

1) *The Greek Slave and Photography in Britain* by Patrizia Di Bello

2)

This essay explores some of the photographs of *The Greek Slave* taken or circulated in Britain in the nineteenth century. Its popularity at the time makes it an effective case study to evaluate the early successes and failures of photography as a means to reproduce works of sculpture, before photographs could be printed in books and magazines through halftone reprographic techniques. As a visual essay, it invites the reader to look *at* the photographs, to focus on their materiality as objects made not only from silver, but also metal or paper, encased in leather or glued on card, sometimes incorporating textual labels. In some sections, the writing verbalizes the embodied experience of looking at the actual daguerreotypes, calotypes, or stereoscopic slides, an experience that cannot be fully conveyed by the reproductions – digital photos or scans from the originals photographs. Captions and footnotes become visible by hovering the cursor on the relevant image or footnote number, and can also be found at the end of the essay.

Caption: Hugh Owen, *Greek Slave*, 1851. Salted paper print from paper negative. Metropolitan Museum, New York.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/263305>

3) *Daguerreotypes, calotypes or statuettes: the mechanical reproduction of sculpture in the 1840s.*

4)

The Greek Slave arrived on the London art scene in 1845, when it was exhibited to great acclaim at the premises of print-sellers and publishers Henry Graves and Co. This was a time of much interest and experimentations – practical, commercial and aesthetic – in the mass production and reproduction of works of art, through methods that combined “the talent of the artist with the enterprise of manufactures.”¹ Vying for the attention of entrepreneurs, opinion-makers and customers were several new ways of making perfect mechanical copies from works of art or directly from nature. The main competing methods were photography, electroplating, as well as instruments that could reproduce statues into statuettes, such as Cheverton’s “Reducing Machine.”

1. “Art Manufactures,” *The Times*, January 24, 1848, 7.

Caption: Benjamin Cheverton’s reducing machine, patented on 16 January 1844. © Science Museum / Science & Society Picture Library - All rights reserved. See also “Machine for Reproducing Sculpture, Made in 1826 by Benjamin Cheverton (1794-1876),” Science Museum former gallery label in the Technical File linked to Inventory Number t/1924-292.

<http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/results.asp?image=10275950>

5)

Photography seemed especially promising. As David Brewster wrote in 1844, in one of the first critical reflections on the new medium:

Very extraordinary inventions and discoveries have already given an impulse, and will soon give a new form to the imitative arts. The art of

multiplying statues by machinery [...] might have been regarded as a vast step in the fine arts; had it not been eclipsed by the splendid process of copying all sorts of sculpture, by the voltaic deposition of metals from their solutions. But even this has been surpassed by the art Photography, by which we obtain perfect representations of all objects [...] through the agency of the light which they emit or reflect.[...]The art of *Photography*, or *Photogeny* as it has been called, is indeed as great a step in the fine arts, as the steam engine was in the mechanical arts; and we have no doubt that when its materials have become more sensitive, and its processes more certain, it will take the highest rank amongst the inventions of the present age.²

2. David Brewster, "Photogenic Drawing, or Drawing by the Agency of Light," *Edinburgh Review* (January 1843): 312.

Caption: William Henry Fox Talbot, *Bust of Patroclus*, salted paper print, included as plate V in William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1844-46). This is a photograph of cast by Brucciani, in Talbot's own collection, of a Hellenistic marble now in the British Museum. See Susan L. Taylor, "Fox Talbot as an Artist: The 'Patroclus' series," *Bulletin – Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Michigan* 8 (1982-83) 38–55.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0054307.0008.001:04>

6)

We can now take it for granted that Brewster was right – photography was *the* medium to usher in the age of "technological reproducibility" and transform unique works of art into originals that give value and authority to mechanical reproductions.³ In the 1840s, however, this was not so certain. Daguerreotypes, the more commercially successful of the two photographic systems patented in 1839, fixed the camera-image on a metal plate coated with a thin layer of silver iodide, which was turned into a positive by exposing the plate to fumes of heated mercury. It produced an image of remarkable sharpness and detail that was, however, a fragile one-off, visible only under the right lighting conditions. The alternative system, the *talbotype* or *calotype*, used paper coated in successive layers of silver compounds to create a negative. From this, many positives could be printed by exposing a further sheet of sensitized paper through the paper negative. Talbot's system required lengthy exposures, lacked sharpness due to the interference of the paper fibers, and tended to fade. Further hampered by patenting controversies, it failed to establish itself commercially.

3. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (second version, mid-1930s) in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigit Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

Caption left: Attributed to Southworth & Hawes, "The Greek Slave by Hiram Powers," 1848. Daguerreotype. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/49683/attributed-to-southworth-hawes-the-greek-slave-by-hiram-powers-american-1848/?artview=dor240828>

Caption right: William Henry Fox Talbot, *Bust of Patroclus*, salted paper print, included as plate V in William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1844-46). Royal Photographic Society Collection, National Media Museum, Bradford UK.

<http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/collection/photography/royalphotographic-society/collectionitem?id=2003-5001/2/23899>

7)

Before the development of glass negatives and albumen printing paper in the 1850s, it was the statuette that became one of the most important means to disseminate mechanical reproductions of works of sculpture. The development of new, more durable statuary porcelains added to the appeal of the medium.

Caption left: Attributed to Southworth & Hawes, “*The Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers,” 1848. Daguerreotype. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/49683/attributed-to-southworth-hawes-the-greek-slave-by-hiram-powers-american-1848/?artview=dor240828>

Caption to the statuette: Minton and Co. after Hiram Powers, *Greek Slave*, 1849. Parian ware. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/4140>

Caption right: Hugh Owen, *Greek Slave*, 1851. Salted paper print from paper negative. Metropolitan Museum, New York.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/263305>

8)

Daguerreotypes are assemblages of layers of metal and glass, encased in a tray, and typically bound in a leather or thermoplastic box with a hinged, plush-lined lid. With their shiny surfaces and expensive-looking casing, they seem the uncanny ancestors of the hand-held digital gadgets we now use to carry photographs about. Mechanically produced yet a one-off, at once a negative and a positive, the daguerreotype image is but a dusting of mercury and oxidized silver, easily wiped off its metal plate. Its visibility itself feels precarious. To make a daguerreotype image visible, the viewer has to tilt the case in his or her hands this way and that – or swivel the head around it if the daguerreotype is hanging on the wall. As this happens, the image appears, suddenly full of details, turns into a ghostly negative, and almost disappears again as the mirror-polished silver background reflects the viewer’s face. In a daguerreotype, Powers’s *Greek Slave* plays a photographic game of hide-and-seek with the viewer, impossible to convey in a static reproduction.

Caption: Attributed to Southworth & Hawes, “*The Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers,” 1848. Daguerreotype. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/49683/attributed-to-southworth-hawes-the-greek-slave-by-hiram-powers-american-1848/>

9)

The first documented daguerreotype of *The Greek Slave*, titled “No. 129. ‘The Greek Slave’ by Power [sic.], the celebrated American sculptor,” has not survived. It was taken by John Mayall, working under the pseudonym of Professor Highschool, who listed it in the catalogue of the 1847 exhibition at his London Gallery of the Daguerreotype

Institution.⁴ Portraiture was the main business of daguerreotype studios, but reproductions of works of art, exhibited in the ground floor rooms where patrons waited for their portraits, advertised the accuracy and good taste of the photographer. Mayall, who had worked as a photographer in Philadelphia since 1843, had only just come back to London, and was exploiting the good reputation of American daguerreotypes.⁵ It made sense to showcase the work of another artist from the New World who had already attracted attention in London, and to advertise the new medium of photography via the older medium of sculpture.

4. John Jabez Edwin Mayall, *Catalogue of Daguerreotype Panoramas, Falls of Niagara, [...] Photographic Pictures, Portraits of Eminent Persons, &c., in the Gallery of the Daguerreotype Institution*, London, April 1847 – 1848, in *Database of Photographic Exhibitions in Britain 1839-1865*, ed. Roger Taylor, De Montfort University, <http://peib.dmu.ac.uk/itemsearch.php?freeText1=Mayall&field1=photographernorm&blnOp=AND&freeText2=Word+or+phrase&field2=search&orderBy=coverage> [accessed 20 August 2015].

5. John Plunkett, "Mayall, John Jabez Edwin," in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), 907–908.

Caption: John Jabez Edwin Mayall, "Sir John Frederick William Herschel, 1st Bt," ca. 1848. Daguerreotype. National Portrait Gallery, London.

10) Mechanical reproductions of *The Greek Slave* at the 1851 Great Exhibition.

11)

The Greek Slave's success at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London increased the production and sale of its reproductions. As the *Morning Chronicle* remarked just before the Exhibition closed, "There are, perhaps, few statues which have enjoyed a greater popularity than 'The Greek Slave'. Casts of it in a variety of materials are hawked about the streets; every Italian boy carries it on his board; and it was but the other day that we recognized it in a sweetmeat shop in Tottenham-Court-road, nicely executed in a species of barley-sugar – a substance which not inelegantly rendered, in a glowing flesh colour, its sentimental graces."⁶

6. "The Great Exhibition," *Morning Chronicle*, October 10, 1851, 3.

Caption: "Hiram Powers, Sculptor, *The Greek Slave*, Daguerreotyped by Mayall", 1851. Steel engraving from a drawing from a daguerreotype, un-paginated tipped-in plate in *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* (London and New York: John Tallis & Co., 1852). © The British Library Board, 7955.e.11

12)

As the Exhibition boosted the market for reproductions of *The Greek Slave*, it also highlighted the shortcomings of daguerreotypes and calotypes as ways to reproduce it. Mayall's two daguerreotypes of *The Greek Slave* (front and back) had to be turned into engravings to be circulated cheaply and in quantity, as they were in *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851*. The publication's subtitle emphasized that it was illustrated by "Beautiful Steel Engravings

from[...]Daguerreotypes by Beard, Mayall &c. [sic.]". In this publication, photography was not just a method to facilitate the preparation of the engravings, but also advertised in the subtitle to give the whole publication an aura of accuracy. This, in turn, showcased the names of Beard and Mayall, two of the most prominent daguerreotype businesses of the time.¹²

7. Beard himself was not a photographer but an entrepreneur who owned the patent for daguerreotypes in England. Steve Edwards, "'Beard Patentee': Daguerreotypes, Property and Authorship," *Oxford Art Journal* 36, no. 6 (2013) 369–394. doi: 10.1093/oxartj/kct030

Caption: Daguerreotypes could not be engraved directly. They had to be turned into line drawings first. This however was faster and required less skill than drawing from the statue directly. The process also corrected the horizontal inversion of daguerreotypes.

13)

Paper negatives, unlike daguerreotypes, could generate a potentially infinite number of positive salted paper prints, which were sometimes tipped-in in illustrated books. This involved gluing the prints by hand onto pages pre-printed with the title, then binding them between pages of separately produced letterpress text. Making salted paper prints in large quantities was a slower and costlier process than engraving, and therefore suitable only for limited luxury editions, such as the four volumes of the photographically illustrated edition of the *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Reports by the Juries*, a prestigious gift destined for the Queen and other dignitaries who had contributed to the success of the Great Exhibition.

Caption: "Greek Slave. Marble. Powers.", unpaginated plate in Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. Reports by the Juries*, 4 vol. (London: Spicer Brothers, 1852) vol. 4, facing page 1585. The photographs for this edition were taken by Hugh Owen and Claude-Marie's Ferrier. The salted paper print in the Metropolitan Museum might be a page from this publication, although sometimes extra plates were made for sale as individual prints.

14)

This is how Owen's photograph of *Greek Slave* was originally circulated, facing the page discussing Power's statue. This, and the other 154 photographs tipped-in throughout the four volumes, animate and illustrate the otherwise fairly dry text, endowing the *Reports by the Juries* with a desirable visual appeal and a distinctly modern edge. Yet the photographers, or indeed the fact that the illustrations are photographs, are not mentioned anywhere in the publication.⁸ At a time when making photographically illustrated books was still an experiment, crediting the photographers was not a matter of course.⁹

8. I have looked at the copy of this volume in Senate House Library, University of London, which has an inscription on the front flyleaf to vol. 4: "Presented by her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition of MDCCCLI to Thomas Baring Esquire".

9. Nancy B. Keeler, "Illustrating the Reports by the Juries of the Great Exhibition of 1851," *History of Photography* 6:3 (1982) 257–72.
DOI:10.1080/03087298.1982.10443047

15)

Many photos have been taken of this statue over the years, but Owen's is still one of the most evocative. He waxed the negative, a process that lessened the visibility of the paper fibres in the positive, thereby maximising sharpness. The velvety texture of the print, a result of the silver halide crystals soaking into the paper as if they were pigments, rather than sitting as a shiny emulsion on its surface, softens the marble and warms its tones.

16)

The lighting from top left keeps the face in shadow, as if the figure were turning away, almost blushing, from the spotlight of the viewer's attention. The light, turned by photography into denser or sparser clumps of dark brown silver molecules, echoes the statue's narrative of a young Greek maiden holding on to her dignified, pensive modesty as she is being sold into slavery by her Turkish captors. It highlights her right hand, in one of the sharpest passages of the print, attracting the viewer's gaze to the crucial details of statue's narrative – the manacle, cross and locket.

17)

In the early 1850s, the circulation of photographs of *The Greek Slave* was outstripped by that of statuettes, which were more reproducible, widely available, and could be displayed in bright light without fading. Photography did, however, succeed in making mechanically achieved accuracy a desirable feature of new reproductions of statues. In the 1840s, the name "Art Manufactures" and their suitability as gifts were enough to advertise statuettes.¹⁰ By the early 1850s manufacturers such as Copeland, Minton's main rival, started to emphasize the mechanical accuracy with which they had been produced.

10. See for example Felix Summerly's Art Manufactures, "Presents for Weddings, Birthdays, and all Festivals," advert in *Daily News*, March 8, 1849, 2.

Captions:

Left: detail from Hugh Owen, *Greek Slave*, 1851. Salted paper print from paper negative. Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Middle: detail from : "Hiram Powers, Sculptor, The Greek Slave, Daguerreotyped by Mayall", 1851. Steel engraving from a drawing from a daguerreotype, un-paginated tipped-in plate in *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* (London and New York: John Tallis & Co., 1852). © The British Library Board, 7955.e.11

Right: Minton and Co. after Hiram Powers, *Greek Slave*, 1849. Parian ware. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/4140>

18)

According to one article from 1852:

Those of our readers who are acquainted with the attractive display of objects at the rooms of Messr. Copeland, [...] will find a new and highly

interesting feature in a cast of the famous Greek Slave, which is now open to inspection at their establishment.[...] The moulds from which the present figure is taken were constructed by Signor Brucciani, upon the marble statue which was exhibited at the Crystal Palace[...]From these moulds about twenty casts will be made, and the copy will then be reduced by means of Mr. Cheverton's instrument, in order to form the original for a series of statuettes.¹¹

One of the reasons the market embraced mechanical reproductions, photographs or statuettes, was that they seemed to be unsullied by hands that would interfere with the touch of the artist who had made the original object. This touch, the trace of the hand of the artist, was at the time becoming valorized as the actual impress of genius on the work.¹² Photographers, reducing machine workers or cast-makers were not fine-artists but mechanical workers. Their right to be named on the copy, Brucciani for example, depended on ownership of the business. In any case, the whole point of their work, the measure of its skill, was to be invisible.

11. "Fine Arts," *Literary Gazette*, April 10, 1852, 314.

12. On the history of the value of the visible touch of the artist see *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible*, ed. Kelly Baum, Andrea Bayer and Sheena Wagstaff (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Caption Left: Anonymous, *Greek Slave...Fictile Marble... by D. Brucciani* (from the sign just readable on the pedestal), detail from *London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company. No. 93. – State Ceremonial Trophy. (United States.) The International Exhibition of 1862*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Right: Detail from Anonymous, *Greek Slave*, after 1952. Albumen print from wet collodion on glass negative. Collection of the author. After comparing it with contemporary photographs, I suggest this might be one of Copeland's statuettes announced in the *Literary Gazette*.

19) Collodion plates, stereoscopic prints.

20)

It was in this vein that photography began to fulfill its promise as an engine of the fine arts, particularly after 1851, when collodion plates, developed by the sculptor Frederick Scott Archer, became available. Printed on glossy albumen paper, another recent innovation, these "wet plates" (so called because they had to be exposed and developed while still moist) made previous photographic systems obsolete, as they combined the detailed quality of daguerreotypes with the reproducibility of paper negatives. Archer's decision not to patent the system facilitated its widespread adoption. Photographic studios thrived, with some, such as the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company, growing into multinational businesses. Stereoscopy was the first photographic "craze".¹³

13. Thad Logan discusses stereoscopes and statuettes in *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105–201. See also William Merrin, "Skylights onto Infinity: The World in a Stereoscope," in *Visual Delights Two: Exhibition*

and Reception, ed. Vanessa Toulmin and Simon Popple (Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey, 2005), 161–174.

Caption: Detail from Anonymous, *The Greek Slave By Hiram Powers*, mid-nineteenth century. Albumen print from wet collodion on glass negative. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O201494/the-greek-slave-sculpted-by-photograph-unknown/>

21)

Stereoscopy amplified photography's ability to reproduce sculpture. As explained in 1851 by Brewster, who had adapted earlier forms of stereoscopes for photography:

The art [of stereoscopy] cannot fail to be regarded as of inestimable value to the sculptor [...] Superficial forms will stand before him in three dimensions, and while he summons into view the living realities from which they were taken, he may avail himself of the labours of all his predecessors, of Pericles as well as Canova; and he may virtually carry in his portfolio the mighty lions and bulls of Nineveh, - the gigantic sphinxes of Egypt, - the Apollos and Venuses of Grecian art, - and all the statuary and sculpture which adorn the galleries and museums of civilised nations.¹⁴

14. David Brewster, "Account of a Binocular Camera, and of a Method of Obtaining Drawings of Full Length and Colossal Statues, and of Living Bodies, which Can Be Exhibited as Solids by the Stereoscope," *Transactions of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts* 3 (1851): 264.

Caption Top: Anonymous, Untitled ("252. The Belvedere Apollo. From the Vatican" on the plinth), mid-nineteenth century. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Bottom: Giorgio Sommer, *No. 815. Apolino. Firenze*, second half of the nineteenth century. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

22)

Oliver Wendell Holmes, the designer of the American stereoscope, was equally concerned with defining stereoscopy as a form of "sun sculpture" – the threedimensional counterpart to ordinary photography as "sun painting".¹⁵ As he described it, "A stereoscope is an instrument which makes surfaces look solid.[...]That effect is so heightened as to produce an appearance of reality which cheats the senses with its seeming truth."¹⁶ In the same essay, he explained the tactile dimension of the visual perception of threedimensionality: "By means of these two different views of an object, the mind, as it were, feels round it and gets an idea of its solity. We clasp our object with our eyes, as with our hands, or with our thumb and finger, and then we know it to be something more than a surface."¹⁷ And how this is mobilised by stereoscopy: "The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise[...].The mind feels its way into the very depth of the picture."¹⁸ He then went on to conclude: "Form is henceforth divorced from matter. [...]In fact, matter as a visible object is of no great use any longer, except as the mould on which form is shaped.[...]Matter in large masses must always be fixed and dear; form is cheap and transportable."¹⁹

15. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Sun-Painting and Sun-Sculpture; with a Stereoscopic Trip across the Atlantic," 1861, reprinted in *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 166–227 .

16. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," 1859, reprinted in *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 140.

17. Holmes, "The Stereoscope", 142.

18. Holmes, "The Stereoscope", 148.

19. Holmes, "The Stereoscope", 161–162.

Caption: Anonymous, *Choice Gems: Statuary*, mid-nineteenth century. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

23) The Greek Slave and stereoscopy at the 1862 International Exhibition, London.

24)

The Greek Slave was still attracting attention at the 1862 International Exhibition, even though the original statue was not included. It featured, however, as a statuette in the sections dedicated to Parian-ware, and was used as a cast to decorate the display of trophies won by the United States, which was photographed by the London Stereoscopic Company as part of their record of the Exhibition.

Caption: Detail from London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862, No. 93. – State Ceremonial Trophy. (United States.)*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

25)

Like the statues they reproduce, these stereographs of the casts of Canova's *Venus* and Powers's *Greek Slave*, were not in the Exhibition, but they attracted as much attention as the exhibits themselves and were widely advertised and available for sale.²⁰

20. See also Patrizia Di Bello, "‘Multiplying Statues by Machinery’: Stereoscopic Photographs of Sculptures at the 1862 International Exhibition," *History of Photography* 37, no. 4 (2013): 412–20. DOI:10.1080/03087298.2013.780750

Caption Top: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862. No. 60. – Venus by Canova, from the original Statue*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Bottom: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862. No. 93. – State Ceremonial Trophy. (United States.)*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

26)

This was the first exhibition to be comprehensively photographed, and not just for documentation but for commercial enterprise, as a forerunner of the practice of selling catalogues and other photographic reproductions to help support financially their

corresponding exhibitions. As *Art Journal* explained in 1862, in an article dedicated to the “Photographs of the Sculpture of the Great Exhibition,” the London Stereoscopic Company had been the highest bidder for the exclusive rights to take photographs of the exhibits, and sell them to the public. As a result, the exhibition was “fully, as well as faithfully, represented in these wonderful pictures, which reproduce the originals ten thousand times.” It went on to note the “peculiarly vivid impressiveness” of stereoscopic photographs of sculpture, and to assert that “It is impossible to estimate too highly the importance of such works as these photographs as agents for refining and elevating the public taste.”²¹

21. “Photographs of the Sculpture of the Great Exhibition,” *Art Journal* (November 1862): 68.

Captions Top: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862. No. 8. - Venus. By Gibson*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Bottom: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862. No. 62. – Zenobia Captive, by Miss Hosmer*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

27)

The article continues, highlighting the advantages of photography over older methods of reproduction:

Hitherto, sculpture has suffered from the difficulty of rendering it by means of engraving, and from the impossibility of combining first-rate representations with trifling cost. Now, instead of being almost the exclusive inheritance of a privileged few, sculpture has been photographed into a popularity which must inaugurate a new era in the sculptor’s art. The photographs of the Stereoscopic Company form a complete gallery of modern sculpture, having this rare recommendation, that it may be possessed as well as seen.²²

22. “Photographs of the Sculpture of the Great Exhibition,” *Art Journal*, November 1862, 68.

Caption Top: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862, No. 61. – The Sleep of Sorrow the Dream of Joy, by R. Monti*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Bottom: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862, No. 63. – The Reading Girl. P. Magni, Sculp*, 1862. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

28)

Given the continuing popularity of Powers’s *Greek Slave*, it is an interesting sidenote that his two sculptures in the 1862 International Exhibition – *Proserpine* and *California* – were not photographed by the Stereoscopic Company. *Art Journal* noted that “the collections comprehend almost every important and interesting work that was present in the Exhibition, the exception being, in most cases, the result of some restrictions

placed by either the sculptor or the proprietors of certain works upon the operations of the photographers.”²³ Along these lines, it is possible to speculate that Powers refused permission to photograph *Proserpine* and *California* to avoid creating competition for his son Longworth, who was by then working as a photographer, including of his father’s work.²⁴

23. “Photographs of the Sculpture of the Great Exhibition”, *Art Journal* (November 1862): 68.

24. “The Artists in Florence”, *Art Journal* (May 1871): 133.

Caption: London Stereoscopic Company, *The International Exhibition of 1862. No. 321. – Eve at the Fountain, by E.H. Bailey, R.A., 1862.* Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

29)

There are many stereoscopic photographs of Power’s *Greek Slave* still to be found in public and private collections, and their existence is some measure of how common they were in the nineteenth century and beyond. Stereoscopy allowed anyone to become a serial collector, if not of actual sculpture, of “sun-sculptures”, which seemed, as reproductions, more three-dimensional than ordinary photographs and more direct than engravings or statuettes. Even the smallest interior could house a virtual sculpture gallery, which moreover gave the viewer the illusion of coming closer to the statues than viewing conditions would normally engender, whether in a private or public space.

Caption Top: Charles Bierstadt, 1032 – *Hiram Powers, Greek Slave, after 1897.*

Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

Caption Bottom: Anonymous, *The Greek Slave. By Hiram Powers, mid-nineteenth century.* Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

30)

A description of the stereoscopic experience can help us understand their appeal. Looking at stereographs through a stereoscopic viewer is a slower, more cumbersome process than that of looking at photographs in a book or album. The slide has to be picked up and inserted in the stereoscope, then the apparatus and the viewer’s eyesight have to be adjusted before the stereo effect works. Once this happens, however, all framing context disappear, facilitating the suspension of disbelief required for the viewer to feel that he or she is experiencing an encounter with *the statue by Powers.*

31)

The visual sensation of looking at stereographs through the viewer is peculiar. The observer’s vision is more than physically isolated from the surrounding space by the frame of the stereoscope. As Holmes suggested and experience confirms, the eyes feel as if they are moving in the space of the photograph. The details in the image, no longer miniaturised, reward leisurely perusal and facilitate complete absorption.

32)

The limitations of the stereoscopic photograph as a sculpture – its single fixed view and limited three-dimensionality – are compensated by other visual plenitudes, each stereo embodying the condition of both sculpture and photography as media of multiple iterations in its triptych of slightly different images: two on the card, one in the stereoscope.

33)

Perhaps surprisingly, stereoscopic photographs of statuettes seem to have been as popular as those of the full-sized versions. This stereograph, simply titled *Greek Slave* on the back, is clearly of a statuette, its scale made visible by the pattern and folds in the fabric background. The photographer could have chosen a plain background and arranged its draping to avoid indicating so emphatically the size of the statuette compared to the fabric. This was not an attempt at passing off the statuette for a full-scale statue. Because binocular disparity, on which the stereoscopic effect is based, is greater when we look at nearby, small objects, stereos of statuettes, seen through the viewer, create a stronger three-dimensional effect than larger statues. Stereoscopy emphasizes the distance between planes, so the figure's chained hands seem to be closer towards the observer than they are in the statuette, or appear to be in the flat photograph. To feel that close to a statuette, a viewer would have to be so near it as to lose vision of the whole object, which does not happen when looking through the stereoscope. The invisibility to the camera of the space between the planes parallel to it – here, between the chain and the pelvis – creates a vagueness or gap in the 3D effect, giving the impression that there is a bigger empty space between *The Greek Slave's* hand and her body than there is in the object. As a result, looking through the stereoscope, it is easier to fantasize slipping one's fingers behind the chain, and pulling the young woman towards the viewer, perhaps to freedom.

Caption: Anonymous, *Greek Slave* (printed on the back of the card), mid-nineteenth century. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

34)

And yet, the illusion of mastery that might be generated by the miniaturisation of the sculpture in the photograph, and emphasised by the naked woman in chains, is undermined. As we look through the stereoscope, we become at once large, looming outside the stereoscope, even as we are small inside it, our eyes sharing with the sculpture a space that has been collaboratively created by our visual perceptual apparatus (eyes and brain), by the stereoscope, and by the foreground object pictured in the stereograph. We become “like the the actress behind the curtain peeping at an expectant audience – observing seeing while at the same time being complicit in making the seen.”²⁵ This interplay between physical and conceptual processes is more profoundly interactive than handling actual statues or statuettes would be. In the stereoscope, we *make* the work in the process of seeing it, mingling our perceptual labor with the valorised work by the artist, and ignoring the less valuable labor of workers in the photography and sculpture businesses. The tactile fantasies engendered by this experience are arguably richer and more evocative than touching actual statues, as the figure's body and space in the stereograph, and one's own space and body, enfold into each other, creating a one-to-one encounter in which the distances between original and reproduction is no longer meaningful.

25. Rod Bantjes, "Reading Stereoviews: The Aesthetics of Monstrous Space," *History of Photography* 39, no. 1 (2015): 40-41.

Caption: Anonymous, *The Greek Slave* (printed on the back of the card), mid-nineteenth century. Stereoscopic slide (two albumen prints from wet collodion on glass negatives, glued on card). Collection of the author.

35)

If in the 1840s popular works such as Powers's *Greek Slave* had been used to advertise and legitimize photography, as Mayall had done, in the 1860s the success of stereoscopy demonstrated the effectiveness of photography to disseminate sculpture, as predicted by Brewster in 1844. It also seems to have established a habitus of looking *through* photographs of sculpture that survived the waning of the popularity of stereoscopy. In this analysis of early photographs of *The Greek Slave*, we can see a tension between how sculpture was used to attract attention to photography, and how photography succeeded precisely by making itself invisible. What held the two in balance was the desirability of owning works of art, even as reproductions, as long as the reproduction process did not interfere with the impress of genius left by the touch of the artist.
