’s sense of late-coming and his fear that he would never attain the only type of fame he craved – immortal fame.

Seemingly immune to Fuseli-like hopelessness, Hosmer produced her busts, statues, and sculptural groups, even as she socialized, travelled, and shared the news of her vibrant life with friends back home. How was it that she eluded artistic paralysis, particularly as she lived and worked in Rome in the literal shadow of its artistic past, depicted so evocatively by Fuseli? Recent scholarship in celebrity studies helped to provide an answer. For we now know that even Fuseli could have found an escape hatch. It was in his own day that a new form of fame was emerging – that of celebrity, a far less burdensome form of public adulation. Through my work on this dissertation, I have come to the conclusion that Hosmer was protected from the anxiety of influence experienced by Fuseli because she was far more interested in contemporary attention than long-lasting renown. She became “famous” because that was her primary goal, when we understand that fame, for her, *really* meant celebrity.

Many commentators on expatriate American neoclassical sculptors have argued that those who moved to Italy did so for primarily nationalistic reasons – to learn to produce sculpture that would help bring acclaim to their young nation. Yet such a vaunted aim does not entirely line up with Hosmer’s attitude towards art-making. If she was chiefly concerned with bringing acclaim and honour to her nation, surely she would have been more interested in innovating, or at least would have shown some evidence of what Harold Bloom has characterized as “creative misprision” – the deliberate misinterpretation of artistic precedents in order to innovate. Moreover, the contested processes involved in producing nineteenth-century sculpture might have caused her greater concern. However, Hosmer showed little desire to change or advance the enterprise of neoclassical sculpture. Rather, I would argue, taking up sculpture was a stepping stone to Hosmer’s greater aim – to live abroad, to associate with the leading cultural and political figures of the day, and to become well-known.

Yet my assertion is not meant to be damning. It is, in fact, Hosmer’s interest in gaining contemporary celebrity rather than posthumous fame that makes her career so compelling. While her chosen form of artistic expression was locked in the past, Hosmer herself exemplified a burgeoning form of modernity that we know so well today – the desire to be in the public eye, for whatever reason. She chose a profession that would help her to garner both respect and notoriety within her Anglo-American world. She worked hard to become highly proficient in her chosen artistic field. And she harnessed the new medium of photography to help reach her goal: a prominent career that brought her international attention for some twenty years, after which she largely retired. Interestingly, Hosmer at that point in her life appears to have hungered after a more traditional form of fame, one that she
associated with originality and innovation: until the end of her days she devoted herself, obsessively, to the (fruitless) pursuit of inventing a perpetual motion machine. “Anybody can do sculpture, it is purely mechanical,” she remarked. “What I shall try for now is really original work.”

342 “The Little Woman Who Wouldn’t Give Up,” Boston Sunday Herald, April 15, 1908. This article is in the possession of the Schlesinger Library as part of Hosmer’s papers, and is in very poor condition. However, the Schlesinger staff kindly allowed me to consult a transcribed copy, from which this quotation was taken.
Appendix A

“Harriet E. [sic] Hosmer: A Biographical Sketch”

Lydia Maria Child

*The Ladies’ Repository* 21 (January 1861): 1–7
THE
LADIES’ REPOSITORY.

JANUARY, 1861.

HARRIET B. HOMER.
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY L. MARIE CHENEY.

I WAS next-door neighbor to Dr. Homer, when he first established himself as a physician, in Watertown, and the acquaintance then formed has since continued. As I make this sketch with his knowledge and sanction, its correctness may be relied upon, so far as facts are concerned.

HARRIET B. HOMER was born in Watertown, Massachusetts, October 20, 1831. From both father and mother she inherited perseverance and strong will. As soon as she was able to run about her fearless independence and pertinacity of purpose were observable. When she first began to go in the street she was usually accompanied by an exceedingly small black dog, which she carried all over with little bells. Even then she attracted notice by her even figure, straight-forward walk, and earnest attention to whatever was going on. She received many a smiling salutation as she passed; and to questions asked about herself or dog, she always had a frank and ready answer.

When she was four years old her mother died of consumption, and eight years later her only sister fell a victim also, to the same fatal disease. This great sorrow of her childhood had a very important and uncalculable influence on her future character and prospects. Her father, in the course of his extensive medical practice, had seen multiplied and most lamentable instances of children, especially girls, enmeshed by indoor occupations and excessive study. He was accustomed to say, “There is a whole lifetime for the education of the mind, but the body develops in a few years; and, during that time, nothing should be allowed to interfere with its free and healthy growth.” To this rational conviction, resulting from medical experience, was added an anxious precaution, produced by the early death of his wife and eldest daughter. Harriet was now his only child; and it became almost his sole object to make her body strong enough for the mind to work freely in. He bought her a horse, a boat, bow and arrows, and skates, and told her to live “all out-doors,” a prescription extremely pleasant to her free and fearless nature. So, with more to molest her or make her afraid, the happy child galloped over hill and dale, rowed her boat amid whirling currents, swam in deep waters, and skated for hours together, in the keen, wintry air.

At school she was an intractable pupil, and made slow progress of the kind by which good marks and medals are won; nevertheless, her mental powers were being developed in a healthy way, by processes of her own. Machinery of any kind always excited her curiosity, and drew from her many questions; and the knowledge of mechanical laws thus obtained, was soon manifested in various little contrivances for her own use or amusement, while the clay-pit, near the house, furnished her with material for modeling images of horses, dogs, and other creatures.

But while her mind was expanding by these unaided exercises of thought, and her muscular system was acquiring strength and elasticity, by pursuits usually considered appropriate for boys only, some slight disadvantages resulted from the novel system. She was as wild as a colt on the prairies, and as tricky as Puck. In character and manners she was, in fact, just like a brave, rugged boy. In a boy her fearlessness and fun would have been admired, and quoted as proofs of intelligence and spirit. But girls are to be...
But all the while the angels saw in her only a soul that was growing in a natural, healthy way, like the free development of flower or tree. It can not be denied that, at this period of her life, she was active and friskious to a degree quite inconvenient to others. But those who knew her well loved her dearly, and strove to soften harsh criticisms by saying, "There is never any immodesty in her frankness nor any motion in her fun." Her father waited for the sobering effects of time with such patience as he could. Meanwhile, he gave frequent exhortations to amendment, but at last one of her freaks gave so much offense, that it became necessary to put a check upon her thoughtlessness. Dr. Morse, of Watertown, had lived to an extreme old age, and people often asked, "Is Dr. Morse living yet?" I do not know in what dwell expect this circumstance presented itself to her merry young soul. Perhaps she was curious to hear what people would say when the old patriarch departed. Whatever might be the motive, she wrote a notice of his sudden death, and sent it privately to a Boston newspaper. Relatives and friends of the supposed deceased hastened to Watertown to attend the funeral, and were, of course, much annoyed by the hoax. Notwithstanding her precautions, the mischief was traced to her, and her father, incensed and perplexed, resolved to place her somewhere to be brought under control. Mrs. Sedgwick's school at Lenox was recommended to him, and he immediately applied for his daughter's admission. He frankly stated, at the outset, that teachers had hitherto found her difficult to manage. Mrs. Sedgwick made minute inquiries to ascertain her peculiari- ties and the leading qualities of her head and heart. Having learned them all she smiled, and said, "I have the reputation of knowing how to train wild colts, and I will try this one." Harriet was accordingly sent to Lenox, at the commencement of 1841.

But there was no diminution of her love of outdoor exercises. In committing her to the care of Mrs. Sedgwick, Dr. Hooper had expressly enjoined attention to physical education as of paramount importance. Indeed, the reputation of the school in that respect had been one of its greatest inducements to place her there. The girls were generally here trained to athletic exercises; but for riding, leaping, shooting, skating, climbing trees, and other similar performances, Harriet was the wonder of them all. There is no end to the anecdotes her schoolmates tell, to illustrate her agility and strength.

Catherine Sedgwick, the distinguished writer and excellent woman, was an inmate of her brother's household, and took great interest in the pupil. Mrs. Fanny Kemble spent the summers at Lenox, and being an intimate friend of the Sedgwicks, Harriet had frequent opportunities to hear her reading and conversation.

For these years, at the most impossible period of her life, she lived amid the magnificent scenery of Berkshire, riding and roaming through all places, accessible and inaccessible, gazing with a poet's eye on the evening star, glistening on the dark wavehead of the ancient hills; on the rising and setting of the glorious sun; on the grand old trees veiled in solemn moonlight; familiar with the haunts of all the little woodland creatures; like a true artist, observing all the forms of things, except conventional forms; con- necting friendships with charming young girls; and in constant intercourse with intellects of a high order. It is not without reason that her father attributes her subsequent success largely to those Berkshire influences, so healthy to mind and body, or rather to body and mind, as he would say, according to the tendency of physi- cians.

When she returned home in the autumn of 1840, a marked improvement was observed by all who had previously known her; but the naturalness of her character was in no way inju- red by the process. If she had lost the charm- ing naiveté of her individuality, improvement would have been bought at too high a price. There is much wisdom in the saying of an old woman from the country. Visiting the city in her old age, she came in contact with people who were discussing various theories of education. She listened attentively, and, when her opinion was asked, replied, "Well, I never heard so much talk about education before, but I reckon about the best thing to do is just to catch nature, wash her face, comb her hair, and let her run." In Miss Homer's case, where nature was originally strong and noble, honest and kindly, this process has assuredly worked well.

With regard to the physical education, which her father had so much at heart, he had abundant reason to be satisfied when he returned to him. As a pedestrian, she could outwalk an Englishman, or even an Indian trapper. With gun, or pistol, her aim was as sure as a rifleman's. On horseback, she often amazed herself with riding at full speed, lying backward, or forward, or standing upright in the stirrup. It was a great pleasure to her father to go out in the boat with her, and see how skillfully she managed it among contending currents. When they came to deep water, she would assume her bathing dress and plunge into the stream; sometimes swimming so far under water that noth-
ing was visible but the rippling wake she left behind her; sometimes revolving in all manner of evolutions, with the suppleness and agility of a water nymph, or a South Sea Islander.

But mere amusement of any kind could not long satisfy her—she had come into the world to do something. She had shown in her walk and her ways, even at four years old, when she and her little tinkling dog attracted attention in the street; and it had subsequently manifested itself in multiplied forms of ingenuity and labor. Now she must begin to work, and, following what she felt to be her vocation, she entered the studio of Mr. Stephens, of Boston, to take lessons in modeling. A very pretty bust of a child was the first thing she completed under his direction, and a spirited little head of Byron, done in wax, was, I believe, made at nearly the same period.

Aware of the great importance of accurate anatomical knowledge, for the purpose of sculpture, she had learned all that she could from her father, and from books. But in order to perfect her education in that branch of the art, she desired to see the muscular system analyzed in the dissection room. It had once been proposed to the Boston Medical College to admit a woman to its course of lectures, and the request had not been granted. The free young woman was less scrupulous about infringing upon old customs. At Lenox she had formed an intimate friendship with the daughter of Mr. Wayman Crow, a wealthy and liberal citizen of St. Louis. She had been urgently invited to spend some months with her friend, and it occurred to her that she might combine the visit with the visit to anatomical investigation, not likely to be obtained in the neighborhood. She accordingly went to St. Louis, in the autumn of 1850, and remained eight or nine months in Mr. Crow's family, with all of whom she became a great favorite. The medical school in that city furnished her the opportunity she desired of witnessing a dissection of the human frame. She thus received very efficient aid from the anatomical lectures and oral instructions of Professor McDowell, with whom both Cleverger and Powers had studied the science of anatomy.

There were, of course, some who considered this a very eccentric proceeding for a young lady; but these things are matters of custom, and, in a progressive state of society, customs are always changing. Aär these with Europeans gradually teaches them that women may be allowed to breathe God's free air, without committing or causing crimes. Europeans have further steps to take in social progress. They must learn that no harm comes of allowing the souls of women to breathe free air. I feel personal gratitude to Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, Rosa Bonheur, Harriet Hosmer, and all other women, who, by following noble impulses, unrestrained by more conventional rules, prove woman's right to do whatever she can do well.

It is honorable to the medical student in St. Louis, that they made no attempt to throw obstacles in the way of the young lady’s pursuit of knowledge. I do not think this resulted from fear of the sentinel she was known to carry; though certainly it would not have redounded to their credit to be shot by a young girl, even in that dealing region. The fact is, a frank, modest, direct soul, unconscious of any thing vile, is clad in an armor by its complete absorption in lofty aims; while the prudish observer of conventionalities lays herself open to attack, by the very fact that her mind is obviously occupied with the dangers she has been instructed to avoid.

At the west, as elsewhere, Miss Hosmer excited remark by her disregard of customs, in her earnest pursuit of whatever object she had in view. But there, as elsewhere, those who knew how to discriminate characters, readily perceived that she never did any thing that she would have avoided to do, and that her boldness was sustained by the dignity of impudence. Not expecting to visit the west again, she availed herself of every opportunity to see the country. She went up and down the Mississippi, visiting New Orleans, the Falls of St. Anthony, and other places, attended or unattended by friends as happened to be convenient. She had a very interesting interview with the Dutch Indians, and smoked the pipe of peace with their chief. At Dubuque she saw near losing her life by an accident, while descending into the lead-mine in a bucket. At the Falls of St. Anthony, her attention was attracted by a high, steep bluff. It was considered inaccessible, and therefore she wished to climb it. "If you will," said the captain of the boat, "I will engage it shall be named for you." He laughed as he spoke, not dreaming she would attempt it. But, to the astonishment of all who saw her, she went up the bluff, with the fearless agility of a chamois-hunter on the Alps, and waved her handkerchief from the summit.

From that happy winter and those exciting adventures she returned home to plunge into her favorite pursuit with redoubled zeal. Her indulgent father fitted up a neat little studio in his garden, which she, in her facetious way, was accustomed to call her "shop." There her ma
charcoal ingenuity and handcraft manifested themselves in various contrivances; and in this new studio Harriet began to work in marble. Her first attempt was a reduced copy of Canova’s bust of Napoleon, which she presented to her father. It is an excellent likeness, and the workmanship is extremely well done.

Not long afterward she began to embody an ideal of her own, called Herter. In this case, as with the bust of Napoleon, she did every stroke of the work with her own small hands, except knocking off the corners of the block of marble. She employed a man to do that; but, so he was unused to work for sculptors, she did not venture to have him approach within several inches of the surface she intended to cut. Slow, and slow, she worked, for eight or ten hours a day, a slender mallet, weighing four pounds and a half. Had it not been for the strength and flexibility of muscle, acquired by rowing and other athletic exercises, such arduous labor would have been impossible.

In the summer of 1852 Dr. Homer invited me to Watertown, to see the bust of Herter, then recently finished. I shall never forget that visit to the little studio in the garden. I was completely taken by surprise. I expected to see skilled workmanship, but I was not prepared for such a poetic conception. While the impression made upon me was still fresh, I conveyed it to the New York Tribune, in an anonymous letter, entitled “A New Star in the Arts,” from which I make the following extracts: “This beautiful production of Miss Homer’s hand and soul has the face of a lovely maiden gently falling asleep to the sound of distant music. Her hair is gracefully arranged and interwoven with sprays of the poppy. A polished star gleams on her forehead, and under her breast lies the crescent moon. The breath of evening breezes from the serene countenance and the heavily-drooping eyelids. I felt tranquilized while looking at it, as I do when the grey clouds are fading into grey twilight, and the pale moon rises slowly behind the dim woods. The mental conception of this bust seemed to me worthy of its lovely and lifelike expression. The swell of cheek and breast is like pure, young, healthy flesh; and the muscles of the beautiful mouth are so delicately cut, that it seems like a thing that breathes.” Miss Homer presented this second production of her chisel to her friend, Miss Cushidge, of Boston.

Not far from this period she cut in marble, from a bust by Cleve, a medallion likeness of her friend, Dr. McDowell, of St. Louis, and presented it, in a token of gratitude for his kind instruction.

Soon after the Heper was completed Miss Charlotte Oncken, who had been absent from her native country, made a tour through the United States. With her ready appreciation of talent in every form she was naturally attracted toward the young sculpturist in Watertown. The desire to visit Rome, which unavoidably rises in the heart of every artist, and a desire which our young friend had long cherished, was kindled into a flame by Miss Cushidge’s representations; and it was soon settled that Dr. Homer and his daughter should meet her in Paris, in the autumn of 1852. A week before her departure Harriet came on horseback to bid me farewell. She told me her father intended to return soon to his professional duties in America, but would leave her in Italy. I said, “Shall you never be homesick for your museum-parlor in Watertown, and your chamber, with such a pleasant outlook on Charles river, where you used to see your boat in summer, and skate in winter? Do you think you can be contented in a foreign land?” “I can be happy anywhere, with good health and a bit of marble,” she replied, and sprang into her saddle, she dashed away, and I lost sight of her among the trees.

She took with her to Rome a Diploma from Dr. McDowell, certifying the correctness of her anatomical knowledge; and two daguerreotypes of Homer. Her highest ambition was to be received as the pupil of Mr. Gibson, the celebrated English sculptor, and the acknowledged head of art in Rome. But there was great doubt whether he would receive her. He had, of course, numerous applications, and lady-pupils, by their want of perseverance, had excited some prejudices among the artists of Rome. But the infinite advantages arising from the instructions of such a master, outweighed in her mind the disappointment of a refusal—it was worth the trial; and accordingly a friendly young sculptor placed the daguerreotypes in Mr. Gibson’s hands, and told him somewhat of Miss Homer’s history, character, and purpose. She listened to silence, looking intently, meanwhile, on the likenesses of Homer. Then, closing the case, he said, “Send the young lady to me; whatever I can teach her she shall learn.”

When Dr. Homer went to the Via Fontanella to introduce his daughter, they passed through a large room, filled with renowned productions of Mr. Gibson’s chisel; crossed a beautiful little garden, fragrant with orange-trees, and embellished by a fountain that sprinkled forms 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, Mr. Gibson said he had appropriated this pleasant room to the use of his young lady-pupil, and there she has pursued her artistic labors ever since, time only cementing the cordial friendship which soon grew up between them.

Her unwearied diligence and perseverance attracted the master's notice and approval at the very outset. She commenced her apprenticeship by copying some of the master-pieces of ancient art. The superb head of the Venus of Milo first tested her capabilities in that line, and this was afterward followed by the Cupid of Parnassus and the beautiful Tasso of the British Museum.

To have confined herself to the studio would have been an unsatisfactory proceeding for one whose constitution was naturally delicate, and whose previous habits had been so extremely active. In conformity with the parting instructions of her father, and with her own inclinations, she took a great deal of exercise on horseback. Her fearless riding attracted attention, and Americans—more afraid than any other people of offending against conventional rules—hastened to inform her that it was not the custom in Italy for ladies to ride alone. But she had not conquered so many difficulties. She conquered by a custom; as she went dashing about the environs of Rome as often as her health or pleasure required, and when the novelty had passed away people ceased to talk about it. There is a report that when the American Charge d'Affaires proposed to protect her on these excursions, she thanked him for his politeness, and playfully made him the same offer.

Before long she began to embody ideals of her own. The first was a head of Daphne, the nymph who was changed to a laurel when pursued by Apollo. Her next was a head of Medusa, representing her as the beautiful maiden she originally was, and not as the frightful Gorgon. Both these works were finished with exquisite delicacy, and Mr. Gibson wrote: “These busts do her great honor.” They were ordered by the late Samuel Appleton, of Boston, always a liberal patron of the fine arts, and on their arrival, in the autumn of 1853, they were publicly exhibited. A copy of the Daphne was subsequently made by Miss Hosmer for her friend, Mr. Crow, of St. Louis, and the Medusa has been often repeated, two copies being in England, in the possession of the Duchess of St. Albans and Lady Marrian Alford.

In the summer of 1854 Mr. Gibson wrote to Dr. Hosmer: “Your daughter’s industry continues unabated, and she makes progress in her profession, for her last model is her best. It is really a fine work, and would do credit to many a sculptor in Rome. We have here now one of the greatest sculptors of the age, Rauch, of Berlin, seventy-seven years of age. He came to my studio, and studied a considerable time. 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. He inquired her age, and wrote her name in his pocket-book. So now you have the opinion of one of the greatest living sculptors concerning your daughter’s merit.”

The “sketch-model” to which Mr. Gibson alludes, and which he pronounces “well composed,” was Miss Hosmer’s first attempt to make an entire statue. It represents Olimara, the shepherd’s wife, whom Paris deserted for the beautiful Helen. When finished in marble this lovely and graceful figure was sent, in the summer of 1855, to Mr. Crow, of St. Louis, her munificent patron and “best friend,” as she styles him, and who, with a liberality which has always characterized that gentleman, and which it is Miss Hosmer’s greatest pleasure to acknowledge, had given her her first important commission. It was so much admired in St. Louis that the Mercantile Library, where by the courtesy of Mr. Crow it was placed, soon sent an order for another statue from the same hand.

In the summer of 1855 there arrived in Boston a small statue of Puck, ordered by Mr. Simeon Hooper, of that city. This statue is extremely popular—several copies have been ordered in this country, and three in England: one by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, another by the Duke of Hamilton, and the third by the Earl of Portarlington.

About this time occurred the death of a lovely daughter of Madame Falconet, an English lady, then resident in Rome. Being Catholic, she obtained the permission, so rarely granted, to erect a monument to her memory in one of the churches. Madame Falconet was so much pleased with Miss Hosmer’s productions, that she chose her to be the sculptor; and this flattering opportunity to have one of her works to remain permanently in Rome, the first offered to any English or American sculptor, was extremely gratifying to the aspiring young artist. She made the clay model in the winter of 1837.

The same year she finished in marble a Life-size statue of Beatrice Cenci, sleeping in her cell the morning previous to her execution. This was universally considered the best work she has yet produced. It is said that when Mr. Gibson
saw it completed, he remarked, "I can teach her nothing." After being exhibited at the Royal Academy in London, where it had a place of honor, and where many encomiums were lavished upon it, as well as in some of our principal cities, it was sent to the Memoriale Library in St. Louis, in fulfillment of the commission already alluded to, where it is regarded as one of the greatest ornaments of the city.

Miss Homer herself arrived in Boston a few days before the Centennial, after an absence of five years. But neither the attention lavished upon her in Italy and England, nor the compliments that greeted her on her return home, appeared to produce any injurious change in her character. I was delighted to find her the same frank, unaffected child who parted from me on that summer evening. Contact with society had softened her manner, but she was still earnest and direct. Her vivacity was so contagious that she renewed my youth, and made me also believe in the possibility of accomplishing great things. But her confidence in herself was modest. There was no tinge of pretension to mar the beauty of her enthusiasm for art. She was not satisfied with what she had done, but was always aiming at something better; and I found that she was more desirous for discriminating criticism than for wholesale praise.

Though still young in years, her medium height and slender figure make her seem younger than she is. Her face is more genial and pleasant than her likeness indicates; especially when engaged in conversation, its resolute earnestness lights up with gleams of humor. She looks as she is—lively, frank, and reliable. In dress and manners she seemed to me one of the most complete and modest young ladies I have ever met. Her ample silk skirt was womanly, but the closely-fitting basque of black velvet buttoned nearly to the throat, like a vest, and left a shirt-bosom and simple linen collar. It had pockets, into which she occasionally thrust her hands, as boys are wont to do, and she carried her spirited head with a manly air. Her broad forehead was partially shaded with short, thick-brown curls, which she often tossed aside with her fingers, as lads do. When she seated me from the chair, she touched the front of her hat and raised it from her head in gentlemanly fashion. When I praised the picturesque effect of the hat with its drooping plume, she answered, cordially, "0, it's merely a lady's riding hat—I've worn a bonnet these five years."

Never occupying herself with trifles, she passed directly to a description of a fountain she had modeled before she left Rome; the conception of which seemed to me extremely poetical. It is intended to represent Hydas going for water, and carried away by the water-nymphs. From a double basin supported by swans rises a pyramid, on which the handsome youth is standing. The enamored nymphs are circling round the base, extending their arms toward him, as if to draw him down into the basin, where swooping dolphins form a pool.

During her visit to America her mind was almost constantly occupied with planning a large statue of Zenobia in chains, as she appeared in the triumphal procession of the Emperor Aurelian. She had made a sketch, and seemed in a hurry to get back to Rome and model it. Meanwhile, she searched libraries, and read everything that could be found concerning that great queen of the East.

After her return to Rome she cut in marble the monument she had previously modeled. It represents a young maiden lying on a sarcophagus, sleeping the last sleep. The likeness is said to be extremely well preserved, and in all respects it gave great satisfaction to the relatives of the deceased, Mr. Luyard, of Ninoveh celebrity, after seeing this monument in the church of San Andrea della Frattina, wrote as follows to Madame Falconnet: "I think you must fully satisfied with Miss Homers's success. It exceeds any expectations I had formed. The unaffected simplicity and tender feeling displayed in the treatment is all that could be desired for such a subject, and can not fail to please the most casual observer. I scarcely remember ever to have seen a monument which more completely commanded my sympathy and more deeply interested me. I really know of none, of modern days, which I would sooner have placed over the remains of one who had been dear to me. Do not believe this is exaggerated praise. I faithfully convey to you the impression made upon me. I attribute this impression not more to the artistic merit of the work than to the complete absence of all affectation, to the simple truthfulness and genuine feeling of the monument itself. Mr. Gibson accompanied me on one of my visits, and the opinion he expressed was quite in accordance with my own; and he is not a man to give praise which is not deserved."

Since Miss Hombers's return to Rome she has modeled a small statue, called Will-o'-the-Wisp, intended as a male for Puck, which is in the possession of Mrs. George Lee, of Boston. But her great labor has been the statue of Zenobia, of heroic size, and of which the clay model is completed. Her motto is "Exceller;' and, judging from a photograph I have seen, this
WOMEN WHO REMAIN UNMARRIED.

BY A CHRISTIAN PAPYRUS.

NEW things afford me more than the way in which it is customary to speak of elderly women who have remained unmated, and need no allowance on account of her being a woman.

For the convenience of referring to her father, when I am in doubt about any fact, I am writing this sketch in the museum-parlor, which she filled up, and which all the family considered peculiarly her own. I dip my pen in the inkstand she made, years ago, of a seagull’s egg, and the body of a beautiful kingfisher, that she shot in one of her rambles. By my side is the crow’s nest she captured, after climbing a tree forty feet high, and mounted on a pretty racer’s stand of her own manufacture. Under the window stands the skeleton of a cat, which she procured. In a glass case are very good copies of beetles and butterflies, mostly caught by herself and her sister. Chim.-of various size and plumage, killed and stuffed by herself, and perched nic-ly in every nest, and corner; pies of nuts, with eggs in them, testify her love for natural history. In a room stands the long Indian pipe she smoked with the Dutchman chief. Among the mirrors is the lead-ore she bought up in a huckster from the mines of Delaware. The walls are decorated with sketches—on which she tried her hand at painting. Her first efforts in plaster are scattered about the room; several of them likenesses of the heads of her schoolmates at Lenox. On the piano lie photographs of her various works in marble, busts, monuments, medallions, and statues. Among them is a daguerreotype of herself, with the bowler and artist’s cap which she wears while at work in her Brusan studio.

I looked into the little “shop” in the garden, where the bust of Hiester formerly refreshed my eyes with the mild beauty of the evening star. On the walls is a copy of the Royal Exchange, made when a school-girl. Various little models and tools are on the work-bench, where she used them, and a pile of dried clay is in the corner. Her father is unwilling to have the place of any of these articles changed. To him they all suggest incidents in the history of his remarkable child. These memoirs of her industry, ingenuity, and genius, fill me with a sudden pleasure, for though I know she is alive, and very much alive, she is so far away from her native land, that these echoes from the past seem to ring voices of the dead.
Appendix B

Timeline of Harriet Hosmer’s Career and Works

This timeline incorporates photographs of Hosmer and her work discussed in the dissertation. Unless the entries on Hosmer’s works say “location unknown,” the works survive, sometimes in a number of variations. For the current locations of most of Hosmer’s works, see Patricia Cronin, Lost and Found: Harriet Hosmer, A Catalogue Raisonné.

1830 Harriet Hosmer born in Watertown, Massachusetts

1846–49 Studies at Elizabeth Sedgwick’s boarding school in Lenox, Massachusetts

Fall 1849–Fall 1850 Sometime during this period, studies for about three months with Boston sculptor Peter Stephenson in his studio at 5½ Tremont Row

c. 1850 Byron, head, wax, location unknown

c. 1850 Unidentified child, portrait bust, probably wax, location unknown

c. 1850 Goethe, portrait medallion, marble bas-relief in wood frame

Fall 1850 Travels to St. Louis and enrolls in anatomy classes

Summer 1851 Returns to Watertown

1851–52 Dr. Joseph Nash McDowell, life-sized portrait medallion, marble bas-relief after a bust by Shobal Clevenger, location unknown

c. 1852 Napoleon, portrait bust after a bust by Antonio Canova, marble, location unknown

1852 Hesper, The Evening Star, bust, marble

September 1852 Leaves United States for Rome. Takes two daguerreotypes of Hesper, The Evening Star, possibly from the Boston daguerreotype studio Southworth & Hawes

November 1852 Arrives in Rome. Invited by John Gibson to join him in his studio at 6 and 7 Via Fontanella, near the Spanish Steps, after he sees daguerreotypes of Hesper

1853 Sits for portrait photographer in Rome and sends copies of photograph (salted paper print) to family and friends in the United States
**1853** *The Clasped Hands of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, from a plaster mold, cast in plaster or bronze

**1853** *Daphne*, bust, marble

**1853** *Medusa*, bust, marble

**1854** *Mrs. Cass*, portrait bust, probably clay, location unknown

**1855** *Oenone*, full-length statue, marble

**1856** *Puck*, statuette, marble

**1856** *Will-o’-the-Wisp*, statuette, marble

**1856** *Night Rises with the Stars*, marble bas-relief. Only surviving work from a planned *Gate for an Art Gallery* (see below, c. 1864)

**1856** *Phospher and Hesper Circling their Double Star*, marble bas-relief, location unknown

**c. 1856** *The Falling Star*, marble bas-relief, location unknown

**c. 1856** *Zephyr Descends*, marble bas-relief, location unknown

**1856** *Beatrice Cenci*, full-length reclining statue, marble

**1856** Receives invitation to exhibit *Beatrice Cenci* at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in May 1857

**February 1857** Sends photograph of *Beatrice Cenci* to Lady Waterford in London at her request

**April 1857** Engraving of *Beatrice Cenci* appears in *The Art-Journal*, along with a profile of Hosmer

**May 1857** *Beatrice Cenci* exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. Hosmer attends exhibition

**1857** *Beatrice Cenci* exhibited at the New York Academy of Design. Hosmer returns to the United States for the first time since 1852

**October, 1857** Sits for Imperial Portrait at Mathew B. Brady’s studio in New York

**November, 1857** Profile of Hosmer appears on front page of *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, published in New York, illustrated by woodcut engraving of Hosmer possibly based on photograph from Brady studio, along with a woodcut engraving of *Beatrice Cenci*.
Credit to “James Anderson, Rome” for the original photograph from which the woodcut of *Beatrice Cenci* was taken

**December 5, 1857** Profile of Hosmer appears on front page of *Ballou’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, published in Boston, illustrated by woodcut engraving of Hosmer credited to Damereau (a French wood engraver) derived from a drawing by Mr. Ward, which in turn was based on a photograph by Whipple and Black (a Boston photography studio)

1857 *Adelaide Talbot*, medallion portrait, marble bas-relief, location unknown

1857 *Constance Talbot*, medallion portrait, marble bas-relief

1857–58 *Julie Falconnet Memorial*, life-sized memorial, marble

c. 1858 *Lady Margaret Leveson Gower*, portrait, marble bas-relief, location unknown

1858 *Hylas and the Water Nymphs*, fountain, marble, location unknown

1858–60 *Crow Memorial*, location unknown

1859 Moves from Gibson’s studio to an independent studio space at 5 Via Margutta

1859 *Lady Mordaunt*, portrait, clay, location unknown

1859 *Zenobia in Chains*, monumental statue, marble

1859 *Zenobia in Chains*, marble bust

**March 1859** James Anderson’s first catalogue published (in French) by Joseph Spitöver in Rome, entitled *Des Photographies de Rome de James Anderson*. Includes listings for ten albumen prints of works by Hosmer (with catalogue numbers): *Medusa* bust (425); *Medusa* in profile (426); *Puck* statuette (427); *Puck* in profile (428); *Beatrice Cenci* statue (429); *Oenone* bust (430, probably full-length Oenone); *Oenone* bust in profile (431, probably Daphne bust in profile); *Zenobia* statue (432, could be a bust of Zenobia); a fountain (433, could be *Hylas and the Water Nymphs*); Will-o’-the-Wisp (447)

1859 *Prince of Wales* (Edward VII) visits Hosmer’s studio and purchases copy of *Puck*. Woodcut engraving in *Harper’s Weekly* 3 (May 7, 1859) entitled “Miss Hosmer’s Studio at Rome,” shows Prince of Wales, John Gibson, and Hosmer in her studio

1860 Receives commission from State of Missouri to produce a monumental statue of the deceased American senator Thomas Hart Benton. Travels to St. Louis to do research for statue. Sits for local photographer J. A. Scholten for carte-de-visite portrait
c. 1860–62 Works on Thomas Hart Benton statue in Rome studio. Commissions Roman commercial photographer Antonio Mariannecci to take carte-de-visite photograph in her studio, posing next to her clay model

1861–62 *Fountain of the Siren*, marble, location unknown

1861–70 Commercial photography studio E. Anthony of New York produces cartes-de-viste for sale to public based on Imperial Portrait of Hosmer by Mathew B. Brady

1862 *Medusa, Puck, and Zenobia* at the International Exhibition, London. *Zenobia* is exhibited in the same pavilion as John Gibson’s *Tinted Venus*

1862 *Bessie Dundas Tomb*, location unknown, probably in or near Rome

c. 1864 *Gate for an Art Gallery*, location unknown, probably unfinished. Incorporates bas-reliefs from 1856, above

Summer 1864 Hosmer accompanies *Zenobia in Chains* to United States, where it is exhibited in New York, Boston, and Chicago

1864 While in Boston, sits for carte-de-visite portraits at commercial photography studio Black and Case

1864 While in New York, sits for carte-de-visite portraits at commercial photography studio J. Gurney & Son

December 1864 Hosmer’s article “The Process of Sculpture” is published in *Atlantic Monthly*

1865 *The Sleeping Faun*, life-size marble group. Exhibited at Dublin International Exhibition

c. 1865 Moves from studio at 5 Via Margutta to a larger space at 116 Via Margutta

1865? Possibly while in Dublin for Dublin International Exhibition, sits for carte-de-visite portrait at commercial photography studio T. Cranfield

c. 1866 Unidentified man, portrait bust, marble, private collection

1866 *The Academy of Design Gateway*, location unknown

1866 *Wayman Crow*, portrait bust, marble

1866 *John Gibson*, portrait medallion, marble bas-relief

1866–67 *Waking Faun*, unfinished, location unknown
c. 1867–70 James Anderson’s second catalogue published by Joseph Spitöver in Rome, entitled *Catalogue of Mr. James Anderson’s Photographs of Views of Rome, Its Environs, Galleries and Museums*. Includes listings for eight albumen prints of works by Hosmer (with catalogue numbers): *Triton* (541); *Faun Sleeping* (542); *Faun Awake* (543); *Puck* (544); *Medusa Full Face* (545); *Medusa Profile* (546); *Zenobia* (547); *Oenone* (548)

1867 *The Falling Star*, marble, location unknown

1867 *Abraham Lincoln Memorial*, model for exhibition competition, wax over plaster (?), location unknown

1867 *Death of the Dryads*, chimneypiece, location unknown

1867 Poses for a two photographs in her Roman studio in front of *Fountain of the Siren*, along with Italian workmen

1867 Exhibits *Sleeping Faun* at the Paris Universal Exposition

1868 *Thomas Hart Benton*, monumental statue, bronze, installed at Lafayette Park in St. Louis

1869 *Maria Sophia, Queen of Naples*, life-size statue, wax over plaster or marble, location unknown

c. 1869 *Bridge of Sighs*, location unknown

c. 1872 *Mrs. Letchworth Tomb*, marble and red stone, location unknown

March 1872 Profile of Hosmer in *Phrenological Journal*, accompanied by woodcut engraving based on carte-de-visite from 1864 by J. Gurney & Son

1873 *Caesar (dog belonging to Empress Elizabeth of Austria)*, plaster (?), location unknown

c. 1873 *Edward Everett*, memorial tomb, unfinished

1874 *African Sybil*, model only, location unknown

1876 Begins to work in a London studio financed by Lady Ashburton, and starts to spend less time in Rome

c. 1878 *Sentinel of Pompeii*, over life-size, wax over plaster, location unknown. Probably created in London studio

1889–96 *Crerar Lincoln Memorial*, model for exhibition competition incorporating design for the *African Sybil* from 1874 (above), wax over plaster (?), location unknown
1889 Begins work on *Isabella of Castile, Queen of Spain*, statue commissioned by Queen Isabella Association for World’s Columbian Exhibition to be held in Chicago in 1893

c. 1892 *Triton Fountain*, bronze, location unknown but originally installed in England (Note: a fountain entitled *Triton* was photographed by James Anderson according to his c. 1867-70 catalogue, so perhaps there was an earlier version)

1892 *The Mermaid’s Cradle*, bronze, location unknown

1893 *Isabella of Castile, Queen of Spain*, over-life-size statue, plaster, location unknown. Exhibited at World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893 and at Mid-Winter’s Fair in San Francisco in 1894

1893–1908 Spends an increasing amount of time in the United States, devoting herself to the invention of a perpetual motion machine

February 1908 Harriet Hosmer dies in Watertown, Massachusetts
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