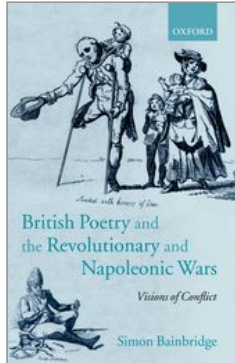


University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict

Simon Bainbridge

Print publication date: 2003

Print ISBN-13: 9780198187585

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2010

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198187585.001.0001

'Of War and Taking Towns': Byron's and Hemans's post-Waterloo Poetry, 1816–1828

Simon Bainbridge (Contributor Webpage)

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198187585.003.0007

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the works of Lord Byron and Felicia Hemans, whose obsession with war developed out of their engagement with the Peninsular War and whose poetic identities were profoundly shaped by their continued reflection on conflict. The chapter also focuses on one way in which these two writers represented war, the siege. They found in the siege a means of representing to their readership the entirety of modern war. The siege illustrates war's effects on the whole of society and it conflates within one site — the fortress, the citadel, or the walled city — the two spaces poetry frequently strives to link, the scene of conflict and the home. Both writers use the siege to explore the relations between war, gender, and history, exploiting the figure siege's rich allegorical and symbolic potential and ultimately find in it a figure for their own poetic identity.

Keywords: Lord Byron, Felicia Hemans, Peninsular War, siege, fortress, citadel, walled city, war, gender, history

WAR REMAINED A dominant poetic subject in the decade after Waterloo, with a vast amount of poetry produced and published on the topic in addition to that which celebrated the battle itself¹ Percy Shelley, whose *Esdatie Notebook* includes several anti-war poems written during the period of the conflict, continued to examine war's place in the modern world in *The Revolt of Mam* (1817–18), *Prometheus Unbound* (1818–19), and *The Triumph of Life* (1822), John Keats's *Mitonic Hyperion: A Fragment* (1818–19) reflects on dynastic change in the aftermath of war, while his Dantean reworking of the material in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* (1819), with its examination of the poetic role through the narrator's encounter with Moneta, again illustrates the creative dynamic that links the envisioning of conflict and the poetic imagination, Laetitia Landon displayed the impact of war on the family and the home in several poems in *The Improvisatrice* (1824), while in the inserted narratives of *The Troubadour* (1825) she offers tales of war's destructiveness and analyses the role of poetry within martial societies. But in this final chapter I want to examine the work of two of the best-selling and most widely read poets of the period whose obsession with war developed out of their engagement with the Peninsular War and whose poetic identities were profoundly shaped by their continued reflection on conflict, Felicia Hemans and Lord Byron. The chapter will (p.191) particularly focus on one way in which these two writers represented war, the siege. Writing with a degree of historical distance from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic conflicts, they found in the siege a means of representing to their readership the entirety of modern, war, as Byron tells the 'Cockneys of London' and 'Muscadines of Paris', by contemplating 'one annihilated city, | Where thousand loves, and ties' and duties grow' they can 'ponder what a pions pastime war is' (VIII 124),² The siege illustrates war's effects on the whole of society and it conflates within, one site—the fortress, the citadel, or the walled city—the two spaces that, we have seen poetry so frequently striving to link, the scene of conflict and the home, as Joseph Fawcett had emphasized in his poem 'The Siege', published earlier in the period: 'Domestic scenes no safe recess afford: | The peaceful hearth the missile battle feels'.³ War is not something that can be contained within the public, professional, or masculine sphere, as Hemans shows in her poetic examinations of women caught up in besieged cities and as Byron emphasizes in *Don Juan* when he comments that the aim of the Russian bombardment is to 'knock down | The public buildings, and the private too, | No matter what poor souls might be undone' (VII. 23). Both writers use the siege to explore the relations between war, gender, and history, exploiting the siege's rich

allegorical and symbolic potential, and ultimately find in it a figure for their own poetic identity.

'To Paint' the 'Appalling Sight' of a Siege

The figurative and symbolic elements of Hemans's and Byron's uses of the siege are emphasized when seen in terms of developments in military history during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Though once the dominant form of warfare in Europe and still a significant feature of the military scene, particularly during the British campaign in the Spanish Peninsula, regular sieges played a considerably less important part in the warfare of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period than they had in the mid-eighteenth century.⁴ Byron, had, of course, treated the siege of (p.192) Saragossa in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, I, but none of the siege texts I will be examining in this chapter were set during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Byron wrote his verse narrative *The Siege of Corinth* (1816) during the closing years of the war, from 1812 to 1815, and in it he describes the Turkish attack on the Venetian fortress in 1715 during the war between Venice and the Ottoman empire for control of the Peloponnesus.⁵ Similarly, in her first collection of narrative poems, *Tales, and Historic Scenes, in Verse*, published in 1819, Hemans turned to historical sieges to examine the impact of war in a number of poems, perhaps most powerfully 'The Wife of Asdrubal' set during the siege of Carthage in 146 BC. But it was in the early years of the 1820s that these two writers particularly exploited the siege as a dramatic situation through which they could examine the place of war in the modern age. Thus 1823 witnessed the publication of two of the great poetic investigations of war in the romantic period, Byron's *Don Juan*, cantos VII and VIII, and Hemans's *The Siege of Valencia* volume. In the war cantos of *Don Juan*, written in 1822, Byron depicts the Russian assault on the Turkish fortress at Ismail of November to December 1790, part of the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–91. He reworked and developed a number of his themes in *The Deformed Transformed*, written in 1822–3 and published in 1824, which dramatizes the siege of Rome of 1527 by Charles V's army of Spanish, German, and Italian troops under the leadership of Charles, Duc de Bourbon.⁶ Hemans's *The Siege of Valencia* volume includes no fewer than three siege texts. The verse drama from which the volume takes its title presents a Ictional sixteenth-century siege of the city by the Moors while her collection of lyrics 'The Songs of the Cid' is set during the 1090s when 'The Moor had beleaguer'd Valencia's towers' ('The Cid's Funeral Procession', l.1).⁷ In *The Last Constantine*, initially intended as an entry for the Royal Society of Literature's poetry

prize, Hemans focuses on the siege and fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.

To a writer of exciting verse narratives such as Byron, siege warfare may have seemed a particularly attractive topic, offering a series of (p.193) dramatic set-piece actions (trenching, cannonade, assault) that had become particularly formalized during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (following the manuals of the French military architect Vauban) and that contributed to a single, decisive action—the taking of a fortress and the annihilation or total surrender of the enemy. In all three poems, Byron exploits and increasingly scrutinizes the exhilaration of this form of combat, presenting the action of the siege from the attackers’ point of view and using the structured events of the siege to structure his own works. By contrast, Hemans shows little interest in the formalities and technicalities of the siege. Rather, writing from the perspective of the besieged confined within the city walls and limited in their sphere of action, she is more concerned to represent the psychological impact of war through a focus on individuals caught up in the conflicts of history.

If sieges played a less important part in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic conflicts than they had in earlier centuries, the action of the siege none the less constituted modern warfare at its most intense and devastating,⁸ and both poets emphasize this shocking physical destructiveness of modern war by presenting it as surpassing in horror the military actions of classical poetry. In *The Last Constantine*, Hemans addresses ‘Olympus, Ida, [and] Delphi’ and informs them that:

there is yet a more appalling sight
For earth prepared, than e’er, with tranquil brow,
Ye gazed on from your world of solitude and snow! (41)⁹

Similarly Byron informs ‘eternal Homer’ that he has:

To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that [Trojan] campaign; (VII.
80)

However, there is a major difference in the way in which the two poets ‘paint’ the ‘appalling sight’ of a siege for their readers in *The Last Constantine* and *Don Juan*. While Hemans describes ‘the mangled heap, | In the red moat, the dying and the slain’ over which the assailants climb to (p.194) attack the city (83), the smoke of the cannons and fires obscures the action of the siege from the vision of the poet and her readers, drawing a discreet veil over its horrors: beyond ‘the compass

of our gaze |... fearful things, unknown, untold, are there, j Workings of wrath and death, and anguish, and despair!’ (85). By contrast, much of Byron’s war poetry is directed to precisely the aim of making known and telling the ‘fearful things’ of war. In his dedication to Wellington at the start of Canto IX of *Don Juan*, Byron describes war as a ‘brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art, | Unless her cause by Right be sanctified’(IX. 4) and throughout the poem he insists upon the factual nature of his ‘true Muse’ and ‘true portrait of one battlefield’ (VIII, 1, 12), emphasizing the shocking physicality and gory nature of martial combat when describing Juan and Johnson ‘trampling’ over ‘dead bodies’ and ‘wallow [ing] in the bloody mire | Of dead and dying thousands’ (VIII. 19–20). Byron uses two particular tropes to represent the devastation of the siege of Ismail. The first is the sea, initially used to figure the unholy destructive potential of mankind—“‘Let there be light! said God, and there was light!” | “Let there be blood!” says man, and there’s a sea!’ (VII. 41)—and repeated throughout the two cantos to quantify the blood, tears, gore, and slaughter produced by the siege (VII. 50, 68; VIII. 3), culminating in his final picture of Ismail:

Ismail’s no more! The crescent’s silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o’er the field,
But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter. (VIII. 122)

Here the blood-besmeared cross, presiding over the scenes of devastations in Ismail, becomes a symbol of the perversion of Christianity, representing not Christ’s redemptive sacrifice through crucifixion but the destructiveness of religiously endorsed imperialism. The second of Byron’s two major tropes for the siege is Hell (VII. 86; VIII. 6, 20, 42), which he uses for his final attempt to assess the events at Ismail:

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man’s distresses;
All that the Devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which Hell is peopled, or as sad
As Hell—mere mortals who their power abuse—
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose. (VIII. 123)

(p.195) Byron’s representation of the aftermath of Ismail as the result of the devil ‘run stark mad’ recalls one of his first uses of the siege motif in his poem ‘The Devil’s Drive’ of 1813 in which the devil ‘gazed on a town by besiegers taken, | Nor cared he who were winning’ (II. 77–

8). It also anticipates the merging of the metaphysical and the historical in *The Deformed Transformed* which dramatizes the conceit by presenting the devilish figure of Caesar observing the bloody sacking of Rome and describing his 'sport' as 'to gaze, since all these labourers | Will reap my harvest gratis' (2. 2. 61–3). In this drama, Byron develops his language of war to render the events of the siege in broader historical terms, merging the literal and symbolic in a way that pushes the play towards the elevated levels and grand schemas of the metaphysical dramas. For example, when Arnold arrives before the walls of Rome he comments 'my path | Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full | Of blood' (1. 2. 2–4). His literal meaning is reinforced by Caesar's instructions to him to wipe the blood from his eyes but symbolically his comment represents both his new found role as a conqueror and the atrocities he has seen during it. This merging of the literal and the symbolic is characteristic of the play with its repeated references to the Tiber running with blood (1. 2. 85, 152), the streets of Rome red with gore (1. 2.152; 2. 2. 10–11), blood contaminating all drinking water (2. 1. 167–8; 2. 2. 48–52) and Arnold 'purple with the blood of Rome' (2. 3. 124) which suggest both the corruption of nature by war, as McGann has argued,¹⁰ and war's devastation of civilization.

While Hemans also emphasizes the devastation of the 'wasting siege' in the 'Songs of the Cid' ('The Cid's Departure into Exile', 1. 7) and *The Siege of Valencia* (VI. 7),¹¹ as this phrase suggests her focus is more often on the suffering caused by famine and pestilence to the civilian population than on the horrors of fighting. In both 'The Wife of Asdrubal' and *The Siege of Valencia*, the central action of the martyring of two brothers in the name of patriotism powerfully enacts the destructiveness of war and patriotic ideology on the family and the home. In her play, Hemans implies that this devastation is felt throughout society during the siege, paralleling the death of the Governor's two sons with those described by an unnamed citizen: (p.196)

This wasting siege,
Good Father Lopez, hath gone hard with you!
'Tis sad to hear no voices through the house,
Once peopled with fair sons! (VI. 7–10)

The nation at war is a nation robbed of its sons through death. Through the trope of pestilence, Hemans launches an assault on heroism itself, with martial strength unable to withstand its power: as Ximena comments, in the besieged city "Death is busy, taming warrior-hearts, | And pouring winter through the fiery blood, | And fettering the strong arm!" (V. 20–2), Rather than providing an arena for the display of

physical prowess and the earning of military glory, the siege renders the warrior class both useless and vulnerable, as the knight Garcias himself remarks (II. 75–92).

‘Battles, Sieges, and that Kind of Pleasure’: The Martial and Erotic in Byron

In revealing ‘what a pious pastime war is’ in *Don Juan*, Byron maintained the attacks of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* on an activity which had gained a central place in British culture and society and developed his criticism of what he saw as the dominant ways in which it was constructed and consumed in the Gazettes and in poetry.¹² These forms of mediation create and feed the illusions of the ‘Too gentle reader’ (VIII.i), one of the ‘panthers for newspaper praise’ and ‘dilettanti in war’s art’ (VII. 39) who revel in the official accounts of the war without thinking about its costs. Such readers, Byron insists, should ‘Think how the Joys of reading a Gazette | Are purchased by all agonies and crimes’ (VIII. 125). As here, Byron constantly juxtaposes the physical actualities of war with its textual representations, asking ‘if a man’s name in a *bulletin* | May make up for a *bullet* in his body?’ (VII. 21). One of the major fabrications of such idealizing narratives of war is ‘glory’—‘what story | Sometimes calls “murder,” and at others “glory”’ (VII. 26)—and throughout the war cantos Byron seeks to offer ‘Glory’s dream | Unriddled’ (VIII. 1). While Byron exposes glory as illusory—‘But Glory’s Glory; and if you would find (What that is—ask the pig who sees the wind!’ (VII. 84)—he recognizes its abstract yet pervasive power: Suvorov exploits it in his speech to his troops and during the assault Juan battles ‘In search of glory’ (VII. 64; (p.197) VIII. 31, 52). Byron identifies the ideological force of glory, not only in the role it plays in driving soldiers into battle but in bolstering the established order:

Yet I love Glory:—glory’s a great thing;—
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintained at the expense of your good king;
A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,
And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to wage
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying. (VIII. 14)

Alluding to both Wordsworth, the ‘sage’ of Grasmere who had taken a governmental ‘pension’ as Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland, and to Wellington, the subject of numerous poems and whose pensions are alluded to in the opening of canto IX, Byron argues that the concept of ‘Glory’ has been used not only to justify the destruction of mankind but

to maintain the positions of those individuals who have most benefited from the recent wars.

Byron reinforces his unriddling of glory's dream through his highly sceptical treatment of the heroic in his three siege poems. While all three protagonists possess conventionally heroic qualities and play major roles in the actions of the sieges, none of them fights for a justifying 'cause' (*Don Juan*, VII. 40), or even thinks of himself as so doing. Alp in *The Siege of Corinth* is driven by the personal motives of 'revenge and love' (l. 245), while in *Don Juan* Juan and Johnson fight 'thoughtlessly' and 'arm | To burn a town which never did them harm' (VIII. 19; VII. 76). Juan, 'a fine young lad, who fought | He knew not why', is driven on by his desire for glory and by the increasing excitement he feels during the battle (VIII. 29, 32–3, 54–5). Yet Byron's depiction of Juan in battle is also part of the poem's critique of the siege as an act of imperialism. Juan's heroics at Ismail are the product of his education as a member of the gentry class in Spain, trained in the practice of warfare:

Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
In case our lord the king should go to war again,
He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress—or a nunnery. (1.38)

Throughout the siege cantos, Juan is presented as representative of the various aristocrats, including a large number of French émigrés, fighting in what McGann has called a 'classic instance of the imperialism of the (p.198) monarchist regimes'.¹³ For Juan, like many of the other multinational aristocrats in the Russian army, warfare is a gentlemanly pursuit, producing sensations akin to horse-riding and hunting (VIII 54–5), and he is 'delighted to employ his leisure' 'In such good company as always throng | To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure' (VIII 24). Like Juan, Arnold in *The Deformed Transformed* fights for no explicit cause, chooses the side on which he fights seemingly by chance and becomes frenzied in battle (2. 2. 28–9). Throughout the play, his martial deeds are accompanied by the debunking commentary of his anti-heroic *doppelgänger* Caesar, the 'everlasting Sneerer' (1. 2. 117). Yet if Juan, in his naivety, fights 'without malice' and with "'the best | Intentions'" (VIII. 25), Arnold sees his martial 'daring' as the product of his deformity whose 'essence [is] to o'ertake mankind | By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—| Aye, the superior of the rest' (1.1. 314–16). But such compensations for 'step-dame Nature's avarice' come at a price (1.1. 320). Arnold's assumption of the heroic form of Achilles is made possible through his Faustian pact with the Stranger which, it transpires, is signed in the

blood of all those he kills during the siege of Rome. In this most bloody of all Byron's treatments of war, the achievement of fame through a martial career is represented as nothing less than a compact with the devil.

Byron emphasizes his critique of martial heroism by drawing on the traditional trope of the siege as the assault on the woman's body,¹⁴ seen most obviously in his equation of the taking of the city with the rape of women. In both *The Siege of Corinth* and *Don Juan*, for example, he alludes to Henry V's threats before Harfleur to defile 'your shrill-shrieking daughters' (3. 4. 35) in describing the 'Shriller shrieks' and 'war-whoop and shriller scream' that provide the soundtracks to the sackings of the cities (1. 726; VIII. 127). But this symbolic linking of fortress and woman also operates at the levels of plot and character, as in *The Siege of Corinth*, in which Alp besieges the city not only out of revenge but because it contains Francesca. However, the poem is as critical in its treatment of Alp's attempted sexual conquest of Francesca as it is of the Turk's territorial imperialism: if the assault on Corinth leads only to the city's annihilation, Alp's attempts to gain Francesca lead only to his knowledge of her death and his own destruction. Like the fight between the nameless Venetian aristocrat and the Turk Hassan for possession of (p.199) Leila in *The Giaour*, which *The Siege of Corinth* replays on a national scale, the contest for possession of the desired object leads to its destruction along with all those involved, here represented in the staggering apocalyptic explosion of the magazine that annihilates the city and destroys the innocent Greek inhabitants of Corinth as well as the warring Turks and Venetians. Similarly, in *The Deformed Transformed*, the assault on Rome becomes focused on Olimpia, who operates partly as a symbol for Rome itself. In an action that echoes Juan's saving of Leila in *Don Juan*, Arnold saves Olimpia from the rampaging soldiers, but as both Caesar and the soldiers observe, he has as little right to her as they have (2. 3. 73–4, 86–7). Their critique is developed by Olimpia, who is equally suspicious of Arnold's actions, attempts suicide to avoid being taken by him, and even when married to him withholds her love. Through its spirited and independent heroine who refuses to love the 'beautiful and brave' figure of Arnold, *The Deformed Transformed* offers a powerful critique of masculine physical force.

In *Don Juan*, Byron uses the image of the siege to focus one of the poem's major themes, the equation of the martial and the erotic; Juan is trained to 'scale a fortress—or a nunnery', 'cunnus' becomes the best cause of war and reason to 'batter down a wall', the women of society erect 'palisades' to protect their virtue, and Byron ends his account of

Ismail with his notorious joke about the middle-aged widows who ask “Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!” (1.38; IX. 55–6; XIV. 61; VIII. 132). In the siege cantos, war and love provide not only the subject of the poem—‘Oh Love! O Glory!’ (VII. 1)—but are deliberately conflated in Byron’s invocation: “Fierce loves and faithless wars”—... I sing them both’ (VII. 8). Parodying Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, ‘Fierce warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song’,¹⁵ Byron not only cynically updates romance values, but suggests a likeness between the martial and the erotic in contemporary society, seen in the sexual and territorial aggressiveness of Catherine the Great, with her excessive appetite for new lands and new lovers, and Potemkin—‘a great thing in days j When homicide and harlotry made great’ (VII. 37). We might expect Juan, the naïve, feminized hero and saviour of Leila, to be exempted from this linking of the martial with the erotic but his valour is frequently equated with his virility, Johnson commenting to Suvorov, for example, that ‘if he hath no greater fault | In war than love, he had better lead the assault.’ (p.200) (VII. 62). While Juan ‘wars’ as he loves ‘with what we call “the best | Intentions”’ according to the narrator (VIII. 25), his complicity in the savagery of Ismail parallels the devastating effect of his romantic adventures on the lives of those involved, such as Donna Julia or Haidee. If the symbolic dimensions of the siege present war as an assertion of masculinity, equating the martial and erotic instincts behind both “Fierce loves and faithless wars” in *Don Juan* Byron points to the fatal effects that result from the unthinking unleashing of these urges.

‘Womanhood ... Summon d unto Conflicts’: Hemans and the Inspirations of Siege Warfare

In the opening scene of Hemans’s *The Siege of Valencia*, Ximena, the daughter of the city’s governor, Gonzalez, tells her mother, Elmina, that as a consequence of the Moorish siege ‘womanhood | Is suramon’d unto conflicts, heretofore | The lot of warrior-souls’ (1. 100–2). The siege disrupts the gendered conventions of war, conventions presented in the ballad with which Ximena opens the play in which a warrior returned from the battle of Roncesvalles informs a maiden of her lover’s death during it (1.1–64). In such conventional war narratives, warriors go away to fight while maidens wait for them at home, aligning men with the public sphere and women with the private. But as Ximena’s comment emphasizes, by making the home itself the scene of arms, the siege presents a particular challenge to women, compelling them, to cross from the private sphere into the public and from a conventionally feminine role into a conventionally masculine one. This structural potential of the siege as a form for examining the relations between war, the home, and gender roles had been recognized by Hannah

Cowley in *The Siege of Acre: An Epic Poem, in Six Books* of 1801, the major treatment of the theme prior to Byron's and Hemans's poems on the subject.¹⁶ *The Siege of Acre* celebrates the events of March–May 1799, when a Turkish fortress with the support of Sidney Smith's naval flotilla survived a fierce French siege, and identifies Acre as the place where 'gallic Madness' was stopped by 'sacred Fiat' in what Cowley presents as a holy war.¹⁷ While Cowley (p.201) emphasizes the 'truth' of her representation of the siege (3, 149), she introduces two fictitious episodes which she justifies as follows: 'It may be almost assumed that there never was a Siege which lasted more than two Months, in which some interesting *family event* did not take place, in consequence of HUSBANDS and FATHERS becoming Military Men' (150). These two episodes not only emphasize the overlap of war and the home as a result of the siege but highlight the potential of this form of warfare to raise questions about wartime gender roles. In the first episode, Ira disguises herself as a man so that she can follow her husband to war, but her adoption of manly dress leads ultimately to her madness, as a result of the horrors that she sees, and her death when she is shot by a French sniper (34–42). In the second episode, two sisters who try to prevent their father from fighting are offered as examples of women who 'endeavour to seduce [the men of their families] from their duty, from an acute sense of their personal danger' (150). As negative examples of women's behaviour in wartime, the two narratives propose by contrast a role for women during conflict which supports the martial endeavours of men without transgressing into the active sphere of fighting. If Ximena's comment in *The Siege of Valencia* raises the issue of women's participation in war that Cowley seeks to proscribe through Ira's narrative, it also points to the different grounds on which conventional gender roles are constructed; women are defined in terms of a natural, essential state—'womanhood'—while the 'warriors' are defined through their 'souls', a spiritual individuality that transcends the bodily. In Hemans's poetry, the state of siege provides an opportunity for women to reconstruct their identity on an entirely different basis, even to transcend what convention presents as their nature and its natural sphere of activities—'the heart' and the 'domestic affections'—but such reconfigurings of gendered identities away from the naturally feminine threatens women's very existence. The dangers of such reconstructions of women's identities compelled by a state of siege can be illustrated by contrasting two of Hemans's shorter siege poems, before examining her most complex exploration of the issue, *The Siege of Valencia*,

In 'Marguerite of France', the Queen nurses her baby during a Turkish siege 'Deep in the Saracenic gloom | Of the warrior citadel' where 'midst arms the couch was spread, | And with banners curtain'd o'er'.¹⁸ Hemans's description of this 'strange, wild bower' illustrates how (p.202) she uses the siege to conflate the sites of the martial and the familial, the national and the domestic. In this poem the Queen inspires her previously reluctant troops to defend the citadel by presenting it as a defence of her child and her sexual purity, linking the gender politics of the home with that of the nation in a Burkean speech which in turn prompts the ideal Burkean response:

And her babe awoke to flashing swords,
Unsheath'd in many a hand,
As they gather'd round the helpless One,
Again a noble band!

The age of chivalry is not dead and the poem ends with the Queen and the warriors enacting their conventional gender roles, the warriors promising to guard her well so that she can concentrate on the properly feminine activity of mothering—'Rest, with thy fair child on thy breast'. Yet this ending constitutes a restoration of such conventional roles in a poem in which the soldiers' initial 'wavering hearts' had forced the Queen to consider taking on the martial role herself:

'Then bring me here a breastplate
And a helm, before you fly,
And I will gird my woman's form,
And on the ramparts die!'

As with Ximena, as a result of the siege the Queen finds herself summoned unto the manly world of conflict, but while Hemans presents her as a potentially heroic figure, she also emphasizes her femininity. Marguerite is a 'fragile thing' with a 'flute-like voice' and 'pale aspect' whose 'soft sad eyes of weeping love' are compared to 'the Virgin Mother's mild'. The Queen remains entirely natural, her 'deep strength' derived from her 'gentle heart' and her embrace extending from her son to her country. If the siege calls upon women to play a role beyond that normally scripted for them, in 'Marguerite of France' Hemans suggests that so long as women remain true to their 'heart' and their nature they have resources of strength that can influence the public sphere.

In 'Marguerite of France' Hemans draws back from presenting the transgressive possibilities of a mother figure dying 'on the ramparts', but it is just such a scene that she represents in another of her siege poems, 'The Wife of Asdrubal'. Like 'Marguerite of France', the action

of the poem is generated by the failure of manliness on the part of the citadel protector, in this case the Carthaginian consul Hasdrubal, who surrendered to the Roman general Scipio during the siege of Carthage in 146 BC, (p.203) deserting his wife and their two sons.¹⁹ The unnamed 'wife' addresses Asdrubal from the roof of a burning temple, the last refuge of those left in the city, before stabbing her two sons and plunging with them into the flames. As for Queen Marguerite, the situation of the siege locates the mother within the arena of war, and like the Queen, the 'wife' is presented in martial terms, though here through simile; 'The dark profusion of her locks unbound, | Waves like a warrior's floating plumage round' (11. 29–30). But whereas Marguerite's potential adoption of a martial identity was presented as the extension of her maternal role, the 'wife' appears inspired by some higher power, like the priestess of the Delphic Oracle:

She might be deem'd a Pythia in the hour
Of dread communion and delirious power;
A being more than earthly, in whose eye
There dwells a strange ascendancy. ...
Flush'd is her cheek, inspired her haughty mien,
She seems th'avenging goddess of the scene. (11.19–32)

Hemans emphasizes the unnaturalness of this figure by fusing her feminine qualities with elements more characteristic of the masculine sublime, describing her as 'sternly beauteous in terrific ire' (1. 18). The crisis of the wife's situation raises her beyond the earthly but destabilizes her gendered identity, literally calling into question her role as mother:

Are those *her* infants ...
Is that a mother's glance, where stern disdain,
And passion awfully vindictive, reign? (11. 33–8)

This tension between the wife's inspired but unearthly position and her maternal role as mother is dramatized in her killing of her sons. Though this act is presented as both an act of revenge on their traitorous father—"thou, their sire, | In bondage safe, shah yet in them expire" (11. 57–8)—and a culminating act of loving motherhood that has been left with no alternative in a world of masculine violence—"the arms that cannot save | Have been their cradle, and shall be their grave" (11. 62–5)—in its final lines the poem also suggests it may be a result of madness (11. 64–9).

These two shorter pieces illustrate how the state of siege brings (p.204) women into the arena of war but also reveals the limitations that are placed on their roles as a result of the constructions of gender. In *The*

Siege of Valencia, Hemans gives her fullest examination of war's liberating and devastating effect on women through the figure of Ximena, using the dramatic form, of the play to voice her ambivalence towards the involvement of women in conflict. If Ximena presents herself as compelled to take on a new role as a result of the siege, Elmina presents her daughter's besieged situation as a removal from the natural world which prefigures her death (I. 73–9, 107–19, 350–68). But Gonzalez figures his daughter's transformation not in relation to nature but through martial imagery (and in language that recalls Roderick's vision of his mother transformed by war in Southey's *Roderick, The Last of the Goths*):

I see a change
Far nobler on her brow!—She is as one,
Who, at the trumpet's sudden call, hath risen
From the gay banquet, and in scorn cast down
The wine-cup, and the garland, and the lute
Of festal hours, for the good spear and helm,
Beseeming sterner tasks. (I.368–74)

Rather than lamenting the severing of Ximena's ties through the heart to nature, Gonzalez celebrates her transformation as inspired by her soul:

Her eye hath lost
The beam which laugh'd upon th' awakening heart,
E'en as morn breaks o'er earth. But far within
Its full dark orb, a light hath sprung, whose source
Lies deeper in the soul. (I. 374–8)

Even though at this stage of the play Ximena is only nursing the sick and wounded, Gonzalez represents her new role within the besieged city in martial terms: 'She hath put on | Courage, and faith, and generous constancy, | Ev'n as a breastplate' (I. 381–3). Like the heroines of Hemans's other siege poems, the crisis of her situation compels her to adopt a martial identity, but such a reconstructed identity is potentially dangerous to a woman if it is not founded on the basis of her 'nature* and her 'heart', as we saw in 'The Wife of Asdrubaf. Elmina sees her daughter in just the same way as the poet of that lyric sees the 'wife', as both transformed and threatened as the result of an inspiring 'unearthly power': (p.205)

And seesf thou not
In that high faith and strong collectedness,
A fearful inspiration?—*They* have cause

To tremble, who behold th'unearthly light
Of high, and, it may be, prophetic thought,
Investing youth with grandeur! (I. 390–5)

Elmina's and Gonzalez's contrasting responses to Ximena's new role as a woman summoned unto conflicts is representative of Hemans's use of them to dramatize the competing demands of the 'heart' and 'soul'. This conflict is produced by the central action of the play in which Gonzalez's and Elmina's two sons, Alphonso and Carlos, are captured by the Moorish Prince, Abdullah, who threatens to execute them unless Gonzalez yields the city to him. Gonzalez refuses to do, despite Elmina's powerful pleadings and criticisms of the values of patriotism and patriarchy, which have provided the focus for some of the excellent recent readings of the play.²⁰ As Hemans's biographer Henry Chorley commented, this situation, 'a thrilling conflict between maternal love and the inflexible spirit of chivalrous honor—afforded to [Hemans] an admirable opportunity of giving utterance to the two master interests of her mind'.²¹ Elmina's response to learning of the threat to her sons is rooted in 'Nature' and the 'heart', as she comments; 'Nature is all-powerful, and her breath | Moves like a quickening spirit o'er the depths | Within a father's heart' (I. 246–8), Gonzalez, however, seeks to subordinate 'Nature's voice' to 'Th'austere and yet divine remonstrances | Whisper'd by faith and honour' and equated throughout the play with the soul (I. 259–63). While Gonzalez acknowledges the power of his own feelings, located within his heart —'Thinkst thou *I* feel no pangs? | He that hath given me sons doth know the heart | Whose treasure she recalls' (I. 302–4)—Elmina presents his refusal to yield up the city as the triumphant separation of his 'soul' from his 'heart': (p.206)

Oh, cold and hard of heart!
Thou shouldst be born for empire, since thy soul
Thus lightly from all human bonds can free
Its haughty flight! (I, 272–5)

Elmina and Gonzalez, then, speak as representatives not only of different sets of values but of the different models of identity underlying Ximena's distinction between 'womanhood' and 'warriors', the first based on the natural affections of the heart, the second on the patriotic and religious values of the soul. They both recognize the power of the values for which the other speaks, Gonzalez acknowledging that God demands a 'terrible sacrifice ... | From creatures in whose agonizing hearts | Nature is strong as death!' (I. 404–6) and Elmina describing her husband as one who 'bears a soul | Stronger than love or death' (IV. 162–3), The parallel of these two

comments indicates the play's overall trajectory, with the 'soul', associated throughout with Gonzalez and his religious and patriotic ideology, presented as stronger than both the 'love' of the 'heart' and death.

The Siege of Valencia offers another version of the wartime transformations of gender, nation, and poetry that have been examined throughout this book, Ximena's reconstruction of her self from an identity based on the natural affections of the heart to one based on the spiritual values of the soul is also registered as a shift in poetic mode, as Elmina announces in the play's opening speech:

Your songs are not as those of other days,
Mine own Ximena!—Where is now the young
And buoyant spirit of the morn, which once
Breath'd in your spring-like melodies, and woke
Joy's echo from all hearts? (I, 64–8)

Against Elmina's figuring of Ximena's songs prior to the siege in natural terms and in relation to the heart, Gonzalez presents the current crisis as requiring a different form that addresses the 'spirit' and cuts it free from nature:

If there be strains of power
To rouse a spirit, which in triumphant scorn
May cast off nature's feebleness, and hold
Its proud career unshackled, dashing down
Tears and fond thoughts to earth; give voice to those!
I have need of such, Ximena! we must hear
No melting musk now! (1,148–54)

(p.207) Ximena, then, becomes representative of a wartime poetics that articulates and inspires a model of identity severed from nature. And her successful attempts to rouse the citizens of Valencia to attempt to save her two brothers replays the conflict between 'heart' and 'soul' at a civic level. In response to a citizen's explanation of the reason for the city's apathy—'Sickness, and toil, and grief, have breath'd upon us, | Our hearts beat faint and low' (VI. 77–8)—Ximena sets the bodily heart against the higher power of the soul:

Are ye so poor
Of soul, my countrymen! That ye can draw
Strength from no deeper source than that which sends
The red blood mantling through the joyous veins,
And gives the fleet step wings?—Why, how have age

And sensitive womanhood ere now endured,
Through pangs of searching fire, in some proud cause,
Blessing that agony?—Think ye the Power
Which bore them nobly up, as if to teach
The torturer where eternal Heaven had set
Bounds to his sway, was earthy, of this earth,
This dull mortality?
(VI. 78–89)

Contrary to Marlon Ross's argument that Ximena 'is always cognizant that the source of her power is the heart, which binds the hearth and the state, the past and the present, passivity and activity, suffering and passion, life and death',²² her speech to the citizens emphasizes the necessity of finding in the soul a power and an identity which can transcend those defined in terms of the mortal strength of the heart.

Though Ximena dies during the siege, ostensibly of disease, in many ways the play endorses her transformation. Gonzalez's elegiac tribute to her as one who 'for all her life | Breath'd of a hero's soul' (IX. 95–6) presents her as having achieved the status of the 'warrior-souls' against which 'womanhood' was initially defined. But the importance of Ximena's transformation is felt not only by Gonzalez, the embodiment of faith and honour, or the citizens, themselves transformed by her patriotic oratory. It is also acknowledged by Elmina, for so long the spokesperson in the play for the natural and the heart's affections. It is these values that prompt Elmina to betray the city to Abdullah in return for the release of her sons, but Abdullah does not keep his word, and the (p.208) two boys are executed below the walls of the city. In her initial response to the news of their deaths, Elmina collapses in what feels like a potential end to the play, signalled in the stage directions by 'a long pause' (VIII. 210). But, as if offering an alternate conclusion, Elmina 'rises', struck by the power of revelation:

—A light, a light springs up from grief and death,
Which with its solemn radiance doth reveal
Why we have thus been tried!
(VIII. 213–15)

This imagery of heavenly light is of course associated with Ximena throughout the play, and in her valediction to her, Elmina presents herself as transformed by her influence into a second version of her:

Be at peace!
Thou whose bright spirit made itself the soul
Of all that were around thee!—And thy life

E'en then was struck, and withering at the core!
—Farewell!—thy parting look hath on me fall'n,
E'en as a gleam of heaven, and I am now
More like what thou hast been!—My soul is hush'd,
For a still sense of purer worlds hath sunk
And settled on its depths with that last smile
Which from thine shone forth.—Thou hast not lived
In vain—my child, farewell!
(VIII. 285–95)

Transformed by the influence of Ximena, Elmina now constructs herself in terms of her 'soul' rather than her heart, a shift emphasized by her previous speech to Gonzalez in which she presents herself through the imagery of the rising soul she had previously used to criticize her husband:

My soul hath risen
To mate itself with thine; and by thy side
Amidst the hurtling lances I will stand,
As one on whom a brave man's love hath been
Wasted not utterly. (VIII. 272–6)

By the end of the play, then, Elmina places herself in one of the conventional roles scripted for women in wartime, located in the scene of conflict but playing a secondary role to her husband and defining herself in terms of his love for her.

In its three main figures, then, *The Siege of Valencia* appears to celebrate the ability of the 'soul' to rise above the immediate affections of (p.209) the 'heart', offering examples of what Hemans in her 'Advertisement' describes as 'the severe and self-devoting heroism, which forms the subject of the ... poem' (p. 177). All three figures ultimately articulate the connection of 'a religious feeling with the patriotism and high-minded loyalty which had thus been proved "faithful unto death" ' (p. 178). However, Hemans's ambivalence about the triumph of this patriotic discourse of the soul over the affections of the heart is illustrated by the play's dramatic action which presents both Ximena and Gonzalez as unable to free themselves from the body. Stepping beyond the conventional roles of womanhood, Ximena has 'cross'd (The paths of Death' (I. 111–12), as her mother comments, catching disease by entering the public sphere. Yet it is not only disease which kills her, as she tells the citizens:

But even now,
I have that within me, kindling through the dust,

Which from all time hath made high deeds its voice
And token to the nations;—Look on me!
Why hath Heaven pour'd forth courage, as a flame
Wasting the womanish heart, which must be still'd
Yet sooner for its swift consuming brightness,
If not to shame your doubt, and your despair,
And your soul's torpor?
(VI. 94–102)

The martial virtue of 'courage', one of the qualities that Gonzalez had described Ximena as wearing as a breastplate, is absorbed into the imagery of fire that not only inspires but also consumes 'the womanish heart' in a manner figured through Hemans's language of siege —'Wasting'. Ximena's transformation is achieved at the cost of her heart and her 'hero's soul' is gained through the destruction of her woman's body. While Ximena is able to inspire the city to regain its masculinity, redeeming itself through fighting, this civic regendering results in the death of the feminine. In this association of a martial woman and death, Ximena is linked to the heroine of the ballad sung to her by her friend Theresa which tells of a 'maiden' who 'bound the steel, in battle tried, | Her fearless heart above, | And stood with brave men, side by side' (V. 66–8). Literalizing Ximena's figurative putting on of a breastplate, this heroine is killed by her involvement in war, her grave a symbol of the incongruity of her gender and the place and means of her death: (p.210)

Why Is the Spanish maiden's grave
So far from her own bright land?..
The lowly Cross, with flowers o'ergrown,
Marks well that place of rest;
But who hath graved, on its mossy stone,
A sword, a helm, a crest? (V. 42–3, 54–7)

However, this maiden's motives for crossing into the martial sphere seem at first to differ from Ximena's; like the heroine of Hemans's 'Woman on the Field of Battle', she fights and dies 'In the strength and faith of love', throwing herself in front of a javelin that is aimed at her lover's breast in 'a death which saved what she loved so well' (V. 69,76), While Ximena appears to fight for a divinely sanctioned national cause, the ballad maiden fights for love, her martial activity made properly feminine because motivated by the heart. Yet Ximena is ultimately contained within just such a conventional narrative. As she dies, she confesses to her mother that she had a lover recently killed in battle and that if she were not already dying of disease she would perish of a broken heart. Ximena dies as a conventional figure of womanhood, akin to the bereaved 'maiden' of the ballad she sings at the play's opening.

We might compare her return to such a 'natural role' with Hemans's treatment of the most famous warrior woman of history in her poem 'Joan of Arc, in Rheims', in which Joan's recognition of her father and brother during the coronation of the dauphin is presented as 'Winning her back to nature' (1.81), prompting her to unbind 'The helm of many battles from her head' and request to return home with her family (1.82).²³

If Ximena's reinscription within a conventional feminine role based around the natural heart's affection of womanhood is unsurprising, her inability to free herself from her 'womanish heart' is paralleled by Gonzalez's temporary blindness while watching the execution of his sons. Gonzalez insists on his ability to withstand the ordeal, but immediately finds himself unable to carry out his wish, temporarily blinded by his emotional turmoil:

—my brain whirls fearfully—
How thick the shades close round!—my boy! my boy!
Where art thou in this gloom?
(VII. 67–9)

(p.211) Overcome by feeling, Gonzalez finds himself subject to the condition he had earlier criticized in Elmina, whose 'blinding tears' made her unable to see the guilt of her desire to surrender the city (1.356), Hemans emphasizes the significance of his temporary blindness by stressing his inability to witness Alphonso's heroic death, despite his son's dying wish that he should 'fall | Knowing thine eye looks proudly on thy child' (VII. 56–7). In a poignant moment of recognized failure—'He bade me keep mine eye upon him, | And all is darkness round me!' (VII. 80–1)—Gonzalez's emotions undermine Alphonso's commitment to a heroic death undertaken on behalf of the father. As in Hemans's most famous poem, 'Casabianca', the father's failure to witness his son's martyrdom calls into question the patriotic and filial values for which the sacrifice was made.

Ultimately, then, their affections prevent either Ximena or Gonzalez from entirely severing their ties with the natural and the heart. The demands of the 'heart' and the 'soul' remain in conflict, part of what Wolfson has described as the staging and restaging of a 'restless debate between domestic affections and the spear of Minerva'.²⁴ Nor is this debate resolved by the ending of the play; to quote Wolfson again, 'the ideological conflicts between patriotism and maternal affection, between aristocratic honor and common misery, are not soluble by historical process'.²⁵ But what the ending of the play does reveal is that even if these conflicts are not soluble at an ideological level, they can

be resolved in formal terms through a double transformation that turns siege into battle and drama into romance. With the arrival of the Castilian forces the siege, with its conflation of the domestic and the martial and its emphasis on inner tension, is replaced by an open battle in which the Spanish forces can heroically defeat the Moors and the 'noble king' of Castile triumph over 'the man of blood' (IX. 164, 178). Immediately after Gonzalez's tribute to Ximena's heroic soul, there is a 'sound of trumpets and shouting from the plain', as the two armies close and the focus of attention shifts from the walled city to the battlefield, described by the priest Hernandez in the picturesque terms of Scottian narrative romance:

The first bright sparks of battle have been struck
From spear to spear, across the gleaming field!
—There is no sight on which the blue sky looks
To match with this! (IX. 103–6)

With Ximena's burial, war again becomes an all-male affair—'the lot of warrior souls'—and its particular value lies in realigning the natural and (p.212) the spiritual, as Hernandez comments: 'The very nature and high soul of man | Doth now reveal itself' (IX, 108–9). It is through battle against the other that the individual and the city, divided during the siege, regain their unity (and we might recall Hemans's youthful description of herself as an '*enthusiast*... in the cause of Castile and liberty' whose 'whole heart and soul are interested for the gallant patriots').²⁶ No longer torn between heart and soul, Gonzalez dies triumphant, claiming the victory for God, his country, and his sons—'For Afric's lance is broken, and my sons | Have won their first good field!' (IX, 198–9). Similarly, in the final speech of the play, Elmina is able to align the heroic and familial, the heart and soul, and the human and divine:

Aye, 'tis thus
Thou shouldst be honour'd!—And I follow thee
With an unfaltering and a lofty step,
To that last home of glory. She that wears
In her deep heart the memory of thy love,
Shall thence draw strength for all things, till the God,
Whose hand around her hath unpeopled earth,
Looking upon her still and chaste'n'd soul,
Call it once more to thine!
[to the Castilians] Awake, I say,
Tambour and trumpet, wake!—And let the land
Through all her mountains hear your funeral peal!

—So should a hero pass to his repose.
(IX. 219–30)

The ease with which the turn to battle and Scottian romance resolves the conflicts of *The Siege of Valencia* emphasizes the structural value of Hemans's choice of the martial situation of the siege. While the romance of battle works to unite the state and the individual, the drama of siege provides a format in which Hemans can explore the construction of gender in terms of the 'heart' and 'soul' and examine how these roles are both questioned and reconfirmed by the crisis of war.

Sieges and the Lessons of History

Byron and Hemans both drew on the allegorical potential of siege warfare to represent the more general process of history of which it is a part. When Ismail is entered in *Don Juan*, Byron presents history as a (p.213) sequence of sieges: 'I see cast down | Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh, | All walls men know, and many never known' (VIII. 60). The great sieges of the past here represent a model of history as a series of falls; the siege of Rome, the first example in this list, provides Byron with the subject for his dramatic exploration of the theme in *The Deformed Transformed* in which the city, the 'World's Wonder' (2. 1. 87) and the high point of Western civilization is destroyed. In *The Last Constantine*, Hemans uses the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, the events which marked the end of the Roman empire—'that last night of empire!' when a 'thousand years of Christian pomp are o'er' (63–4)—for her fullest examination of the historical process, one that she undertakes in the mode and form (Spenserian stanza) of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and one in which she draws on the narrative of wartime national remasculinization that has been traced throughout this book.

Addressing the stars that shine above Constantinople on the night prior to its destruction, Hemans constructs history as a cyclical series of sieges:

But ye! that beam'd on Fate's tremendous night,
When the storm burst o'er golden Babylon,
And ye, that sparkled with your wonted light
O'er burning Salem, by the Ionian won;
And ye, that calmly view'd the slaughter done
In Rome's own streets, when Alaric's trumpet-blast
Rang through the Capitol; bright spheres! roll on!
Still bright, though empires fall; and bid man cast

His humbled eyes to earth, and commune with the past.
(46)

Heraans's historical model has contemporary relevance, both in the wake of the collapse of the Napoleonic empire and in the context of the resurgence of Greek nationalism which she addresses in the poem's close, prophesying that in Istanbul 'the Tartar sways: | But not for long!' (104). For Hemans the past 'hath mighty lessons' (47) and it speaks from the sites that so often form the subject matter of her shorter pieces, graves and ruins:²⁷

from the tomb,
And from the ruins of the tomb, and where,
'Midst the wreck'd cities in the desert's gloom,
All tameless creatures make their savage lair,
Thence comes its voice (47)

(p.214) Yet this historical voice is not one of Byronic lament, for it 'bids us not despair,':

But make one rock our shelter and our stay,
Beneath whose shade all else is passing to decay! (47)

If for Byron, history is a cycle of sieges in the man-made catastrophe of civilization, for Hemans it is a divinely sanctioned process which she presents as a gendered process of history.²⁸ The Byzantine empire is punished for its enactment of a familiar historical narrative as the feminized city Constantinople, 'great ocean's bride' (1), declines from greatness and glory into decadence and 'luxury' (3), its self-indulgence and over-exquisite sensibility leaving it open to attack:

The pure high faith of old
Was changed; and on her silken couch of sleep
She lay, and murmur'd if a rose-leaf's fold
Disturb'd her dreams; and call'd her slaves to keep
Their watch, that no rude sound might reach her o'er the deep.
But there are sounds that from the regal dwelling
Free hearts and fearless only may exclude;
(2–3)

Like Wordsworth in his sonnet on Venice, and Scott, Byron, and Southey in their writing on Spain, Hemans represents Constantinople's decline as a narrative of gender, the city's feminization contrasted with the manly heroism of the Greece of classical times—'Oh! for a soul to fire thy dust, Thermopylae!' (6)—and of the 'sainted chivalry' of the

Crusades (9), *The Last Constantine* is another siege poem like 'The Wife of Asdrubal' and 'Marguerite of France' which combines historical and gender crises, the failure of masculinity compelling the feminized city to take on the martial role:

Then gird thou on
Thine armour, Eastern Queen! And meet the hour
Which waits thee ere the day's fierce work is done
With a strong heart; so may thy helmet tower
Unshiver'd through the storm, for generous hope is power!
(10)

But like the 'wife', the city is doomed as the 'degenerate Greeks' fail to respond to the poet's rallying cry, continuing to indulge themselves in 'every brief delight' of luxurious ease' (12,14).

Hemans presents the Greeks of fifteenth-century Constantinople as (p.215) having fallen away from the standards of the heroic and manly past and she looks to the models of classical Greece to inspire 'Freedom's fight' against the Turks in 1820, invoking the 'kindling' 'spirit' of Plataea (101), Marathon (103), and Thermopylae and calling on the Greeks to 'Wash from that soil the stains, with battle-showers' (104). Here Hemans's cyclical model of history becomes incorporated within a divinely ordained ideological scheme which progresses towards a state of 'peace' and 'Freedom' and a triumphing of Christianity over Islam (105). The process of remasculinization necessary to enact this divine historical schema is anticipated in Hemans's treatment of the figure of Constantine and his followers, who fight In the strength of a collected heart, | To dare what man may dare—and know 'tis vain' (77), While both Kelly and Sweet have argued that this last Roman ruler is a feminized figure, who embodies a revised male subjectivity,²⁹ Constantine redeems himself through the assumption of a heroic role that parallels the city's need to reman itself. Like Ximena in *The Siege of Valencia* (and Adosinda in *Roderick: The Last of the Goths*), his strength comes from a divine source, though one which Hemans certainly emphasizes may inspire women as well as men:

Yet then that Power, whose dwelling is on high,
Its loftiest marvels doth reveal, and speak,
In the deep human heart more gloriously,
Than in the bursting thunder!—Thence the weak,
They that seem'd form'd, as flower-stems, but to break
With the first wind, have risen to deeds, whose name

Still calls up thoughts that mantle to the cheek,
And thrill the pulse!—Ay, strength no pangs could tame
Hath look'd from woman's eye upon the sword and flame!
(54)

Rather than 'transcend [ing] the forces of masculine history to be the inspired liberal subject of the future' as Kelly has argued,³⁰ Constantine invokes and appeals to the classical heroism, of the past to inspire the masculinity necessary in this crisis, calling on 'the strong names of Rome and Liberty' to 'fire the eye, | And rouse the heart of manhood' (56). In fighting to win 'A soldier's death—the all now left' an empire's lord' (90) (p.216) and in dying 'unfettered, arm'd, and free, | And kingly to the last' (99), Constantine embodies redemption through masculine action which provides the model for Greece in its war against the Turks in the 1820s. If it can regain the values of its heroic past, it can bring about a triumph of Christianity that is, in fact, fated.

While Hemans uses the siege of Constantinople to allegorize a divine model of history, Byron uses the dramatic structure of *The Deformed Transformed* to reveal both the ambiguities in historical understanding and the way historical models serve particular ideologies. For Arnold, Rome represents the centre of Christianity and the epitome of historical grandeur and he believes that modern Romans are innocent and undeserving of their impending destruction (1. 2. 90–3). Yet for Caesar, their deaths and the near-total destruction of Rome are part of the cycle of history: Rome was founded in blood with Romulus's murder of Remus and its sacking will only replay the devastation of the Romans themselves who made 'the Ocean and the Earth |... their never-ceasing scene of slaughter | For ages' (1. 2. 83–9). On the night before the assault, Bourbon presents his impending sacking of Rome in terms of this vision of history as a repeated refrain of destruction:

The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hilled city hath
Retained her sway o'er nations, and the Caesars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the Pontiffs, Roman, Goth, or Priest,
Still the world's masters! Civilized, Barbarian,
Or Saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the Circus of an Empire. Well!
'Twas *their* turn—now 'tis ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.
(1. 2. 274–84)

Bourbon presents the history of Rome as cyclical, but in his hope that he will 'rule much better' he shows how this model of history can be used to serve his own purpose and justify his invasion of Rome. Shortly after, he will describe Rome as his Treasury' (1. 2. 303). A similar, self-Justifying construction of history is given by the dying Lutheran soldier who represents the sacking of Rome not as an exercise in plunder (despite the looting of St Peter's) but as part of a divine ideological scheme (2. 3. 24–7). Byron sets these contrasting historical models against Caesar's version of the cycle of sieges as ants 'tearing down each other's nests' (1. 2. 328). (p.217) Caesar's cosmic perspective further questions the human understandings of history and the ideological uses that are made of it.

'Bellona as a Muse': War and Poetic Identity in Byron and Hemans
Byron's and Hemans's siege poems provide a valuable focus for examining the way in which they shaped their poetic identities in relation to war as a subject and a context of their careers as writers. For Byron, war had always been part of his epic agenda for *Don Juan* (I, 200) and in canto VIII he makes a claim for the special, if ambiguous, role of 'the blaze | Of conquest and its consequences, which | Make Epic poesy so rare and rich' (VIII. 90). In choosing a siege, he sets up a parallel with the major epic model, 'eternal Homer', arguing that if he cannot match Homer poetically, his modern siege outdoes in its devastation the great siege of classical history and literature, Troy (VII. 80–1). Byron uses the parallel with Homer as part of the grand claims he makes for the poem and for himself as a poet. Homer's skill is registered in terms of the martial forms of his own epic: he can 'charm | All ears ... By merely wielding with poetic arm, | Arms to which men will never more resort' (VII. 79). Similarly, despite Byron's savage critique of siege warfare, he uses it as a framing metaphor for his own poetic performance, introducing the subject with 'I... am about to batter | A town which did a famous siege endure' and concluding it when he is 'Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall' (VII. 8; VIII. 139). Of course, Byron had a strong sense of his own poetic militancy, describing himself as one who 'will war, at least in words (and—should | My chance so happen—deeds)' (IX. 24),³¹ but in *Don Juan* he uses the siege metaphor to image the power of his own poetic performance rather than his readiness to take up arms in a particular cause. Similarly, when at the end of canto VI Byron introduces his martial theme with 'The Muse will take a little touch at warfare' (VI. 120), he not only echoes the Chorus's famous description of Henry V on the night before Agincourt (' "A little touch of Harry in the night" ' (4. o. 47)) but also recalls the 'touch' of the linstock on 'the devilish cannon' at the siege of Harfleur (3. 0.33). Byron's dazzling display of poetic

skills in *Don Juan* is often described in terms of pyrotechnics; here he suggests it is better thought of as a cannonade, as powerful as those of the great poets of war, Homer and Shakespeare.

(p.218) It is through the figure of Suvorov, the Russian general appointed to lead the siege, that Byron represents the force of history as it enacts itself through war, and it is in response to this figure that he offers his own alternative vision of it and his own statement of his poetics. In his efficiency, ruthlessness, and willingness to expend any number of soldiers to achieve his aim, Suvorov, whose 'trade | Is butchery' (VII. 69), comes to represent both the professionalism and the devastation of modern war. But his position as one of the 'great men' who makes history, possessed of 'the spirit of a single mind [that], | Makes that of multitudes take one direction' (VII. 48), is achieved only as a result of his limited vision of history:

Suwarrow,—who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail,
Who calculated life as so much dross (VII. 77)

This limited vision is echoed by history's own limitations, described in the next canto:

History can only take *things in the gross*;
But could we know them *in detail*, perchance
In balancing the profit and the *loss*,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste *so much* gold for a little *dross*
As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
(VIII 3; italics added)

It is against this 'gross' vision of history that Byron writes in *Don Juan*. Throughout the cantos, as here, he counters history's Suvorovian values by offering his reader an account 'in detail' of the true cost of war, redefining territory rather than human life as 'so much dross', and emphasizing the importance of 'one good action in the midst of crimes' (VIII. 90). Jerome McGann has convincingly argued that Byron's choice of the siege of Ismail at the moment he was reconceiving *Don Juan* was 'extremely important' because it indicates 'its new, self-conscious, and more comprehensive aspirations towards political and ideological commentary and commitment'.³² This new seriousness and militancy is seen in the way Byron defines his own role as a poet against Suvorov's embodiment of history enacted through war. In his description of Suvorov's victorious message to the Empress Catherine, Byron presents him as 'a poet' who 'Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city' (VIII. (p.219) 134 and p. 1057). Just as Suvorov's

embodiment of history's 'gross' vision prompts Byron's alternative detailed vision, so the fatuous and inappropriate 'couplet' of this 'Russ so witty' stimulates Byron's climatic statement of his own poetic role in the siege cantos:

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it—
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against Earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones;—
But ye—our children's children! think how we
Showed *what things were* before the world was free! (VIII,
135)

Defining his own song against Suvorov's 'Polar melody', Byron here gives his most ambitious statement of the function of his poetry and the part it will play in the bringing about of a 'free' world in the future. Adapting the 'things as they are' slogan and aesthetic of the English Jacobin novelists, Byron presents his role as an educative one that will lead to change: he will 'teach' by showing '*what things were*'. While Byron uses the disasters of the sieges of Corinth and Ismail to reveal the pattern of history as shaped by 'thrones, | And those that sate upon them' (VIII. 137), he presents as startlingly different the ultimate outcome of this pattern of history in the two texts. Despite its occasional wishing for 'better days' (1. 341), *The Siege of Corinth* ends on an apocalyptic note of total destruction with no envisioning of a world after the apocalypse. By contrast, the account of the siege of Ismail in *Don Juan* concludes with a millennial vision of an ideal, republican world to come (VIII. 135–7). The factor that will make the difference between these two outcomes, Byron suggests, is his own insistence on singing the 'shrieks and groans' of war and his decision to 'throw away the scabbard' in the 'present clash of philosophy and tyranny', as he described his intention in the siege cantos in a letter to Moore (*BLJ*, IX. 191).

If the siege provided Hemans with a means of bringing together the competing but related themes of her poetry, what her sister and biographer identified as 'the two strains dearest to her nature, the chivalrous and the tender',³³ it also provides a figure for her poetry itself. With its fusion of the domestic and martial spheres, the siege summoned her as a poet, as it did Ximena as an embodiment of 'womanhood', 'unto (p.220) conflicts, heretofore, | The lot of warrior-souls.' As Marlon Ross has reminded us, Hemans's biographer Henry Chorley had pointed out that Ximena's voice represents Hemans's own,³⁴ and Ximena's transformation from singer of natural lyrics for a

family audience within the bower into an inspiring singer of martial ballads in the public sphere offers a figure for the wartime transformation of poetry as well as for Hemans's own poetic ambition; Ximena's rousing of the public with 'The Cid's Battle Song' (VI. 193–224) parallels Hemans's inclusion of 'Songs of the Cid' in *The Siege of Valencia* volume. Yet Ximena's fate illustrates the potential cost of such a public career, her death enacting Hemans's anxiety about the cost of fame for a woman writer. As Susan Wolfson has shown, there is a 'fundamental and unresolvable conflict' in her work which sees 'female fame as a purchase against female happiness'.³⁵ As she argues of 'Woman and Fame', the poem's 'disparage[ment of] woman's fame against the durable nurture of "home-born love"' are at war with its 'aesthetic elaborations' which associate 'artistic achievement with the thrill of life itself'.³⁶

Thou hast a voice, whose thrilling tone
Can bid each life-pulse beat,
As when a trumpet's note hath blown,
Calling the brave to meet:
But mine, let mine—a woman's breast,
By words of home-born love be bless'd.

What is striking here is that the figure which Hemans uses to register the thrill of life is a call to battle. War becomes symbolic of life's excitements, linked in the poem to creativity and artistic achievement, but denied to the poet as a woman dutifully disciplining herself to the demands of the home.

Hemans explores this tension between the life-affirming stimulations of the imagination, war and poetic creativity, on the one hand, and the duties of the home, on the other, in 'An Hour of Romance', another example of the imagining of war facilitated by the writing of Walter Scott.³⁷ In this poem, published in *Records of Woman* (1828), the poet describes her retreat into a bower where she 'read | Of royal chivalry and (p.221) old renown, | A tale of Palestine', in the 'magic page' of Scott's novel *The Talisman*,³⁸ Scott's text acts as a stimulation, to the poet's martial imagination, as indeed the man himself would when Hemans met him in 1830, an encounter which it is worth outlining before returning to the poem. Describing her stay at Abbotsford, Hemans explains how, hearing Scott 'pour forth, from the fulness of his rich mind and peopled memory, song, and legend, and tale of old ... I could almost fancy I heard the gathering-cry of some chieftain of the hills, so completely does his spirit carry me back to the days of the slogan and the fire-cross'.³⁹ Like his poetry, Scott's tales transport Hemans back through history, and as her fancy begins to take a visual

form she sees ‘many a cairn and field of old combat, the heroes of which seemed to start up before me, in answer to the “mighty master’s” voice, which related their deeds as we went by’ (I. 178). And the power of Scott’s voice over the imagination is such that Hemans presents herself as taking on the role of Marmion:

like the war-horse at the sound of the trumpet ... in reciting a verse of old

martial song, he will suddenly spring up, and one feels ready to exclaim—

‘Charge, Chester, charge!—on, Stanley, on!’

so completely is the electric chain struck by his own high emotion.
(1.179)

Hemans responds to Scott’s recitations as readers did to his poetry, his oral and textual performances enabling hearers and readers to picture and become part of the imaginative world that he creates. And it is this process of imagining war that Hemans presents in ‘An Hour of Romance’, the ‘magic page’ gradually facilitating the imaginative transformation of the natural bower in which she is reading into the martial environment of his novel, the ‘bee’ becoming ‘A drowsy bugle’ and the ‘purple dragon-fly’ ‘a fairy javelin’, until ‘the spell’ of the ‘high gorgeous tale’ on the poet’s ‘chain’d soul’ transports her to the scene of war:

‘twas not the leaves I heard;—
A Syrian wind the lion-banner stirr’d,
Through its proud floating folds;—’twas not the brook
Singing in secret through its glassy glen;—
A wild shrill trumpet of the Saracen
Peal’d from the desert’s lonely heart, and shook
The burning air.—Like clouds when winds are high,
O’er glittering sands flew steeds of Araby,

(p.222)

And tents rose up, and sudden, lance and spear
Flash’d where a fountain’s diamond wave lay clear,
Shadow’d by graceful palm-trees. Then the shout
Of merry England’s joy swell’d freely out,
Sent through an eastern heaven, whose glorious hue
Made shields dark mirrors to its depth of blue;
And harps were there—I heard their sounding strings,
As the waste echoed to the mirth of kings.—

But from these imagined animations of romantic conflict, Hemans is recalled to the domestic sphere:

The bright mask faded. Unto life's worn track,
What call'd me from its flood of glory back?
A voice of happy childhood!—and they pass'd,
Banner and harp, and Paynim's trumpet's blast;
Yet might I scarce bewail the splendour gone,
My heart so leap'd to that sweet laughter's tone.

In a poem primarily inspired by Scott, Hemans here rewrites Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' and 'My heart leaps up' lyric to present the joys of motherhood as compensating for the fading of the visionary world of 'splendour' and 'glory'. The poem celebrates only a temporary escape from the demands of the home, an *hour* of romance, and the poet's use of the language of enchantment emphasizes the illusory nature of her imaginings when set against the spell-breaking 'sweet laughter's tone'. However, the poem does emphasize how the imagining of war that provides the poetic subject and the inspiration for poetic creativity cannot be found on 'life's worn track'. This implicit argument in the poem can be glossed with one of Hemans's letters from the late 1820s, in which she compares the world of romance heroes with her own:

I send Herder's beautiful ballads of *The Cid*, and I wish you may take as much pleasure as I have always done in their proud *clarion music*, I often think what a dull, faded thing life—such life as we lead in this later age—would appear to one of those fiery knights of old. Only imagine *my Cid*, spurring the good steed Bavioca through the streets of Liverpool, or coming to pass an evening with me at Wavertree!⁴⁰

Though Hemans is ostensibly making a comparison between two ages here, much of the pathos of the passage comes from the juxtaposition of the *Cid*'s romantic adventures with her own constricted domestic life.

In 'An Hour of Romance', then, war provides the subject for (p.223) Hemans's poetic imagination, and in her 'Advertisement' to *The Siege of Valencia* she emphasizes the extent to which the play is a product of her imagination, again drawing on Theseus's account of the poetic imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in describing herself as having 'employed the agency of imaginary characters, and fixed upon "*Valencia del Cid*" as the scene to give them "A local habitation and a name"' (p. 178), 'An Hour of Romance' ends by restoring the poet to the domestic sphere, just as Ximena is restored to the role of broken-hearted maiden lamenting the death of her lover in battle. For the

woman writer, war, the imagination, and poetry must be subordinated to the duties of the home and the affections of the heart. Yet if in 'An Hour of Romance' the thrill of the imaginative process and the linked exhilarations of martial conflict seem to overwhelm the supposed joy of the return to life's worn track', so in *The Siege of Valencia* Ximena's martial instincts survive not only her recuperation into a more conventional model of wartime but also her death. Ximena's final words are of her 'father's banner' and the 'trumpet of Castile' (VIII. 137–41) and her military spirit lives on not only in the citizens of Valencia but also in Elrnina who, as we have seen, bids farewell by saying 'Thou hast not lived j In vain' (VIII. 294–5). Elmina's elegizing of her daughter here draws attention to the fact that Ximena is a poetic figure, for it echoes the opening of Byron's famous self-elegizing in the climax to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, IV (1818):

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain,
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love. (IV. 137)

Elmina suggests that Ximena's voice will endure and be influential, just as the most famous poet of the period did of himself. Moreover, in granting her daughter poetic status akin to Byron's, Elmina endorses Ximena's own self-conception, for in her address to the citizens Ximena had also presented herself through echoes of Byron's stanza:

But even now,
I have that within me, kindling through the dust,
Which from all time hath made high deeds its voice
And token to the nations; (VI. 94–7)

(p.224) If Ximena (and Hemans) aspire to a Byronic timelessness, they also rewrite poetry away from the autonomous voice of Byronic selfhood and towards the poet as the voice of a divinely inspired patriotism. By the end of the play, these poetics have been inherited by Elmina who, no longer the voice of domestic affections, is now 'More like what [Ximena] hast been!' (VIII. 291). While many critics have rightly emphasized the dark undercurrents of the play's close, with Elmina left on stage as a symbol of both the value and the destruction of the domestic sphere, these readings must be set beside the fact that Elmina presents herself as a reincarnation of the martial spirit of her

daughter; what survives at the end of the play is that 'Which from all time doth make high deeds its voice | And token to the nations'. Indeed, so strong is the poem's martial voice that in its review of *The Siege of Valencia* the *British Critic* presented the Roman goddess of war as the presiding deity of Hemans's poetry: '[S]he has a strong predilection for warlike affairs, for bold, fervid, and daring characters. We must, however, remark, that the military spirit that breathes and glows in many of her pages, does not add to their real excellence. We do not like Bellona as a Muse'.⁴¹ While the *British Critic's* response illustrates once again the ideological pressure which Hemans as a woman had to negotiate in her writing on war, it also registers the extent to which her poetry was shaped by being produced in an age in which Bellona was indeed one of the Muses of British poetry.

Notes:

(1) I have discussed some of the poetic responses to Waterloo in *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 153–82. See also Philip Shaw, *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (Basingstoke and New York: Patgrave Macmillan, 2002); Richard Cronin, *The Politics of Romantic Poetry; In Search of the Pure Commonwealth* (Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan and St Martin's Press, 2000), 85–91; and Carl Woodring, 'Three Poets on Waterloo', *Wordsworth Circle*, 18/2 (1987) 54–6.

(2) References to *Don Juan* are to Byron, *The Oxford Authors*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), and hereafter are cited by canto and stanza number within the text.

(3) Joseph Fawcett, 'The Siege', *War Elegies* (London: J. Johnson, 1801), 16.

(4) David G. Chandler, *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993), 410–12.

(5) lord Byron, *The Complete. Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980–93), III. 479–82. References to *The Siege of Corinth* are to this edition and are hereafter cited by line within the text.

(6) Ibid., VI. 725–38. References to *The Deformed Transformed* are to the McGann edition and are hereafter cited by act, scene, and line within the text.

(7) Unless otherwise stated, references to Hemans's poetry in this chapter are to Felicia Hemans, *Selected Poems, Letters, Reception*

Materials, ed. Susan Wolfson (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). References are cited by line number within the text.

(8) See e.g. the accounts of the British siege of Badajoz in Michael Glover, *The Napoleonic Wars, 1792–1815: An Illustrated History* (London: Book Club Associates, 1979), 160, and Christopher Duffy, *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare, 1660–1860* (London and Vancouver: David and Charles, 1975), 149.

(9) As *The Last Constantine* is not included in either Kelly’s or Wolfson’s modern editions, I have taken my text from *The Works of Mrs Hemans, with a Memoir by her Sister* (Edinburgh and London: Thomas Blackwood and Sons and Thomas Cadell, 1839), III. 178–224. References are to stanza numbers.

(10) Byron, *Poetical Works*, ed. McGartn, VI. 746.

(11) References to *The Siege of Valencia* are to *Selected Poems*, ed. Wolfson, and are cited by scene and line within the text.

(12) e.g. VII. 32–4; VIII. 9, 18, 82, 119, 140.

(13) Byron, *Poetical Works*, ed. McGann, V. 719.

(14) See Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 150.

(15) Edmund Spenser, *The Fairie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, with the assistance of C. Patrick O’Donnell, Jr. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 39.

(16) Another treatment of a siege from the wars by a woman poet was Laura Sophia Temple’s *The Siege of Zaragoza, and Other Poems* (London: William Miller and W. Butmer and Co., 1812).

(17) Hannah Cowley, *The Siege of Acre: An Epic Poem, in Six Books* (London: J. Debrett, 1801), 4. Further references are to page numbers and are included within text.

(18) As ‘Marguerite of France’ is not included in Kelly’s or Wolfson’s editions, I have taken my text from *The Works of Mrs Hemans*, VI. 272 (no line numbers given).

(19) Felicia Hemans, *Selected Poems, Prose, and Letters*, ed. Gary Kelly (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 173, n. 1.

- (20) See Marion B. Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women's Poetry* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 274–85; Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 135–40; Susan Wolfson, 'Felicia Hemans and the Revolving Doors of Reception' in Harriet Kramer Linkin and Stephen C. Behrendt (eds.), *Romanticism and Women Poets: Opening the Doors of Reception* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 214–41; and 'Editing Felicia Heroans for the Twenty-First Century', *Romanticism on the Net*, 19 (August 2000).
- (21) Quoted in Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, 135.
- (22) Ross, *Contours*, 284.
- (23) I was alerted to this moment in the poem by Susan Wolfson's excellent discussion, "'Domestic Affections" and "the Spear of Minerva": Felicia Hemans and the Dilemma of Gender', in Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefliger (eds.) *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776–1837* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). 156.
- (24) Wolfson, "'Domestic Affections'" 162.
- (25) Wolfson, 'Revolving Doors', 237.
- (26) Hemans, *Selected Poems*, ed. Kelly, 411–12.
- (27) e.g., 'The Graves of England', 'The Image in Lava', 'Marius amidst the Ruins of Carthage'.
- (28) See stanzas 38, 40, and 50.
- (29) Gary Kelly, 'Death and the Matron: Felicia Hemans, Romantic Death, and the Founding of the Modern Liberal State', in Nanora Sweet and Julie Melnyk (eds.), *Felicia Hemans: Reimagining Poetry in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke and New York: 2001), 204–5; Nanora Sweet, 'The Bowl of Liberty: Felicia Hemans and the Romantic Mediterranean', Ph.D. thesis (University of Michigan, 1993), 362–4.
- (30) Kelly, 'Death and the Matron', 205.
- (31) See also his description of the siege cantos in *BLJ*, IX. 191.
- (32) Byron, *Poetical Works*, ed. McGann, V. 718.

(33) *The Works of Mrs Hemans*, 1. 56. References to this *Memoir* are hereafter cited by volume and page within the text.

(34) Ross, *Contours*, 284.

(35) Wolfson, 'Editing Felicia Hemans', 19.

(36) *Ibid.*

(37) My attention was first drawn to this poem by E. Douka Kabitogfou's 'The Pen and Sword: Felicia Hemans's Records of Man', in ed. Tony Pinkney, Keith Hanley, and Fred Botting, (eds.), *Romantic Masculinities: News from Nowhere 2, Theory and Politics of Romanticism* (Keele, Staffs: Keele University Press, 1997), 101–20. The poem is also the subject of an excellent discussion by Jacqueline Labbe in *The Romantic Paradox: Love, Violence and the Uses of Romance, 1760–1830* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 2000), 121–2.

(38) Text, from *The Works of Mrs Hemans*, V. 274–5 (no line numbers).

(39) *Ibid.*, 1. 178. Further references are included within parentheses in the main text.

(40) *The Works of Mrs Hemans*, 1. 159.

(41) Quoted in Wolfson, 'Revolving Doors', 233.

