

# Byron and Latin Culture



Byron and Latin Culture:  
Selected Proceedings of the 37th  
International Byron Society Conference

Edited by

Peter Cochran

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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Edited by Peter Cochran

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The International Byron Society is most grateful to Santiago Guerrero-Strachan, Maria Eugenia Perojo Arronte, Ken Purslow, and Eric Wishart, for their work in organising the conference.

The papers printed were all given at the conference except the two sections entirely by me, which cover important areas not dealt with there.

I have tried to select with a view to covering as wide a canvas of languages, cultures, and media as possible: thus there are papers not just on poetry but on politics, sculpture and illustrations. One paper covers English, French, *and* Russian: another, Greek, English, *and* Italian.

A wide range of religious and gender approaches will be found.

Throughout I hope the vast transnational impact which Europe made on Byron, and which Byron made on Europe, will become plain.

(– P.C.)



# CONTENTS

Notes on Contributors.....	x
Abbreviations .....	xvii
Introduction .....	1
Byron and Latin Poetry Peter Cochran	
<b>More on Juvenal</b>	
Juvenalian Satire and Byron.....	142
Allan Gregory	
<b>More on Martial</b>	
Byron the Epigrammatist.....	152
Itsuyo Higashinaka	
<b>Papers on International Themes</b>	
The <i>Je Ne Sais Quoi</i> of Byron's Poetry: Foreignisms in <i>Don Juan</i> .....	162
Alice Levine	
Literary Allusion in Byron's Writing of the Mediterranean Tour (1809-1811): An Introduction .....	171
Agustín Coletes Blanco	
Childish Ways: Anne Damer and Other Precursors to <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> .....	181
Jonathan Gross	
From Byron's <i>Giaour</i> to Bizet's <i>Carmen</i> , via Pushkin and <i>Merimée</i> .....	198
Peter Cochran	

### Papers on Italian Themes

- 'Forgive My Folly': Byron's Divided Nationality..... 208  
Madeleine Callaghan
- Byron's *The Lament of Tasso* and the Mannerism of Madness ..... 217  
Mirka Horova
- Orlando, Juan, and the *ottava rima* Ride in Pursuit of Narrative Bliss.... 225  
Olivier Feignier
- Byron and Casti: Dangerous Liaisons ..... 236  
Maria Schoina
- The 'Giant Affair': Byron, the Neapolitans, and the Papal States ..... 248  
Valeria Vallucci
- Faliero's Wife..... 262  
Shobhana Bhattacharji
- Byron's *Prophecy of Dante* and its Form, terza rima ..... 278  
Rosemarie Rowley

### Papers on French Themes

- Byron and Chateaubriand Interpret Spain ..... 292  
John Clubbe
- Byron, D'Herbelot, and Oriental Culture ..... 309  
Naji Oueijan
- Atala and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I and II ..... 316  
Stephen Minta
- « Politics and Ferocity »: Byron's *Beppo*, Romantically Illustrated  
by Alexandre Colin..... 333  
Danièle Sarrat

**Papers on Spanish Themes**

Byron's Romantic Adventures in Spain .....	346
Richard A. Cardwell	
Religion and the Supernatural in Tirso de Molina's <i>El Burlador</i> and Byron's <i>Don Juan</i> .....	368
Katherine Kernberger	
Quevedo: Byron's <i>nom de plume</i> .....	378
Peter Cochran	

**Two Papers on Greek Themes**

'Monuments of mortal Birth': Public Ruins and Personal Grief in Byron's Recollections of Greece .....	394
Mark Sandy	
When Epic Juan meets Donna Joan: Byron, Casti, Roidis, and the Latin Encounter in Nineteenth-century Greek Fiction .....	403
Foteini Lika	
Bibliography .....	425
Index .....	433

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Shobhana Bhattacharji** retired from Jesus & Mary College, University of Delhi, where she taught English from 1970. She has a PhD in Byron's drama, and has presented papers at various International Byron Conferences, some of which have been published in *The Byron Journal* and proceedings of conferences. She is also interested in travel writing, especially about the mountains of the Indian subcontinent, and the history of Christianity in India. She lives in Delhi with four generations of her family and a dog.

**Richard A. Cardwell** is presently Emeritus Professor of Modern Spanish Literatures and History in the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom where he has taught for 45 years. He is the author of over one hundred and thirty articles and over twenty books and editions on Hispanic writers in the modern period.

He edited the special bi-centennial issue of *Renaissance and Modern Studies* on 'Byron and Europe' in 1988 and *Lord Byron the European, Essays from the International Byron Society, July 1994* in 1997. In 2005 he completed, as invited editor, *The Reception of Lord Byron in Europe*, 2 vols, London-New York, Thoemmes-Continuum. In 2007 he won the literary Prize, the Emma Dangerfield Award for Scholarship on Lord Byron.

He has lectured internationally in Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, the Republic of Georgia, Brazil, Argentina and the United States. He was also Visiting Professor in the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore and the University of Colorado at Boulder.

He is a Corresponding Member of the Real Academia de Buenas Letras of Seville and of Granada.

**Madeleine Callaghan** received her PhD from Durham University and is a lecturer in Romantic Literature at the University of Sheffield. She has published several chapters and articles on Romantic and post-Romantic poetry. She is currently preparing a monograph on Byron, Shelley, and Yeats for publication, and has co-edited, with Professor Michael O'Neill, a Blackwell Guide to Criticism entitled *Twentieth-Century British and Irish*

Poetry: Hardy to Mahon, and she was assistant editor of the recent Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

**John Clubbe** was trained in history and literature at Columbia. His main teaching positions have been at Duke University and the University of Kentucky. He served as Chair of the American Byron Society from 1974 to 1999 and as Joint President of the International Byron Society from 1986 through 2012. Published books include critical studies or editions of Thomas Hood, Thomas Carlyle, James Anthony Froude, English Romanticism, and Byron; he has written as well essays on all these subjects and many others on English and American literature. His interests in architecture and urban life resulted in *Cincinnati Observed: Architecture and History* (1992). His focus on Byron abetted by his love of art led to his most recent book, *Byron, Sully, and the Power of Portraiture* (2005), which was inspired by a newly-discovered portrait of Byron by the American artist, Thomas Sully. He is completing a book on Beethoven and is preparing further explorations of Byron's obsession with Napoleon.

**Peter Cochran** edits the work and correspondence of Lord Byron on the website of the International Byron Society. He has lectured on Byron in many places, and has for CSP published fourteen books on the poet, including *Byron and Orientalism*, *Byron at the Theatre*, *Byron in London*, “Romanticism” – and *Byron, The Gothic Byron*, *Byron and Bob: the Literary Relationship between Byron and Robert Southey*, *Byron and Women* [and men], *Byron and Hobby-O*, *The Relationship between Byron and John Cam Hobhouse*, *Byron's Religions*, *Byron's Romantic Politics*, *Byron and Italy*, *Byron's Poetry* and *Aspects of Byron's Don Juan*. His latest book is *Small-Screen Shakespeare*.

**Agustín Coletes Blanco** holds a PhD in English Studies and teaches at the University of Oviedo in Spain. He is also an honorary visiting professor of Hull University in Britain. He has published widely on literary and cultural reception and on British travellers in Northern Spain. He is the editor and Spanish translator of Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (2006), *Byron's Mediterranean Letters and Poems* (2010) and, together with Alicia Laspra Rodríguez, *English Poetry of the Peninsular War* (2013). Recent work also includes *Literary Allusion in Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (2009) and several articles on Byron.

**Olivier Feignier** has accumulated a large collection of books, pictures and music scores, centred on the early nineteenth century, with Byron as one of his favourite subjects. His interest in European languages and his many travels encourage and favour his gathering and reading books from many different sources. Active in the French Byron Society since 1997, he has been its president and the editor of its annual Bulletin since 2008. In 2011, he explored Byron's influence on Philothée O'Neddy and his fellow "Jeune-France" poets from the "1830 generation". Together with the pianist Daniel Propper, he has won the 2012 Award of the "Fondation Napoléon" with *Echoes of the battlefields*, a double-CD of forgotten piano pieces which "narrate" the Napoleonic epic.

**Allan Gregory** is Proprietor of "First Editions", a rare and antiquarian bookshop in Dublin. He graduated from University College Dublin with a BA (Hons) in English and Irish and a Masters degree in Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama. His Phd thesis is on commonality in literary translation. His poem *Some Other Place*, written in Irish, was Ireland's contribution to the SYMPOSIUM ON PEACE FOR THE MILLENIUM at Roma Tre University in August, 2000, and has been published in Irish, English and Italian. Other literary works include *Remembering Michael Hartnett* (Four Courts Press, 2006), with an introduction by Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney and *Byron's Orientalism* (Cambridge Scholar's Press, 2006), and *Byron's Religions* (Cambridge Scholar's Press, 2011), edited by Dr. Peter Cochran. He is a regular participant at International Byron conferences lecturing particularly on the literary relationship between Lord Byron and Thomas Moore. He is Chairman of the Irish Byron Society.

**Jonathan Gross** received his Ph.D. from Columbia University where he studied with Carl Woodring and Karl Kroeber. He is Professor of English at DePaul University in Chicago, author of *Byron: the Erotic Liberal* and editor of *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc": The Life and Letters of Lady Melbourne*. He has focused his attention on Byron through the lens of the aristocratic women Byron knew, editing novels by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (*Emma, or the Unfortunate Attachment*) and Anne Damer (Belmour). His biography of Anne Damer is forthcoming from Lexington Books.

**Itsuyo Higashinaka** was President of the Japanese Byron Society for seven years, and organised the International Conference at Ryukoku University, Kyoto in 2002. He taught in the English Department at Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. He retired in 2009 and is now a professor emeritus at

Ryukoku University. He has presented and published many papers mainly on Byron. He published a few papers on Edmund Spenser. He is also interested in the poetry of Thomas Hardy, Edward Thomas and Philip Larkin.

**Mirka Horova** is academic assistant at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Charles University, Prague. Her research focuses on British Romanticism, primarily Byron. Her other academic interests include Scandinavian literature, with emphasis on the Norwegian Romantic poet Henrik Wergeland. She has published articles on Byron and Wergeland, and participated in conferences in the UK, Greece, Germany, Spain, Lebanon and Turkey.

**Katherine Kernberger** has taught at Linfield College for over thirty years. She serves on the board of the Byron Society of America and participates regularly in the annual International Byron Conferences. Her two volumes of selections from her translation of the Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff have finally appeared as an e-book available from Fonthill Press ([www.FonthillPress.com](http://www.FonthillPress.com)) in New York.

**Alice Levine** is Professor of English at Hofstra University. Her scholarly research has focused on the Romantic period, especially the work of Lord Byron, and on the interrelations of poetry and music. She is the editor of *Byron's Poetry and Prose, A Norton Critical Edition*. In addition, she is coeditor, with Jerome McGann, of *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics: A Facsimile of Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Volumes I-IV*; is coeditor, with Robert Keane, of *Rereading Byron: Essays Selected from Hofstra University's Byron Bicentennial Conference*; and was book reviews editor of the *Keats-Shelley Journal* (1994-2003). She is a director of the Keats-Shelley Association America and of the Byron Society of America.

**Foteini Lika** studied Modern Greek (B.A.) and Comparative Literature (M.A.) at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Modern and Medieval Languages at Cambridge University (Ph.D). She has published articles on various Modern Greek and British writers. Her first book *Roidis and the British Muse: History, Fiction and Satire in Pope Joan* will appear shortly by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. She has taught Modern Greek literature and language teaching at Cambridge University and at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2007-2012). She is currently employed at the Open University of Cyprus. Her research interests include

19th-century and 20th-century historiography and fiction, genre theories, poetics of satire and intertextuality and modern approaches to language teaching.

**Stephen Minta** is Senior Lecturer at the University of York. He has written books on French, Italian, and Latin-American literature. Author of *On a Voiceless Shore: Byron in Greece* (1998), and a series of articles on Byron and the Greek War of Independence, including *Lord Byron and Mavrokordatos*, *Romanticism* 12.2 (2006), 126-42; *Letters to Lord Byron*, *Romanticism on the Net* 45 (February 2007); *Byron and Mesolongi*, *Literature Compass* (July 2007); and *Byron, Consistency, Change, and the Greek War*, in *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terror* (2011). A travel book, *Aguirre: The Recreation of a Sixteenth-Century Journey Across South America* (1994) was a New York Times Notable Book for 1994. He is currently working on a political biography of Byron.

**Naji Oueijan** is Professor of English Literature at Notre Dame University, Lebanon, and Joint President of the International Byron Society. He is also member of several international literary organizations; his main research relates to Byron, Orientalism, and cross-cultural literary issues. He published widely in international scholarly journals and periodicals and has ten books: the ones related to Byron are: *The Progress of an Image* (1996); *The East in English Literature: A Compendium of Eastern Elements in Byron's Oriental Tales* (1999); and *Lord Byron's Oriental World* (2012). He is currently editing a volume on "Byron and Genre."

**Rosemarie Rowley** (M.A., M.Litt., Trinity College, Dublin, Dip. Psych. NUI) has written extensively in form: *Flight into Reality* (1989) is the longest original work in terza rima in English, (reprinted 2010, with CD). She has four times won the Epic award in the Scottish International Open Poetry Competition. Her other books in print are: *The Sea of Affliction* (1987, one of the first works in ecofeminism, which she has also developed through literary criticism, *Hot Cinquefoil Star*, (2002) and *In Memory of Her* (2008) all formal works. Rosemarie has been active in the Irish Byron Society, serving as President 2008-12 and over the past decade has given papers at the International Byron Society conferences.

**Mark Sandy** is a Senior Lecturer in English Studies, Durham University. He has recently edited volumes on Romantic Presences in the Twentieth Century (2012) and Venice and the Cultural Imagination (2012). He has also

completed a book-length study of Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning (forthcoming, 2013).

**Danièle Sarrat** joined the French Byron Society in 1997 and has been participating in the conferences of the International Byron Society since 2000. Her published work on Byron includes the preface for a new French edition of Byron's dramas (*Lord Byron, Théâtre Complet*, Paris, Editions du Sandre, 2006) and a translation of *Parisina* and *Darkness* in 2012 ([www.librairie-doucet.com](http://www.librairie-doucet.com)). Since 2008, she has also been working on a French romantic painter, Alexandre Colin, a friend of Delacroix's who is also an illustrator of Byron's works. She gave a first paper on this painter and Byron at the Missolonghi Conference in 2009 (whose extended French version is in the 2010 bulletin of the French Byron Society) and published an article on A. Colin in 2011 in the *Bulletin de la Société des Amis du musée national Eugène Delacroix* (n°9), the yearly review of the museum in Paris. She has just completed a translation into French of Byron's poem *Mazeppa*.

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**Natalya Solovyova** worked in the World Literature Department at Lomonosov State University of Moscow. She also lectured in Astana (Kazakhstan) at the University affiliated with Moscow State University. She published some monographs and many papers on comparative studies, including Anglo-Russian and French-Russian connections, particularly on Byron, Scott and Russian Romanticism. Her range of interests covered the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (preromanticism, Romanticism, Gothic and the Sensational novel) and some contemporary writers (A.S.Byatt, Graham Swift and Peter Ackroyd).

Nataliya Solovyova died in July 2013.

**Valeria Vallucci** got her Ph.D. from the University of Rome Tor Vergata in 2010, on “Byron, Russia and Italy: aspects of the politics of Alexander I and of the first Risorgimento in Byron and in *Don Juan*”. She has published a short book on Byron and Albania (*Lord Byron e Ali Pascià Tepelene. Childe Harold II e le strategie della Gran Bretagna nel Mare Ionio*) and several articles on Byron and Constantinople, Byron and Foscolo, Byron and the carbonaro Gigante, and Byron and the 1812 Russian Campaign. She is interested in Byron’s role inside history and international diplomacy, as well as his travels and life in Italy.

## ABBREVIATIONS

To economize on space in the notes, the following abbreviations are used for the books referred to. See the Bibliography for further information.

- BJ: *The Byron Journal*  
BLJ: *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (13 vols, John Murray, 1973-94)

When a citation from BLJ is headed "Text from", followed by a manuscript reference, it means that the text is not from BLJ but from the original manuscript. Codes are as follows: <Byron's erasures>; {Byron's interlineated corrections and second thoughts}; [editorial additions].

- Coleridge: *The Works of Lord Byron: A New, Revised and Enlarged Edition with illustrations. Poetry*, ed. E.H.Coleridge (7 vols, John Murray, 1898-1904)  
CHP: Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*  
CMP: *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991)  
CPW: *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller, 7 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980-93)  
DJ: Byron, *Don Juan*  
HVSV: *His Very Self and Voice*, ed. Ernest J. Lovell jr., (1954)  
JMS: *Journals of Mary Shelley* ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, Clarendon, 1987  
Jones: Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964  
LBLI: Teresa Guiccioli, *Lord Byron's Life in Italy*, tr. Rees ed. Cochran (Delaware, 2005)  
LJ: *The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals*, ed. R.E.Prothero, John Murray, 1898-1904  
LJM: *The Letters of John Murray to Lord Byron*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Liverpool University Press, 2007)  
SAHC: Fischer, Doucet Devin and Reiman, Donald, eds., *Shelley and his Circle*, Harvard 1961-2002



# INTRODUCTION: BYRON AND LATIN POETRY

PETER COCHRAN

During the lesson-breaks in Byron's time at Harrow, the boys were allowed to converse only in Latin or Greek. The penalty for being found talking in English was a caning. The boys were monitored by prefects whose identities were concealed, and the monitors were themselves monitored ...<sup>1</sup>

---

The account of Don Juan's education in Canto I of Byron's poem is well-known, but little discussed. Donna Inez is determined that her son shall know nothing of the great classics of western literature (especially the Latin ones), feeling – correctly – that they offend every value which she, as a good Christian mother, desires her son to live by:

His Classic Studies made a little puzzle,  
Because of filthy loves of Gods and Goddesses,  
Who in the earlier ages made a bustle,  
But never put on pantaloons or boddices;  
His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,  
And for their Aeneids, Iliads, and Odysseys,  
Were forced to make an odd sort of apology,  
For Donna Inez dreaded the Mythology.

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,  
Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,  
Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,  
I don't think Sappho's Ode a good example,  
Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn

---

**This introduction is dedicated to Mr Harding, who got us through “O” Level Latin in 1959. Set texts were Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (selections) and Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* (selections).**

**1:** Information from a guided tour of Harrow School.

Where the Sublime soars forth on wings more ample; \*  
 But Virgil's Songs are pure – except that horrid one  
 Beginning with “Formosum Pastor Corydon”.

\* See Longinus Section 10<sup>th</sup>., “Ἴνα μὴ ἐν τῷ παθῶς φαινῆται, παθῶν δὲ Συνοδοῦς.”

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong  
 For early stomachs, to prove wholesome food;  
 I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,  
 Although no doubt his real intent was good,  
 For speaking out so plainly in his song,  
 So much indeed as to be downright rude;  
 And then what proper person could be partial  
 To all those nauseous Epigrams of Martial?

(*Don Juan* I sts.41-3)

The teaching of these books, which every well-educated Christian gentleman in Western Europe was expected to know, but which were offensive to every Christian value known, was a palpable-gross hypocrisy, in the light-hearted depiction of which Byron revels. The way he sketches such an irony so early in his tale may be one reason why *Don Juan* received such negative reactions even before it was published. What his comical imitation-and-travesty doesn't make clear – and is probably intended to disguise – is that *Don Juan* is itself a continuation of the work of most of the writers he lists, and for whose ethics he affects such comical detestation.<sup>2</sup> *Don Juan* is a big slap in the face for the doublethink culture in which its author was brought up.

### “Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him ...”<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the (supposedly) respectable *Metamorphoses*, all the Ovid titles in Byron's library sale catalogues appear in the second, “phantom” catalogue of 1827, as if his possession of them must be hidden:

---

2: Compare Wilde's Miss Prism and Lady Bracknell: “Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.” / “French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so” – *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

3: Translation from

<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/ArtofLoveBkI.htm>.

- 347 Ovidii Opera, notis Variorum, 3 vol. 1702  
 576 Ovidii Opera, Notis Variorum, 3 vol. *in russia*, Amst. 1702  
 577 Ovidii Opera, à Maittaire, 3 vol. 1715  
 578 Ovidii Metamorphoses, Delphini, 1721. Ovidii Fasti Delphini, 1720  
 579 Ovidii Epistola; Delphini, 1714. Ovid's Metamorphoses, Latin and English, by Clarke, 1779.

“Delphini” means “prepared for the Dauphin”: that is, bowdleried for minors.

### **The *Ars Amatoria***

The passive Byron had no need of the *Ars Amatoria*: “Convent” – and “carry off” quotha! – and “girl” – – I should like to know who has been carried off except poor dear me – I have been more ravished myself than anybody since the Trojan war – –<sup>4</sup> he wrote to Hoppner, late in 1819. Ovid is indeed the “tutor” of Love (DJ II 205, 3); but a man like Byron, to whom women were attracted as bears to honeypots, needed no tutoring. It’s clear that he knew Ovid’s book, though he never quotes from it. At an early stage in it, having listed the lust-driven female criminals Byblis, Myrrha, Pasiphaë, Aerope, Clytemnestra and Medea (Ars.Am. I 275-341), Ovid comments,

Omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota:  
 Acrior est nostra, plusque furoris habet.

(Ars.Am. I 341-2)

[“All these things were driven by woman’s lust: / it’s more fierce than ours, and more frenzied.”]

Many of the “libidinous” heroines listed are favourites of Byron. He would otherwise have had to go to Euripides for Medea, to Aeschylus for Clytemnestra, to Alfieri for Myrrha ... whereas Ovid gives them all in one fell swoop.

However, Ovid and Byron – whether the Romantic Byron or the Satirical Byron – inhabit different erotic universes. It’s not just that Ovid is ten times more ungentlemanly and graphic than Byron: it’s a question of attitude. Just as Byron himself needed no practical tutoring in seduction (never having to make any effort), so his own heroes need none in theory, for seduction is not in their line – it’s not that they need no tutoring, but

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**4:** B. to Hoppner, October 29th 1819; text from NLS Ms.43448; BLJ VI 236.

that most of them never attempt seduction. Don Juan, like his creator, takes no sexual initiatives. We do not know how the Giaour and Leila got together, and Leila is conveniently dead and mute throughout their narrative. Conrad is strangely indifferent to women: all Selim can do before Zuleika is spout words: all Lara does with Kaled is talk to him/her in a strange language: and Alp's Francesca is a ghost. These men function, not as satisfiers, but as frustraters, of the female sex-drive. The doomed Hugo and Parisina are a welcome relief from all the other weird neuters – but as for Childe Harold, all he has by way of female company are Paphian girls (who, we assume, are there for the money), and his sister.

Ovid's franker poems are irrelevant not just to most of the Turkish Tales, but also (it's strange to relate) to *Don Juan*.

There are some passages in the *Ars Amatoria* with which Byron might even find himself in contention:

Odi concubitus, qui non utrumque resolvunt;  
 Hoc est, cur pueri tangar amore minus.  
 Odi quae praebet, quia sit praebere necesse,  
 Siccaque de lana cogitat ipsa sua.  
 Quae datur officio, non est mihi grata voluptas:  
 Officium faciat nulla puella mihi.  
 Me voces audire iuvat sua gaudia fassas,  
 Quaeque morer meme sustineamque rogent.  
 Aspiciam dominae victos amentis ocellos:  
 Langueat, et tangi se vetet illa diu.  
 Haec bona non primae tribuit natura iuventae,  
 Quae cito post septem lustra venire solent.

(Ars Am. II 683-94)

["I hate sex that doesn't provide release for both: / that's why the touch of boys is less desirable. / I hate a girl who gives because she has to, / and, arid herself, thinks only of her spinning. / Pleasure's no joy to me that's given out of duty: / let no girl be dutiful to me. / I like to hear a voice confessing to her rapture, / which begs me to hold back, and keep on going. / I gaze at the dazed eyes of my frantic mistress: / she's exhausted, and won't let herself be touched for ages. / Nature doesn't give those joys to raw youths, / that often come so easily beyond thirty-five."]

Byron would (we hope) agree with the middle lines here: but Ovid's confidence in the superiority of heterosexual coupling over "pueri tangar" might cause him to raise an eyebrow – and the idea that a man doesn't know how to make love until he's "post septem lustra" is one at

which he, who died at thirty-six, might blink, wondering what he was missing.

## **The *Amores***

Where Byron seems shy of the *Ars Amatoria*, with a famous section of the *Amores* he tries his own miniaturisation from one of them, with critical commentary. It's the very beginning of *Don Juan* Canto V:

When amatory poets sing their Loves  
 In liquid lines mellifluously bland,  
 And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,  
 They little think what mischief is in hand;  
 The greater their success the worse it proves,  
 As Ovid's verse may give to understand;  
 Even Petrarch's Self, if judged with due Severity,  
 Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

I therefore do renounce all amorous writing,  
 Except in such a way as not to attract;  
 Plain – simple – short, and by no means inviting,  
 But with a moral to each error tacked,  
 Formed rather for instructing than delighting,  
 And with all passions in their turn attacked;  
 Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,  
 This poem will become a moral model.

His first stanza refers to the following address to Venus (which his second stanza swears to improve upon):

nil opus est bello—veniam pacemque rogamus;  
 nec tibi laus armis victus inermis ero.  
 necte comam myrto, maternas iunge columbas;  
 qui deceat, currum vitricus ipse dabit,  
 inque dato curru, populo clamante triumphum,  
 stabis et adiunctas arte movebis aves.  
 ducentur capti iuvenes captaeque puellae;  
 haec tibi magnificus pompa triumphus erit.  
 ipse ego, praeda recens, factum modo vulnus habebo  
 et nova captiva vincula mente feram.  
 Mens Bona ducetur manibus post terga retortis,  
 et Pudor, et castris quidquid Amoris obest.  
 omnia te metuent; ad te sua bracchia tendens  
 vulgus 'io' magna voce 'triumphe!' canet.  
 blanditiae comites tibi erunt Errorque Furorque,

adsidue partes turba secuta tuas.  
 his tu militibus superas hominesque deosque;  
 haec tibi si demas commoda, nudus eris.

(*Amores* II 21-38)

[“War’s not the thing – I come seeking peace: / no glory for you in conquering unarmed men. / Wreath your hair with myrtle, yoke your mother’s doves: / Your stepfather Mars himself will lend you a chariot, / and it’s fitting you go, the people acclaiming your triumph, / with you skilfully handling the yoked birds. / leading captive youths and captive girls: / that procession will be a magnificent triumph. / I myself, fresh prize, will just now have received my wound / and my captive mind will display its new chains. / You’ll lead Conscience, hands twisted behind her back, / and Shame, and whoever Love’s sect includes. / All will fear you: stretching their arms towards you / the crowd will cry ‘hurrah for the triumph!’ / You’ll have your flattering followers Delusion and Passion, / the continual crew that follows at your side. / With these troops you overcome men and gods: / take away their advantage and you’re naked.”]<sup>5</sup>

*Don Juan* – so goes the assertion – will put “Mens bona” and “Pudor” back in their rightful places, and banish “Errorque Furorque” from the procession. He’d been insisting on this – or something similar – from the outset:

If they had told me the poetry was bad – I would have acquiesced – but they say the contrary – & then talk to me about morality – the first time I ever heard the word from any body who was not a rascal that used it for a <Mantle> {purpose. -} ---- I maintain that <the> it is the most moral of poems – <if> but if people won’t discover the moral that is their fault not mine. –<sup>6</sup>

Moral or not, *Don Juan* shadows the *Amores* at several points. Here’s Ovid, protesting his fidelity in the face of all the evidence:

Iusta precor: quae me nuper praedata puella est,  
 aut amet aut faciat, cur ego semper amem!  
 a, nimium volui—tantum patiatu amari;  
 audierit nostras tot Cytherea preces!  
 Accipe, per longos tibi qui deserviat annos;

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5: Translation from

<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/AmoresBkI.htm>.

6: B. to John Murray, February 1st 1819; text from NLS Ms.434890; BLJ VI 98.

accipe, qui pura norit amare fide! (*Amores* I iii, 1-6)  
 ["Be just, I beg you: let the girl who's lately plundered me, /  
 either love me, or give cause why I should always love her! /  
 Ah, I ask too much – enough if she lets herself be loved: /  
 Cytherea might listen to all these prayers from me! / Hear one  
 who serves you through the long years: / hear one who knows  
 how to love in pure faith!"]

And here's Byron, protesting his own "amare fide" with even less conviction:

I hate inconstancy – I loathe, detest,  
 Abhor, condemn, abjure the Mortal made  
 Of such quicksilver Clay that in his breast  
 No permanent Foundation can be laid;  
 Love, Constant Love, has been my Constant Guest,  
 And yet last night, being at a Masquerade,  
 I saw the prettiest Creature fresh from Milan  
 Which gave me some Sensations – like a Villain.

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,  
 And whispered, "Think of Every sacred tie!"  
 "I will, my dear Philosophy!" I said,  
 "But then her teeth, and then, oh Heaven! her eye!  
 "I'll just enquire if She be Wife or Maid,  
 "Or Neither – out of Curiosity."  
 "Stop!" cried Philosophy, with an air so Grecian,  
 (Though She was masqued then as a fair Venetian –)

"Stop!" – so I stopped. (*Don Juan* II sts.209-11)

Here's an Ovidian procuress, giving advice to a would-be adulteress:

quin etiam discant oculi lacrimare coacti,  
 et faciant udas illa vel ille genas;  
 nec, siquem falles, tu periurare timeto—  
 commodat in lusus numina surda Venus. (*Amores* I viii  
 83-6)

["Rather learn to cry with forced tears, / and make him, or yourself,  
 end with wet cheeks: / and if you're cheating don't let perjury scare  
 you – / Venus ensures the gods are deaf to her games."]

Byron takes this outrageous approach further:

Julia said nought; though all the while there rose  
 A ready answer, which at once enables  
 A Matron, who her husband's foible knows,  
 By a few timely words to turn the tables,  
 Which if it does not silence still must pose,  
 Even if it should comprize a pack of fables;  
 'Tis to retort with firmness, and when he  
 Suspects with *One*, do you reproach with *three*.

(*Don Juan* I st.175)

So much for “Errorque Furorque” being banished – Julia has just, in her long tirade, taken the “tu periurare timeto” bit completely to heart. Still, Ovid is bolder – or has a wider canvas – than Byron, who, though he deals fully with adulteresses, only glances at prostitutes (*Don Juan* XI st.30), and never depicts pimps and procuresses (unless you count Miss Protasoff, “*l’Epreuveuse*” to Catherine the great: *Don Juan* IX st.84). Neither does he ever write about abortions (see *Amores* II 13) or erectile dysfunction (see *Amores* III 7).<sup>7</sup> His aim is not confessional / celebratory, as Ovid’s often is, despite the two foregoing: it’s satirical. Ovid obviously enjoys women and sex, and takes it for granted that women enjoy men and sex, whereas Byron prefers to joke about the difference between what women pretend to be (or what his culture claims them to be), and what he knows they really are. He also jokes about that high-class call-girl racket, the London marriage-market. Hypocrisy, at which Ovid only looks *en passant*, is Byron’s main target.

Byron’s confessional love-poetry is never happy. To his women he writes bitterly (*Remember thee! remember thee!* to Caroline Lamb, or *Thou art not false, but thou art fickle*, to Frances Wedderburn Webster, or *I saw thee smile upon another*, to Teresa Guiccioli). To Teresa, it’s true, he also writes *Stanzas to the Po*: but the most heartfelt love-poems he writes are the two famous ones to his half-sister. Next to Ovid’s, Byron’s achievement in this area is meagre.

It’s at the opening of *Amores* Book II that we really see Byron’s indebtedness to Ovid:

Quid mihi profuerit velox cantatus Achilles?  
 quid pro me Atrides alter et alter agent,  
 quique tot errando, quot bello, perdidit annos,  
 raptus et Haemoniis flebilis Hector equis?  
 at facie tenerae laudata saepe puellae,  
 ad vatem, pretium carminis, ipsa venit.

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7: Imitated by Rochester in *The Imperfect Enjoyment*.

magna datur merces! heroum clara valete  
 nomina; non apta est gratia vestra mihi!  
 ad mea formosos vultus adhibete, puellae,  
 carmina, purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor!

[“What does it profit me to sing of swift Achilles? / what use to me  
 one or the other Atrides, / whoever that was who wasted years on war  
 and wandering, / or sad Hector dragged behind the Thessalian horses.  
 / but her face often praised, the beautiful girl herself / comes for the  
 poet, the reward for song. / A great prize won! Bright heroic names  
 farewell: / your rewards are not adequate for me! / Songs bring the  
 beautiful girls to my shining face, / songs that Love dictates to me!”]

*Don Juan's* opening stanza both copies this (by rejecting military heroes) and inverts it (by putting a young man at the centre of the promised work):

I want a Hero: an uncommon Want,  
 When every Year and Month sends forth a new one,  
 Till, after cloying the Gazettes with Cant,  
 The Age discovers he is not the true one;  
 Of such as these I should not care to vaunt –  
 I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan;  
 We all have seen him in the Pantomime,  
 Sent to the Devil, somewhat ere his time.

Ovid only rejects Achilles and Hector as suitable subjects: Byron, more ruthless in interpreting “heroum clara valete / nomina”, rejects Vernon, Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke, Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe, Buonaparte, Dumourier, Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau, Petion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette, Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Dessaix, and Moreau – anxious lest he be accused of leaving anyone out. Later he states a bold ambition:

I love the Sex, and sometimes would reverse  
 The Tyrant's wish, “that Mankind only had  
 One Neck which he with one fell stroke might pierce;”  
 My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,  
 And much more tender on the whole than fierce,  
 It being (not *now* but only while a lad)  
 That Womankind had but one rosy mouth,  
 To kiss them all at once from North to South.

(*Don Juan* VI st.27)

But Ovid had said this already:

Denique quas tota quisquam probet urbe puellas,  
noster in has omnis ambitiosus amor.

(*Amores* II iv 47-8)

[“In short, whichever girls one might approve of in the city, / my desire has ambitions on them all.”]

## The *Heroides*

Byron’s attitude to afflicted women was sympathetic, but a bit cool:

’Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,  
As partings often are, or ought to be,  
And their presentiment was quite prophetic  
That they should never more each other see,  
(A sort of morbid feeling half poetic  
Which I have known occur in two or three)  
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee  
He left this Adriatic Ariadne. – (*Beppo*, st.28)

His attitude to transgressive women – or would-be transgressive women – was no less clinical. He had a catalogue of them, a data-bank on which he could call at will:

Suppose – but you already have supposed –  
The Spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,  
Phedra, and all which Story has disclosed  
Of good examples; Pity! that so few by  
Poets, and private tutors, are exposed  
To educate, Ye Youth of Europe! you by;  
But when you have supposed the few we know,  
You can’t suppose Gulbeyaz’ angry brow. (*Don Juan* V st.131)<sup>8</sup>

But there are forms which Time to touch forbears,  
And turns aside his Scythe to vulgar things,  
Such as was Mary’s Queen of Scots; true – tears  
And love destroy; and Sapping Sorrow wrings  
Charms from the Charmer, yet some never grow  
Ugly; for instance – Ninon de L’Enclos. (*Don Juan* V st.98, 3-8)

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**8:** This stanza reflects B.’s reading of Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews*.

In the *Heroides*, Ovid presents us with a much wider panorama of love-afflicted women than does Byron in *Don Juan*. He starts with Penelope, the chastest of women: but Byron isn't even sure about her:

An honest Gentleman on his return  
 May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;  
 Not all lone Matrons for their husbands mourn,  
 Or show the same dislike to Suitors' kisses;  
 The Odds are that he finds a handsome Urn  
 To his memory, and two or three young Misses  
 Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches,  
 And that his Argus bites him by – the breeches.

(*Don Juan* III st.23)

Soon, as a corrective, Ovid gives us the words of Phaedra:

Non ego nequitia socialia foedera rumpam;  
 fama—velim quaeras—crimine nostra vacat.  
 venit amor gravius, quo serius—urimur intus;  
 urimur, et caecum pectora vulnus habent.  
 scilicet ut teneros laedunt iuga prima iuencos,  
 frenaque vix patitur de grege captus equus,  
 sic male vixque subit primos rude pectus amores,  
 sarcinaque haec animo non sedet apta meo.  
 ars fit, ubi a teneris crimen condiscitur annis;  
 cui venit exacto tempore, peius amat.  
 tu nova servatae capies libamina famae,  
 et pariter nostrum fiet uterque nocens.  
 est aliquid, plenis pomaria carpere ramis,  
 et tenui primam delegere ungue rosam.  
 si tamen ille prior, quo me sine crimine gessi,  
 candor ab insolita labe notandus erat,  
 at bene successit, digno quod adurimur igni;  
 peius adulterio turpis adulter obest.  
 si mihi concedat Iuno fratremque virumque,  
 Hippolytum videor praepositura Iovi!

(*Heroides*. IV 17-36)

["I would not break my marriage contract through sin – / you can enquire – my reputation's free of any stain. / Love that comes late is deeper. We burn within: we burn: / and our feelings suffer the secret wounds: / I suppose that, as a young ox is chafed by the yoke, / and a horse captured from the herd scarcely suffers the harness, / so with great difficulty, with rawness, the heart suffers new love. / and this burden does not lie easy on my spirit. / When guilt's fully

learnt in early years, it becomes an art: / love that comes with the  
 claims of time, loves less easily. / You will enjoy a new libation,  
 one that has been guarded from sin, / and both of us will become  
 equally guilty. / What's plucked from the loaded branches in the  
 orchard / is valuable, and the rose first gathered by slender fingers. /  
 But even if that first purity, that I bring you free of sin, / were to be  
 marked by this unaccustomed stain, / then I would still accept being  
 burnt by a worthy fire: / a vile adulterer is more harmful than the  
 adultery. / If Juno yielded me Jupiter, her husband and brother, / I'd  
 consider Hippolytus preferable to Jove!"

Ovid's Phaedra is fully conscious of the sinful nature of the liaison she and Hippolytus would share – if only he would respond: and she's aware that it will be in the knowledge of sin that the pleasure will partly lie. It's a consciousness which she certainly shares with Byron himself, for whom liaisons unaccompanied by moral risk, or were of long-standing, weren't interesting ("cui venit exacto tempore, peius amat"). But Phaedra shares it with few of his heroines, who either deceive themselves until it's too late (Julia), forget their moral education (Haidee), or have no conscience at all (Gulbeyaz, Catherine, Fitz-Fulke). Byron's own pre-ottava rima Phaedra is of course Parisina – who has no conscience either. He uses the Phaedra-theme of triangulation (with variants) over and over: Leila / Hassan / the Giaour; Selim / Zuleika / Giaffir; Conrad / Gulnare / Seyd in the early work, Laura / the Count / Beppo; and Juan / Julia / Alfonso; Juan / Haidee / Lambro; Juan / Gulbeyaz / the Sultan in *Don Juan*. It's noticeable that the later the heroine, the more she resembles Phaedra morally, though she never has to stoop to the trickery of Phaedra (or of Potiphar's wife!) because Juan, except in the case of Gulbeyaz, doesn't give her the kind of trouble Hippolytus gives Phaedra. With Gulbeyaz, however, he does:

"Thou ask'st, if I can love? be this the proof  
 "How much I *have* loved, that I love not *thee*;  
 "In this vile garb the distaff, web, and woof  
 "Were fitter for me; Love is for the free!  
 "I am not dazzled by this splendid roof;  
 "Whate'er thy power, and great it seems to be,  
 "Heads bow, knees bend, Eyes watch around a throne,  
 "And hands obey; our hearts are still our own."

This was a truth, to us extremely trite,  
 Not so to her, who ne'er had heard such things ...

(*Don Juan* V sts.127-8)