

thereby, the gilding was removed again. This bad taste is also evident in his rhymed verses.³¹⁰ It seems that good artists were becoming ever more scarce, because Nero had Zenodoros come from Gaul (where he had made a statue of Mercury) to Rome to fashion a colossal statue of Nero in bronze.³¹¹ In Greece, the circumstances for the arts were not very favorable—for though Nero sought to allow the Greeks to enjoy as much of their former freedom as possible, he nevertheless committed outrages against works of art and had the statues of the victors in the great games pulled down and thrown into unclean places.³¹² And for all the appearance of freedom, the best works were taken out of the country. Caligula started this practice and filled his gardens and country villas with such pillage, under the pretext that the most beautiful things should be in the most beautiful place—and that was Rome.³¹³ Among other things, he took from the people of Thespias their celebrated Cupid by Praxiteles, which Claudius had returned but Nero took again; and he wanted the Olympian Jupiter of Pheidias brought to Rome, which the architect [Publius] Memmius Regulus did not dare to do, however, for fear of breaking the statue.³¹⁴

b. Statues carried away from Greece, presumably including

Nero was completely insatiable, and to this end he sent Acratus, a iniquitous freed slave, together with the half-learned Secundus Carinas to Greece to cull everything that pleased them on behalf of the emperor. From the Temple of Apollo at Delphi alone five hundred bronze statues were taken,³¹⁵ and earlier many statues had already been carried away from the same place.³¹⁶ It is possible that among these works were the Apollo in the Belvedere and the so-called Gladiator by Agasias of Ephesus in the Villa Borghese³¹⁷—for both were found in Antium [(Anzio)], now called Nettuno, and as this was Nero's birthplace, he spent a great deal on its embellishment. Even today one sees extensive ruins along the sea there. Among other things, there was a portico that a painter (a freed slave of the emperor) decorated with figures of gladiators in every possible position.³¹⁸

aa. The Apollo in the Belvedere: Description of it

The statue of Apollo is the highest ideal of art among all the works of antiquity that have escaped its destruction. The artist has formed this work completely according to the ideal, and he has taken from the material world only as much as was necessary to carry out his intention and make it visible. This Apollo surpasses all other images of him as much as the Apollo of Homer surpasses those portrayed by later poets. His build is elevated above the human, and his stance bears witness to the fullness of his grandeur. An eternal springtime, like that of the blissful Elysian Fields, clothes the alluring virility of mature years with a pleasing youth and plays with soft tenderness upon the lofty structure of his limbs. Go with thy spirit into the realm of incorporeal beauties and seek to become a creator of a heavenly nature, so that the spirit might be filled with beauties that rise above nature—for here there is nothing mortal, nothing that betokens miserable humanity. No veins or sinews heat and move this body, but rather a heavenly spirit that, flowing like a gentle stream, has saturated, as it were, every contour of this figure. He pursued the Python, first using his bow against it, and his mighty stride

overtook it and laid it low. His sublime gaze, as if peering into infinity, reaches out from the height of his contentment to far beyond his victory. Scorn sits upon his lips, and the displeasure that he contains within swells the nostrils of his nose and spreads upward to his proud brow. But the tranquility that hovers over him in a blissful stillness remains undisturbed, and his eyes are full of sweetness, as if he were among the Muses as they seek to embrace him. In all the surviving images of him that art holds in esteem, the father of the gods does not approach the greatness in which he manifested himself to the mind of the divine poet, seen here in the countenance of his son, and the individual beauties of the other gods are here mingled together, as they were in Pandora. A brow of Jupiter, gravid with the goddess of wisdom, and eyebrows whose motions declare his will; eyes of the queen of the gods, arched with grandeur, and a mouth whose shape infused desire in the beloved Branchos. His soft hair plays about this divine head like the tender, waving tendrils of the noble grapevine stirred, as it were, by a gentle breeze: it seems anointed with the oil of the gods and bound at the crown of his head with lovely splendor by the Graces. In gazing upon this masterpiece of art, I forget all else, and I myself adopt an elevated stance, in order to be worthy of gazing upon it. My chest seems to expand with veneration and to heave like those I have seen swollen as if by the spirit of prophecy, and I feel myself transported to Delos and to the Lycian groves, places Apollo honored with his presence—for my figure seems to take on life and movement, like Pygmalion's beauty. How is it possible to paint and describe it! Art herself must advise me and guide my hand to convey henceforth the main features that I have sketched here. I place the concept of this figure that I have conveyed at its feet, like the wreaths offered by those who could not reach the head of the deities whom they wished to crown. The concept of an Apollo "on the hunt" [*venator*], which Spence wishes to see in this statue,³¹⁹ is incompatible with the expression of the face.

The so-called Borghese Gladiator—a statue that, as I have already mentioned, was found in the same place as the Apollo—seems from the shape of the letters to be the oldest of the statues now in Rome on which the artist has placed his name. We have no information on its master, Agasias, but his work declares his merits. Just as one finds in the Apollo and the Torso solely a high ideal and in the Laokoon nature elevated and embellished by the ideal and by expression, so in this statue is found a collection of the beauties of nature at its peak of perfection, without anything added by the imagination. The former figures are like a sublime epic poem, carried beyond truth from what is probable to the marvelous; but the latter is like history, in which truth is conveyed, although in the most select ideas and words. The face clearly indicates that its appearance was taken from the truth of nature, for it represents a man who is no longer in the springtime of his life but who has attained manhood, and in it are found traces of a life that has been steadily occupied and toughened by work.³²⁰

All the other statues that Nero had removed from Greece served to decorate his so-called Golden House [(Domus Aurea)].³²¹ In the great fire of

bb. The so-called Borghese Gladiator: Description of it

312. Suet., *Ner.*, chap. 24. [Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*, Nero 24.1.]

313. Joseph., *Antiq.*, bk. 19, chap. 1, p. 916. [Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 19.6–9.]

314. Pausan., bk. 9, p. 762. [Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.27.3.]

315. Idem., bk. 10, p. 813, l. 13. [Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10.7.1; for Acratus and Secundus Carinas, see Tacitus, *Annales* 15.45.]

316. Strab., bk. 9, p. 420 C. [Strabo, *Geography* 9.3.8.]

317. Bianchini believes that if these statues had been at Antium during Nero's reign, they would have been cited by Pliny [the Elder];^(a) but this does not follow, for Pliny mentions neither a statue of Pallas by Endoios,^(b) which Augustus had moved from the city of Alea to Rome, nor a Herakles by Lysippos,^(c) which was brought to Rome from Alyzia in Akarnania. According to Hardouin's explanation of a passage in Pliny,^(d) painters must have especially flourished in Antium—but the word *hic* must refer not to this place but, from what follows, to Rome.

(a) [Bianchini,] *De Lapide Antiati*, p. 52.

(b) Pausan., bk. 8, p. 694, l. 38. [Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.46.5.]

(c) Strab., bk. 10, p. 705 A. [Strabo, *Geography* 10.2.21; Winckelmann's page number from the 1620 edition is incorrect here—it should be p. 429.]

(d) Bk. 35, chap. 33. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 35.33.32.]

318. V[o]lpi, *Tabula Antia[tina]*, illustr. to p. 17.

319. [Spence,] *Polymet[is]*, dialogue 8, p. 87.

320. Some believe this statue to be a *diskobolos*, that is, one who hurls a discus or metal disk, and this was the opinion that the distinguished Baron von Stosch expressed in a letter to me—but without sufficient consideration of the position in which such a figure would be set. For he who wishes to throw something must rear backward with his body,^(a) and when he is about to throw, his weight rests on the near thigh, while the left leg is relaxed. Here it is the opposite, however. The whole figure is thrown forward and is supported on the left thigh, and the right leg is stretched backward to the utmost. The right arm is modern, and a piece of a lance has been placed in the hand. On the left arm we see the strap of a shield that he held. If we observe that the head and eyes are directed upward and that the figure seems to be defending himself with the shield from something descending from above, then we could with more justification regard this statue as a depiction of a soldier who acted with special merit in a dangerous situation—for the Greeks probably never granted the honor of a statue to a gladiator in public spectacles, and this work appears to be older than the introduction of gladiators among the Greeks.

(a) Κατωμέδισος δίσκος [(a discus from the shoulder)]; see Eustath. on Homer, p. 1309, l. 32. [Homer, *Iliad* 23.431; Eustathius, *Commentary on Homer's "Iliad"* 4.760.17–19.]

321. Plin., bk. 34, chap. 19. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 34.19.84.]

322. Sueton., *Ner.*, chap. 38. [Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*, Nero 38.2.]

323. Plin., bk. 35, chap. 37. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 35.37.119–20.]

324. Maffei, [*Gemme antiche figurate*], vol. 1, pl. 19.

325. Idem., bk. 34, chap. 18. [Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 34.18.46.]

326. [Nardini,] *Rom[a] ant[ica]*, bk. 3, chap. 12, p. 134. [See also Donati, *Roma Vetus*, bk. 3, chap. 5.]

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**History of the
Art of Antiquity**

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