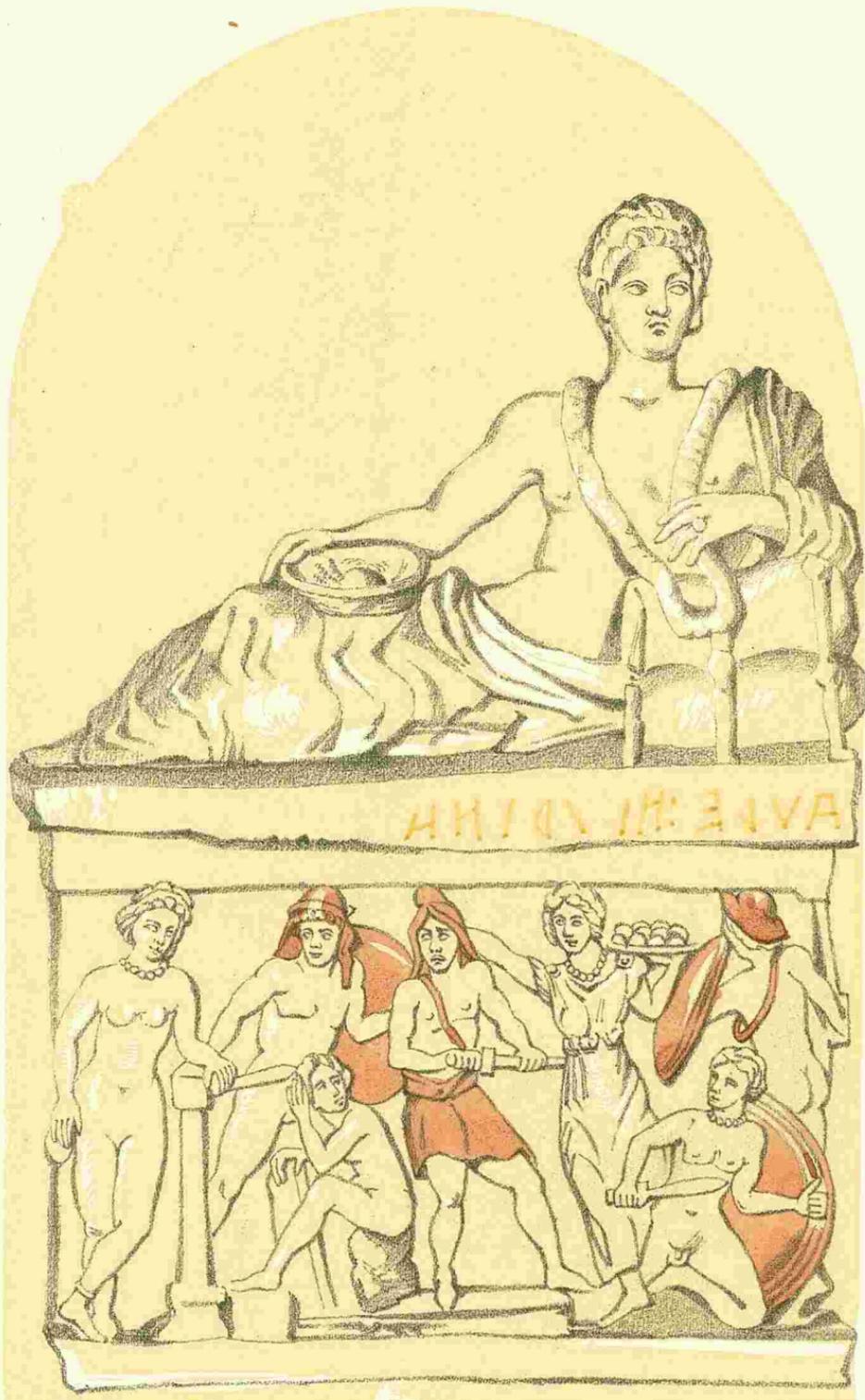


## ON THE ETRUSCAN TOMB AT HARDWICK HOUSE.

IN the entrance hall of Hardwick House there is an Etruscan tomb brought from Chiusi in 1841. The general features of this monument are similar to most of those with which travellers and antiquaries are familiar. A reclining statue of the deceased, leaning on one elbow, and holding a patera in his other hand, surmounts a quadrangular sarcophagus or solium, on the plinth of which was the name and age of the person who is represented; while the faces of the sarcophagus are adorned by reliefs, in this case of singular distinctness and beauty. But although the colour and gilding of these artistic decorations are still nearly perfect, the inscription contains only the word AULE followed by some disjointed letters, in which we recognise two N's and an R, the latter probably a remnant of RIL, the Tuscan word for "a year," which appears on tombs with a number denoting the age of the deceased; as: AVIL RIL XXII "in the 22nd year of his age". We know nothing therefore respecting the occupant of the Hardwick tomb, beyond the fact that he was a portly Etruscan *Lars* or gentleman, and that he bore the common prænomen *Aulus*.

Although, however, we cannot gratify our curiosity respecting the person whose monument is before us, we may derive considerable instruction from a careful examination of the very elegant relief which adorns the front of the sarcophagus. The details are as follows: On the left of the composition is a female figure standing in an easy attitude. Her right hand holds a patera. With her left, which leans upon an altar, she restrains the sword-arm of a gladiator, at whose feet sits a man with his left hand to his head, and with his right hand leaning on a sheathed sword. The centre figure is another gladiator, in the act of drawing or sheathing his sword. A female, bearing in her left hand, which is upraised, a dish of fruit, rushes between the centre figure and a shielded warrior; and, placing her hand upon the head of the former, she steps over the right leg of a figure armed with sword and shield, who is beaten



down upon his knee. The composition therefore consists of seven figures in all : five males and two females. The female to the left, and all the males, except the centre figure, are represented without clothing ; but the beaten gladiator to the right wears a Gallic torques, and three of the combatants are distinguished by Phrygian bonnets, still retaining their red colour ; and the same colour remains also on the kilt of the centre figure, on the shields of the other three combatants, and on the hair of the fruit woman and the other female. Both the females wear necklaces : and there are remains of gilding on that of the left hand figure, the arrangement of whose hair and the shape of her boots, indicate a lady of rank ; and there can be little doubt that we have here a portrait of the wife of the deceased. The intention of the composition was, of course, to represent a gladiatorial exhibition, given at the funeral altar of the departed nobleman, but mercifully stopped by his widow, at a point short of bloodshed, and both interrupted and succeeded by a funeral entertainment. At any rate, the patera in the lady's hand and the dish of fruit borne by her attendant must indicate an offering to the manes of the dead, in lieu of the blood of the combatants, which a barbarous superstition had exacted.

From this description, it appears that at the funeral of the Aulus in question, if on no other occasion, female humanity stepped in and prevented the customary sacrifice of human blood. I am inclined to think that some conclusions, more important than obvious, may be deduced from this fact. And first let me make some remarks on the gladiatorial exhibitions, which disgraced and degraded the civilised inhabitants of ancient Italy. When we think, with some amount of horror, upon the bull-fights of Spain, on which the dark-eyed ladies of Madrid and Seville still gaze with so much complacency, we must surely be prepared to express still stronger feelings of reprobation on reading that the ancient Romans, in the latter and most polished period of their republic, and in the reigns of the earlier Emperors, delighted in no amusement more than these deadly combats of young men trained for the purpose of slaying one another in public. What a state of things it must have been, when

a delicate Roman maiden could look with intense gratification on the excitement of the duel, the streaming blood of the wounded, the ghastly countenance of the dying warrior, the convulsive struggles and agonizing postures with which the young and healthy man passed out of life, or concur in the fatal sign, which authorised the victor to pass his sword through the throat of his disarmed antagonist. It is easy to conceive that such exhibitions, recurring so constantly, must have produced a deleterious effect on the morals of the population who witnessed them. All softer feelings of compassion and humanity must have been paralysed, and a stern contempt for death and its consequences must have sprung up even among those, whose delight it would otherwise have been to nurse tender infancy, and to watch the sick bed of decrepit age. Hence, we find that life was held cheap at Rome, even among women, and scarcely any Roman matron scrupled to remove by poison a husband, a father, or a child, when they stood in the way of interest or gratification.

These gladiatorial exhibitions could not have established themselves in such confirmed popularity, if they had not commenced in some circumstances favourable to their original developement among a martial and religious nation, such as the Romans undoubtedly were at the beginning of their history. It is generally agreed among the ancient authorities that gladiatorial exhibitions originated in Etruria (Nicol. Damasc. ap. Ath. iv, 39 p. 153F. Tertull. *Spect. c. 5*); the country where the monument before us was found, and that they belonged at first to the funeral solemnities of that country. In point of fact there are no devices on tombs of the better class more common than that of the gladiatorial combat round the altar sacred to the deceased; if you look into the engravings of such monuments in Dempster and Inghirami, you will satisfy yourself of the fact; and I do not hesitate to refer to the same class the group supposed to represent Echetlus at the battle of Marathon, which is also of frequent occurrence, and which appears to me only a particular modification of the contest, analogous to that of the *retiarius*. The introduction of the gladiatorial combat, as a necessary part of a splendid funeral, must be traced to

the practice of sacrificing prisoners of war at the grave of a deceased soldier. In Homer's *Iliad* (xxiii) Achilles slays twelve Trojan captives on the funeral pile of his friend Patroclus; and, according to an epic tradition, it was deemed necessary to sacrifice the Trojan princess Polyxena at the grave of Achilles himself. The ancient Greeks, no less than the ancient Etrurians, were more than half Pelasgians—that is, they belonged to that numerous tribe, which spread over all Italy, Greece, and the western coast of Asia Minor, and which furnished the point of contact and the channel of communication between the so-called classical nations and the Phœnicians and Canaanites. Now it is expressly told us that the funeral sacrifices of the old Italians had reference to the worship of *Kronos* or *Saturnus*, the subterraneous god, who fed upon his own children; and the gladiatorian games were specially exhibited at the Saturnalia. This devouring deity is actually represented as waiting for his gladiatorial prey in a tomb copied by Bonarota (Dempster, vol. iii. pl. 25). But *Saturnus* was neither more nor less than the Phœnician and Ammonitish *Moloch*; and therefore the practice of offering up human victims must have been derived by the Greeks and Etrurians, through the Pelasgian ingredient in their composition, from the Phœnicians and other Syrian tribes. While, however, these nations and their pure descendants the Carthaginians, retained this inhuman practice in its original form, the Hellenic element, which leavened the whole mass of the Greek nation, and which produced among them all the higher developements of taste and moral sentiment, for which that nation stands preeminent, soon shook off this barbarous worship, and the Greek Zeus was supposed to be gratified by sacrifices of lower animals, and by innocent trials of strength and skill on the arenas of Olympia and Nemea. It has been the result of my own researches to show that the ancient Etruscans, in addition to this Pelasgian element which they had in common with the Greeks, and from which they derived their share in Asiatic culture and superstition, were made up of a different admixture of Low Germans and Celts, their dominant tribe being a branch of the same nation to which our own Danes and Normans

belonged at a later age, which colonised Iceland, and to which we owe the wild mythology of the Eddas. Such a nation was naturally warlike, and their instincts led them to pit the captives destined for sacrifice to fight against one another; and instead of slaying them in cold blood, to let them become both sacrificers and victims in the funeral solemnity. Under peculiar circumstances the old Eastern ferocity was retained, as when the Tarquinienses in the year A. U. C. 397 sacrificed in cold blood 307 Roman prisoners of war (Liv. vii. 15). At private funerals, however, the fight of gladiators invariably took the place of the human sacrifice. Servius (*ad Æn.* iii. 67) attributes the origin of this substitution to the funeral of Junius Brutus; but he confuses between the origin of the practice, and the first beginning of a public exhibition or *munus* of gladiators, in which the amusement of the people was combined with the honours due to the dead. According to Valerius Maximus (ii. 4, 7) the first *munus gladiatorium*, or "public show of duellists" was given by M. and D. Brutus at the funeral of their father in A. U. C. 489, B. C. 265, and the practice was taken up from that time, the forum being the usual place of exhibition. Thus, 48 years after the funeral of Brutus, A. U. C. 537, the three sons of M. Æmilius Lepidus gave a funeral show in honour of their father, and for three days twenty-two pairs of gladiators fought in the forum for the amusement of the crowd (Liv. xxiii. 30). So it went on, until at last no funeral was required, and men made it a business to buy slaves suited for the purpose, and to train them regularly for the combat, until such numbers of them were collected, that under Spartacus they broke loose, and brought the state into such danger that an army was required for their subjugation. It is remarkable that not only is the classical name for a school, namely *ludus*, derived from the fact that the gladiators fought in play and with blunted foils during the period of their training, but even the words *rudiments* and *elements*, which are applied to the first beginnings of general education, are derived from the *rudis* or foil with which the gladiators fenced at the beginning of their practice, and from the *alimenta* or strong food by which their bodies were prepared for their deadly

trade. To the same mode of speaking belongs the word *erudite*, which properly means "out of the foils," or fit for the use of the sharp sword (see *Varronianus*, p. 140 note, 2nd Ed.). The gladiators, however, left a worse inheritance than words in the country which encouraged them. All the *Marco Spadas* and *Bravos*, the open brigands and private assassins of Italy are the spawn of these trained and paid swordsmen, and the brutal amusements of the Romans have left a long-enduring curse on the peninsula and its inhabitants.

Such being the nature and consequences of the gladiatorial exhibitions, it is important to have an authentic testimony for the fact that an isolated attempt at all events was made to substitute more innocent offerings to the dead for this horrible and murderous entertainment. And the interest of the monument before us is enhanced by the circumstance that the gladiators are interrupted, not in one of those gratuitous exhibitions which were afterwards given at Rome for the mere amusement of the multitude, but in Etruria itself, and in the midst of a funeral rite, which seemed to give at least some sort of religious value to the practice. It is also gratifying to observe that the effort for the cause of humanity is made by a woman, and that although the female sex at Rome were rendered ferocious and unfeeling by their participation in the horrid amusement of the ring, in Etruria there was found at least one noble lady, who in the midst of her grief for Aulus, her lord, had the courage to step forward, and check the popular and bloodstained offering to his manes, and who has commemorated her act for the edification of posterity. On the whole, then, I think that the Archæological Institute may congratulate Sir Thomas Cullum on the possession of a monument not less remarkable for its artistic beauty, than for the virtuous and humane act of a noble Etrurian lady, which it has preserved from oblivion.

J. W. DONALDSON.