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"The Years That Followed": The Afterlives of Lord Byron

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Diego Saglia (University of Parma)

"It is not yet time": Tracking Byron's Absent Presences

Over the last two hundred years, Byron's biography, image, output and style have become what Mark Sandy calls 'a persistent presence that emerges as a marker of absence'. My talk addresses the inceptive moments of this process under the rubric of revenance and, within it, the interconnections between spectral and material returns. The familiar manifestations of ghostliness in Byron's works open up insights into how his recurrences are rooted in, and stem from, his multifaceted engagements with revenance and spectrality. To this end, I will retrace ghostliness both as a theme in Byron's output and as a mutable topos in the quasi-conclusions to his metrical tales. Indeed, especially the verse narratives he published in his years of fame, roughly between 1813 and 1816, repeatedly and enigmatically climax with modes of revenance that, in addition, indicate the dimension or condition of their textuality, while also significantly foreshadowing the re-emergence of similar strategies in *Don Juan*. By eluding closure and hinting at the possibility of further narratives, this textuality defined by incompleteness and delay turns 'Byron' proleptically into, in Mirka Horová's apt phrase, 'an irresistible story that lives on' – a body and a corpus of unfinished, endlessly re-presentable materials.

Mark Sandy (University of Durham)

'A Pleasure in the Pathless Woods': Tracing Byron's Poetic Legacies in W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Hart Crane, and Louis MacNeice

I start with the discrete, but related, poetic responses of W.B. Yeats and W. H. Auden to Byron. A darkly, existential, Byronic selfhood haunts W. B. Yeats's own poetic mythmaking and struggle for transcendence. By contrast, W. H. Auden's Letter to Lord Byron (1937) celebrates, with its own twentieth-century brio, the ingenuity of wit and accompanying mobility of self championed by Byron's serio-comic poetry. Glimpses of which are caught in Byron's 'address to the ocean' at the close of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Canto IV. On other side of the Atlantic, Byron is an imaginative spur to the visionary quest of Hart Crane's poetry. Crane's sequence, 'Voyages', transforms Byron's tensely visceral relationship with the Mediterranean into a Caribbean clime of oceanic allure and dread in which 'the bottom of the sea is cruel' ('Voyages I'). These imaginative entanglements also persist in Louis MacNeice's later endeavours to find an appropriate twentieth-century poetic register for tallying the measure of self and world. This poetic undertaking frequently found MacNeice's efforts drawn back to those Byronic modalities that he sought to jettison. MacNeice finds subtle lines of Byronic connection even in moments of imagined separation and division from the Romantic. As typified by MacNeice when he observes, 'There is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses' ('Snow'). MacNeice's response to Byronic Romanticism settles, finally, for an approach of imaginative inclusivity and expansion over its outright rejection. Shifting focus to Byron's transatlantic legacies I explore, through the sequence 'Voyages', Crane's complex entanglements with Byron's poetry and Byron's continual presences in William Faulkner's poetic prose. Before examining Louis MacNeice's experimentations with Byronic modes and gestures.

Mirka Horová (Charles University)

Byronic Resilience – Memos for the Present Millennium

This talk takes its cue from Italo Calvino's unfinished lecture series, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and will discuss the extent to which the five extant qualities Calvino singled out as harbingers of enduring literary success – Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity – relate to Byron's work. I am particularly interested in exploring and testing the resilience of the Byronic, looking at the various ways in which the poet's writing performs and inspires resilience. The term resilience carries within it the original sense of bouncing back, that is both the material ability to absorb energy under stress and return to the original shape, and the figurative, more commonly used meaning of being able to confront difficulties and recover from adversity. This modern sense of resilience describes a key adaptive quality acquired through encounters with crisis, something Byron's writing, public and private, contemplates copiously. I will be thinking about Byronic resilience more widely in the context of our own time and the paradigm shift of algorithmic generation, where human imagination, the faculty at the very heart of the Romantic agenda, is being increasingly challenged by advances in artificial intelligence.

DELEGATES

Serena Baiesi (University of Bologna)
Lord Byron and Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Love, Lies, and Lyre.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon has always been regarded as the female alter-ego of Lord Byron, referred to as "the Byron of our poetesses," or even "the female Byron". Landon achieved early literary notoriety in the year of Byron's death, cultivating the cult of the Romantic celebrity by adopting literary masks in her verses, just as Byron had done before her, with all their varieties associated with her gender. Epitomizing the poet of a thousand masks, Byron had a great influence on Landon's use of the narrative poem to investigate issues of dejection and mortification associated with female love. Biographical elements can be detected behind literary disguise both in Byron and in Landon, and however hard they tried to deny any resemblance to their own personalities, they both exploited and justified the use of a public persona within the frame of their own narratives. Unsurprisingly, critics in recent decades have studied the authorial masks adopted by Letitia Landon as a Byronic examples in a female version, endowed with equal strength and transgressive energy. In my paper I would like to investigate how these writers adopted literary masks to discuss personal as well as gender issues revealing interesting correspondences in relation to instances of love and lies. In particular, I will compare passages from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by Lord Byron and *The Improvisatrice* by Letitia Elizabeth Landon as key examples of the experimentation with genre and gender that the two poets carried out in their aestheticization of love and lies. Both of these narrative poems enact fictional identities – Harold and The Improvisatrice, respectively – that conceal and/or reveal elements of their authors, in a combination of fictional and real life.

Roderick Beaton (King's College London)
Byron on the Future of Greece: Was he a philhellene?

At a time when most European travellers to Greek lands were fixated upon the ancient past, Byron from the first seems to have been both perplexed and fascinated by the potential *future* of those lands and their people. Byron's changing and sometimes contradictory thoughts on the subject have always been obscured by the reading from hindsight: it has too often been assumed that he had been committed from the beginning to the idea of a free and independent Greece. Close reading of both published and unpublished texts from the period of his first visit to Greek lands (1809–1811) and afterwards reveals that his opinions were decidedly lukewarm. The repeatedly anthologised lines, inserted into *Don Juan* canto 3 in the form of a song, and written in autumn 1819, are far more ambiguous than is ever realised by readers who encounter them detached from their narrative context. Even after hostilities had begun in Greece in March and April 1821, his almost total silence on the subject for two whole years cries out for comment and explanation. Even after the belated decision had been taken, in summer 1823, to take an active part in Greece, Byron's comments about the Greeks he had gone to serve are often remarkably negative. Finally, his positive and practical political stance developed in the last

months of his life appears to be the fruit of his pragmatic collaboration with the Greek leader Alexandros Mavrokordatos at Missolonghi.

Simona Beccone (University of Pisa)
H.L.V. Derozio's Byronic Dashes of Resistance

Byron's works and lifestyle gained popularity in colonial India, particularly in Calcutta, during the first half of the nineteenth century, attracting British and Indian audiences. Indian writers like Kashiprasad Ghosh, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and H.L.V. Derozio variously looked to him as a model. Derozio exemplifies a complex relationship with Byron, as he uses British Romantic models to engage with the international literary community while innovating them through formal experimentalism. Apart from the obvious references to Byron's works, appearing as epigraphs, quotes, themes, characters, and formal devices, one striking feature of Derozio's writing that reminds us of the British author is his unrestrained and extensive use of dashes. Derozio, much like Byron, intensifies these punctuation marks throughout his entire body of work, often exceeding nineteenth-century conventions to serve multiple functions and convey a wide range of effects: theatrical, satirical, affective and even *aural*. The influence of Byron can be traced back to Derozio's *Don Juanics* (1825-1826), his East Indian version of *Don Juan*. However, in the later stages of his work, the author transcends this model to venture into poetic experimentalism and formal innovation in search of a new poetic voice. Derozio's Byronic dashes can be thus classified as an expression of *recalcitrant mimesis* through which the young Indian poet, at the same time, appropriates and abrogates hegemonic British tropes and language to overcome them and guide Indian literature towards modernity.

Will Bowers (Queen Mary University of London)
Byron's Classroom Legacy

This talk thinks slant about Byron's lyric legacy by ignoring works such as 'She Walks in Beauty', 'So We'll Go No More a Roving', and 'On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year'. Instead, I want to consider how Byron's poetry was disseminated and received in lyric forms during the nineteenth century and how, in our time of short attention span, his poems might be shortened to endure today. The paper will think about how a process of excerpting passages from Byron's longer poems expands our idea of him as a lyricist. By using approaches developed by Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, I'd like to think about how Byron's style accommodates a certain type of cutting and pasting—on statues, gravestones, buildings, monuments, and as epigraphs to other poems—which vastly expand our conception of his lyric art. At a time when the slogan of many syllabus reviews in English Literature departments is 'Make it Short', might mega-texts such as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan* survive (in some form) if we follow the Victorians in excerpting, repurposing, and repackaging Byron's poetry?

Madeleine Callaghan (University of Sheffield)
Twentieth Century Boy: Byron and (Some) American Poets

In the twentieth century, Byron offers poetic opportunities for new generations of poets. However, critics have rarely chosen to explore the contours and content of this influence. This paper understands Byron's influence not as subconscious but as deliberately fashioned by his inheritors, where T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath choose the way in which Byron functions as a model in their poetry. Byron is neither forbidding ancestor nor kindly father. What Byron offers to his twentieth century descendants would not be a shared manner or a collective talent for a well-placed echo or allusion to their precursor. Byron offers a multi-faceted example that his followers would explore and exploit. Focusing upon American writers, this article will explore how Byronic Romanticism becomes central to these twentieth century poets. Byron's cosmopolitanism offered each of his inheritors a version of an Anglophone poet far removed from the parochial model. Byron becomes an alternative version of Harold Bloom's 'exemplary Modern Poet' especially adapted for twentieth century purposes.

Maria Elena Capitani (University of Parma)
"Truth Is Far Stranger Than Any Fiction I Ever Concocted": Storytelling, Authenticity, and Myth in George Costigan's Trust Byron *and Jez Butterworth's* Jerusalem

Since the 1980s, the British stage has seen a persistent return to the nation's literary and cultural heritage as a means of exploring contemporaneity. On this basis, this paper explores a hitherto neglected area within this broader field – that of the remediation of literary works, figures, and themes from the Romantic age. More specifically, it focuses on one of the most iconic nineteenth-century writers, Lord Byron, who still haunts the cultural imagination, both nationally and globally. George Costigan's *Trust Byron* (1997) is a one-man show about the extraordinary life of the Romantic celebrity. In this play, the lame protagonist, wearing a frock coat and ripped jeans, finds himself in a confessional mood. Dissatisfied with the ways in which he has been portrayed over the centuries, a self-indulgent Byron revisits some significant episodes trying to re-establish his own truth, however slippery it might be. In a similar vein, Jez Butterworth's multi-layered play *Jerusalem* (2009), whose Janus-faced and rambunctious protagonist is evocatively named Johnny 'Rooster' Byron, takes storytelling and (in)sincerity centre stage, refashioning identity and cultural myths. If a niche monologue such as *Trust Byron* operates more intimately, Butterworth's state-of-the-nation hit, populated with a large cast of characters, obviously has wider resonances, reverberating both on a personal and communal level. However, despite their inherent differences, these two Neo-Romantic plays remediate and renegotiate a major cultural icon such as Byron in order to invite reflections on the creation (and fabrication) of stories and narratives, the performance of (self-)authenticity, and the authenticity of dramatic and theatrical representation more broadly.

Mellyssa Coelho de Moura (Universidade Federal do Ceará)

Mary W. Shelley and the Immortalization of Lord Byron

Mary W. Shelley played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting Lord Byron's literary legacy. As a confidante, friend, and amanuensis, she transcribed several of his works, including *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Her close interaction with Byron's poetry ensured the preservation of his literary contributions and facilitated their dissemination, extending their influence beyond his untimely death in 1824. Mary's meticulous transcription of his manuscripts created a lasting legacy for Byron's work, which might otherwise have been lost or forgotten. However, her role extended beyond simple preservation; she critically engaged with Byron's ideas, and her editorial contributions and insightful critiques significantly shaped the reception of his work. As a writer, Mary utilized her intellectual and literary skills to connect Byron's themes to her feminist ideology, offering a new perspective on his portrayal of gender and power. In doing so, she ensured Byron's literary immortality while also establishing herself as an important figure within the Romantic intellectual landscape. This paper explores how Mary W. Shelley's transcription, editing, and critical engagement with Byron's works contributed to the perpetuation of his influence, ultimately shaping his posthumous legacy and securing her place within the literary canon of the Romantic period.

Elisa Cozzi (University of Oxford)

Byron, Ireland, and a new MS of 'The Irish Avatar' in the Holland House Papers

In January 1822, *Blackwood's Magazine* reported that 'The Holland-House gentry are chuckling very much over a little tid-bit of blasphemy, sent over by a certain learned Lord from Italy–'tis call'd the 'Irish Advent'. The author is referring to 'The Irish Avatar', Byron's satire on George IV's visit to Ireland, composed in September 1821. Byron, then in Ravenna, had sent the MS of the poem to Thomas Moore, authorising him to copy it and forward it 'to the benevolent few'. The poem was first published in Paris, but an MS copy also reached Holland House, and Lord Holland transcribed it in his commonplace book. It is now among the Holland House Papers at the British Library, where I have recently rediscovered it. This MS contains surprising textual variations and might have been copied from an as yet untraced authorial version. In my talk, I plan to introduce this new manuscript and its significance as a way into a reassessment of Byron's literary, political, and personal Irish connections, filtered through the radical milieu of Holland House. It was during his time as a member of the Holland House circle that Byron delivered his parliamentary speech on Catholic Emancipation, dined with Irish poets and politicians, and met the Anglo-Irish Caroline Lamb. Lord Holland himself was directly related to Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the rebel hero of the 1798 Irish Rebellion, whom Byron admired, declaring that 'if I had been a man [at the time of the Rebellion], I would have made an English Lord Edward Fitzgerald'. Just as the identities of Fitzgerald and Byron mingle in the Irish protagonist of Lamb's *Glenarvon*, I shall examine 'The Irish Avatar' as an example of how Irish identities, voices, and poetic forms played a central role in the development of Byron's political views and poetic imagination.

Lucy Davies (Lancaster University)
Death, Mortality, Legacy: Byron's Hypochondriac Humour

Hypochondria in Byron's lifetime and in the medical lifetimes preceding it was a broad, ill-defined category, swept up within concepts of melancholia or nervous disorders; it was slippery, moveable. With an awareness of the complexity of such a condition, in this paper I would aim to explore the intersection between Byron's own self-identified hypochondriasis, death, and his sense of futurity. Death and the afterlife preoccupy much of Byron's poetry either in the abstract, as a great unknown to be pondered, or as something to be chased down and desired, always out of reach as a destination of peace and a signifier of eternal and final rest. But the Byronic hero is also constantly running from his own death, pursued by a nameless and shapeless anxiety. If, as Byron stated in *The Prophecy of Dante*, the poet aims "at an external life beyond our fate", then how would this sense of enduring legacy be shaped or changed by a constant awareness of his own mortality? The paper looks at Byronic deaths and illness to argue that this hypochondria had a profound impact on Byron's writing and his sense of legacy, and is represented in a struggle for a level of immortality through his poetry that would be denied to a body that consistently betrayed him.

Angel Antonio De Oliveira Amata (University of Pisa)
The Byronic Hero in Comics

This paper aims to analyse the figure of the Byronic Hero within a specific field of popular culture, that of comic books. In particular, it seeks to highlight the way in which Byronic heroes featuring in comic books adhere to the characteristics of the original prototype building upon the expressive potential of this hybrid medium. Since its coinage, the term "Byronic Hero" has become nearly ubiquitous in literary discourse. Its influence, however, has also extended to modern media, where it has been leveraged as a central feature in stories for a broad audience, often centred around characters who inherit the Byronic stance. Byronic Heroes, in short, "are men of stupendous assertiveness and uncertain morality", and comic books are replete with similar characters, be they antiheroes reimagined in adaptations of the classics—such as the Templar Brian de Bois-Gilbert in the French publisher Glénat's 2019 adaptation of *Ivanhoe*—or positive heroes with negative character traits. Examples include Tony Stark (Iron Man), a superhero with alcoholism issues, in line with Stan Lee's vision of "superheroes with super problems," or the enigmatic V of *V for Vendetta* (1982-1985), a character intent on overthrowing a totalitarian regime. Having risen to great prominence not only within the comic book world but also thanks to their cinematic adaptations, these characters have contributed to the dissemination and popularization of the Byronic Hero figure, hence to the transmission of Byron's legacy.

Franca Dellarosa (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

The Posthumous Life of Count Manfred: Covent Garden, 29 October, 1834

The elusive nature and generic affiliation of Lord Byron's dramatic poem *Manfred* (1817) have been a critical paradox since its conception, as encapsulated in its author's skeptical remarks, addressed to John Murray (15 Feb. 1817), on the question of the drama's allegedly *unperformable* quality. This was also a crucial point in the critical reception of the stage version the theatre manager and librettist Alfred Bunn adapted from Byron's source as a highly spectacular melodrama, with music by Henry Rowley Bishop, which premiered at Covent Garden on 29 October, 1834. Close analysis of the licensing manuscript of *Manfred* reveals the adapter's careful manipulation of the source text, whereby strategies of textual contraction (cuts) and expansion (additions) prepared the source text for its melodramatic transition, in a process that strategically enhanced the performative potentialities of the original, while also cannibalizing other Byronian sources, including the discarded Act III and the 'Turkish tale' *The Giaour*. At the same time, comparative analysis of the libretto and score of *Manfred 1834* reveals how the performance event was the final product of a constant negotiation between words and music. Performance notes reported on Bishop's holograph score indicate how the staging was a collaborative enterprise, where the music acted as a unifying element, while the libretto appeared less a prescriptive text than a draft to be reworked and transformed in relation to the performance needs, with music playing a crucial role.

Gregory Dowling (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

Publishing scoundrels, charlatans and failures: Byron scholars in fiction from James to Coetzee.

Byron has been portrayed in countless works of fiction; this is something that began in his own lifetime, in which the protagonists of such novels as *Glenarvon* and *The Vampyre*, although bearing different names, are clearly modelled on the poet, and it has continued to the present day, with novels like *Dangerous* (Essie Fox, 2025), in which he appears under his own name as the hero of an unrestrainedly gory crime story. In my paper, however, I have decided to focus on the distinctly less glamorous figure of the Byron scholar, and to consider the role he or she (usually he) has played in fiction and drama over the centuries. The paper will consider a few major examples, beginning with the "publishing scoundrel" of *The Aspern Papers*, passing via the bemused scholar of the Italian TV series *Il segno del comando* and the squabbling academics of Stoppard's *Arcadia*, to conclude with the self-destructive anti-hero of Coetzee's *Disgrace*. The hope is that a consideration of these characters may lead to some insight into what we are all up to and why (and possibly how), and also provide some reflections (perhaps ironically rueful ones) on the phenomenon of academic Byromania.

Tala El Halabi (Beirut Arab University)

The Byronic Heroine: A Vision of Gendered Futurity

This paper analyzes how the Byronic heroine embodies a form of futurity that challenges traditional gender roles of Byron's time. Focusing on heroines like Haidée (*Don Juan*), Gulnare (*The Corsair*), and Astarte (*Manfred*), I explore the tensions between constraint and agency, revealing new possibilities for women's roles in Romantic literature and beyond. I consider how their defiance, passion, and tragic fates anticipate evolving feminist narratives. How do these heroines engage with personal, political, and spiritual futures, often resisting societal expectations? And how might their depictions critique Romantic ideals, creating an imaginative space for rethinking gendered futurity? Drawing on Judith Butler's concept of Gender Performativity and Rosi Braidotti's constructs of Feminist Nomadism and "Becoming," I argue that the Byronic heroine—a figure less discussed than the Byronic hero—represents transformation and future possibilities. Specifically, I examine how she performs femininity and agency in ways that destabilize traditional Romantic ideals of womanhood. Ultimately, I demonstrate how her fluidity and transformative nature resist fixed identities, offering new possibilities for gendered futurity.

Olivier Feignier (Société française des études byroniennes)

"It is supposed to be a translation…": Byron in 1825, His First Posthumous Year in France

After Byron's death, whose announcement shook the artistic community in France and beyond, the character, life and works of the poet continued to enthrall artists in all aesthetic domains. In Paris, existing translations were reprinted and new translations were published, in prose and in verse. Newly printed pirate editions circulated in the market, too. When unpublished texts were missing, apocryphal ones were produced. Poetical imitations blossomed. Original illustrations flourished. Music settings derived from Byron, whether directly or indirectly, resounded in salons. Byron's life fuelled so much interest that fake narratives began to be printed along with more reliable biographical essays. Some late encomiastic pieces witnessed durable enthusiasm for the poet and Freedom fighter, and Byron's role in the Greek war of independence was pointed out in history books. The sequel of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, by Lamartine, preceded a parody of the same poem, namely *The Pilgrimages of a Parisian Childe Harold*, by the father of Jules Lefèvre, the latter being an early French Byron enthusiast, who soon afterwards published *Le Clocher de St Marc*, a collection of poems full of Byronic reminiscences. Epigraphs drawn from Byron began to set the tone of the poems they adorned. And Byron was cited by fashion makers to help them sell their products. – Year 1825 offers a complete panorama of the Byron-mania which took France and Europe by storm, and can be seen as a concentrate of Byron's posthumous afterlife which was to grow and develop in France and elsewhere in Europe in the next fifteen or twenty years.

Dino Franco Felluga (Purdue University)
Byron and the Future of the Humanities

This paper aims to illustrate how the 19th century proffered an alternative way of thinking about temporality, inspired by the French Revolution and popularized by Lord Byron and other 19th-century poets. We turn to the work of Alain Badiou, Jean-Pierre Dupuy and Slavoj Žižek to theorize this alternative chronology, which Badiou aligns with the "*futur antérieur*." In this way of thinking about time, one must engage with the problems of the present from the perspective of the future, which has the effect of disjointing time and disrupting realistic chronology. The temporality of the future anterior frees us from thinking that we cannot escape the past and calls upon us to take collective responsibility for our actions now rather than wait for someone else to solve our problems. *Novel-Poetry* is highly speculative; however, it argues that adoption of this way of thinking about "event" can have tangible impacts in the real world by liberating us from a strictly narrative chronology. I am now working on a follow-up book that builds on that argument to propose a better way to approach the critical problems facing the humanities today: a practical how-to manual on building sustainable resources at a time of collapse. Can Byron help us to rethink our approach to the future of the humanities more broadly?

Susan L. Fischer (Bucknell University)
Byron's Cain, A Mystery *(1821) and Unamuno's* Abel Sánchez, Una historia de pasión *(1917): Intertextual Mediations*

In Unamuno's *Abel Sanchez* the eponymous artist Abel decides, while preparing a painting of the story of Cain, to lend best friend/brother, Joaquín Monegro, a copy of Byron's *Cain*. Joaquín (=*Jo-Caín*), consumed by a passion of envy for brother/friend Abel, identifies with Byron's hero and wonders if his own soul is identical with his hatred of Abel. Joaquín writes in his diary-confession about his profound existential and spiritual crisis: "The reading of Byron's *Cain* penetrated me to the core.... The image of Cain and Lucifer in the abyss of space was burned onto my soul as if by fire." How does this reading of Cain's rebellion (and that of Lucifer who instructs him) become an important stage in Joaquín's own self-discovery and expand his self-awareness? How does Byron's *Cain* (and, by extension, the myth of Cain) work to clarify and intensify certain aspects of Unamuno's novel? Byron's *Cain* had been known to Unamuno since 1912 at least. In his collection of meditative essays, *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (1913), Unamuno had interpolated passages from *Cain*, for example, where Cain responds to Lucifer: "Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn / To anticipate my immortality" (2.1). This paper will deploy intertexuality as a trope—intertextuality understood as an "infinite interconnectedness of things, conditions, and ideas...a wide-ranging instrument of relevance retrieval whose function is the accrual rather than the immediate exchange of knowledge" (Bronlow and Kronik, 1998)—to probe themes of existential exploration and metaphysical questioning and meditate on Byron's (and Unamuno's) afterlife in meta-literary and transnational dimensions.

Marc Gotthardt (University of Cambridge)
Between common-place and cliché

T. S. Eliot infamously labelled Byron's attempts at being poetic as 'nothing but sonorous affirmations of the commonplace with no depth of significance'. This assertion, which in the interim has itself become a bit of a cliché, has been rightly disputed by generations of Byronists who argued that Byron had been a more profound and poetic thinker than Eliot and many others before and since imagined. I want to reexamine Eliot's judgment and suggest that while Byron did toy with commonplace verse, the result was not shallow versification but a core credo running through Byron's oeuvre: the idea that words are things meant to be put into circulation. Byron knew of the uses and abuses of commonplace and cant, and, as Bernard Beatty and Jerome McGann have suggested, carefully distinguished between commonplace and cliché for poetic effect. That made Byron's verse a favourite for being copied into commonplace books of the period (and it remained so until much after his death). Focusing on nineteenth-century women's commonplace books, I argue that commonplacers discovered literary agency and readerly individuality in communal compositional practices. Reading Byron's poetics in view of the practice of commonplacing, I propose this to be part of a distinctly Byronic strategy for the dissemination of his poetry, and that while not all of Byron's poetry is laced with commonplace and cliché, the portion of it that is, has great depth of significance, just not of the kind that a modernist poet like Eliot desired to fathom.

Alexander Grammatikos (Langara College)
Lord Byron's Afterlives: Examining the Poet's Legacy in Contemporary Greece

In this presentation, I focus on Byron's 'afterlives' in modern Greece. From the Henri-Michel Chapu and Alexandre Falguière statue of Byron outside of Athens' National Gardens, to graffiti bearing his likeness in various cities, Byron lives on throughout the country – but why and how has his legacy endured for so long? In discussing the multiple Greek commemorations and portrayals of the poet, I ask questions like (i) what version of Byron are audiences receiving when they engage with representations of the poet? and (ii) whose narratives of Byron are being told, and which stories are being left out? Questions like these allow me to investigate the myths that surround Byron in Greece and determine what the poet has meant to Greeks at various periods over the last 200 years. Officially, Byron is a national Greek hero – April 19, the day of his death, was in 2008 designated "Philhellenism and International Solidarity Day" by the Greek government – but how do current generations view his role in the Greek revolution? In my presentation, I question whether wartime narratives of Byron resonate with the public, and especially younger Greeks. I also suggest that Greek nationalist narratives might obscure history by presenting a 'soldierly' Byron while ignoring other important aspects of his connection to Greece, including his interest in Romaic (rather than Hellenic) culture and his same-sex sexual experiences. In today's Greece, I propose, there is space to examine aspects of Byron's character that move beyond nationalist narratives linked to the revolutionary war.

Suleiman Hodali (UCLA)

Romancing the Crusades: Historicism, Occidentalism, and Byron's 'Lament of Tasso'

This paper centers its discussion on Lord Byron's *Lament of Tasso*, as a representative example of the hyper-referential historicism and fascination with the Orient that prevailed in the age of Romanticism. The poem–written during Byron's 1817 travels through Italy— reflects the period's embrace of chivalry, the gothic, and geographic fixations on Jerusalem and 'the Holy Land.' Byron's *Lament* also demonstrates a trend in the Romantic period, when medieval holy wars were re-evaluated as emblematic of the West's glorious *past*, and a model for imagining *future* crusades. In contrast to the Enlightenment's moralistic repudiation of crusading, the historical imagination of Latin Christendom's medieval conquests of Palestine was re-configured in secular terms of relation, and Romantic crusades were resuscitated through civilizing missions of nations and empires in service of Occidentalism. I offer a reading that situates Byron's Tasso within a lineage of modern English interpretations and characterizations—beginning with John Hoole's 1763 translation of *Jerusalem Delivered* and subsequent commentary by thinkers like Richard Hurd, John Black, Horace Walpole, Robert Southey, John Keats, Walter Scott, and Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen, among others. The poem exemplifies both the Romantic fascination with the spatial alterity ascribed to the *Asiatic East*, which helped nourish the expansion of modern Orientalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the gothic topos that served to articulate Britain's relationship with a broader Occidental historical and cultural identity. Byron's engagement with translations of Italian texts and travels to Italian places produce an allegorical field of interpretation and representation between past and future.

Emily Holland (University of Sheffield)

'Nor raise my voice—for who would heed my wail?' Byron's The Prophecy of Dante

Revered by Byron as 'the best thing [he] ever wrote,' *The Prophecy of Dante* (1821) stages Byron's equation of words and things through the mode of prophetic writing. In *The Prophecy of Dante*, Byron is not so much concerned with the fulfilment or validation of a single predictive vision but rather considers prophecy as the expression of the intensity of poetic thoughts and feelings. This paper argues that Byron employs prophecy to function as a way to affirm the poet's potential position as Promethean, that is, the willingness of the punished genius to continually suffer for the articulation of 'moral truth'. In *The Prophecy of Dante*, Byron appropriates the voice of Dante for an extended exploration of the enduring nature of poetry that foresees the poet's ability to continue to speak through their verse, even after their death. This allows the poet to attain a lasting immortal legacy through artistic creation. The relationship between words and things has evolved from the previous discussions in Byron's other poems to its fullest realisation, as through prophetic language, the poet is able to bridge the gap between

verbal communication and reality, between past, present, and posterity, by evoking 'the fervent days of Old, / When words were things that came to pass.'

Anthony Howe (Birmingham City University)
A 'Post-Obit on Posterity': Byron's Last Words

A feeling of the posthumous became entwined with Byron's life as a writer. He recognized this in his letters and in the tone of his late poetry. His words faced the odd double predicament of ending – with the poet's death – but also of beginning a new life as a posthumous body of writing. This paper will explore the posthumous feel of Byron's final words, focusing on the unfinished – barely started – seventeenth canto of *Don Juan*.

Rhian Isaac (Leeds Libraries)
Byron's Legacy in a Public Library Collection: An Unrecorded Fragment of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Two hundred years after the death of Byron, the significance of an unrecorded manuscript fragment held in Leeds Public Library has been recognised. The holograph draft that would be printed as stanza 88 in the seventh edition of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was found in an autograph scrapbook amongst other letters and signatures of royal, military and literary figures of the time. No other manuscript version is known to exist. The autograph album was compiled by Anna Leighton (1791-1872) of Northallerton with much of the material gathered by her cousin who was the Private Secretary to Prince Frederick, Duke of York, and second son of King George III. This paper will discuss the provenance of the fragment and its survival in the context of Byron's celebrity status and the autograph collecting culture in the early 19th century. Through description, promotion and curation, libraries can widen access to their collections which can in turn help drive and facilitate research collaborations. Our discovery provides opportunities for new research and public engagement activity which will be discussed in relation to the role of public libraries in not only preserving historic material but also improving discoverability and access for different audiences. This presentation will explore how the library can harness Byron's enduring legacy and the fascination with his life and work to raise awareness of its collections. It will examine opportunities this brings to foster cross-institutional collaboration and strengthen connections between researchers and non-academic audiences.

Maria Kalinowska (University of Warsaw)

Cain in Polish Theatre: Byron Outside the Romantic Paradigm?

The paper discusses the theatrical reception of Byron's *Cain* in Poland in the context of the changing Polish reception of Byron's oeuvre. Byron and his works are an important part of Polish Romanticism. The Polish Romantic reception of Byron has been determined by such issues as freedom, individualism, the political importance of his poetry, and historical activism. An alternative reception of his oeuvre emerged at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries – determined by considerations of decadence and doubt. In the 20th century, readings of Byron's work were broadened to include an appreciation of the grotesque. The question posed in the paper concerns these changes in the reception of Byron's work: to what extent are they an alternative to the Romantic reception of Byron, and to what extent do they arise from the Romantic fascination with Byron that is so important for Polish Romanticism? The analysis will focus on three separate Polish productions of Byron's *Cain*: 1) the 1960 production by Jerzy Grotowski, one of the greatest theatre reformers of the 20th century, co-founder of the Pontedera centre; 2) the 1992 production directed by Andrzej Dziuk at the Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz Theatre in Zakopane; 3) Agata Duda-Gracz's 1998 production at the same theatre. These are the only productions of Byron's *Cain* in Polish theatre. It should be added that Polish theatrical tradition has been predominantly shaped by productions rooted in Romantic drama. Consequently, a dialogue with this tradition – achieved through the reinterpretation of Byron's work – holds significant implications for contemporary understandings of the Romantic heritage.

Miriam Kay (University of Pisa)

«A pardonable nationality»: Byron, Hobhouse, and the Classical-Romantic Debate in Milan (1816)

Lord Byron and John Cam Hobhouse's brief but revealing sojourn in Milan during the autumn of 1816 coincided with the inception of the classical-romantic literary debate. Engaging with prominent figures such as Ludovico di Breme, Vincenzo Monti, and Silvio Pellico, the two Englishmen observed the city's vibrant cultural scene while adopting a detached and often critical stance toward its preoccupations. Hobhouse's reflections in *Italy: Remarks Made in Several Visits* (1859) exemplify this ambivalence, as he dismisses the debate as "an idle inquiry" while also documenting its fervor and broader cultural and historical context in detail. Byron, in contrast, alternates between admiration for the intellectual vitality of Italian society and sharp critiques of its political and cultural stagnation under Austrian rule. This duality – oscillating between fascination, participation and disillusionment – runs through both their accounts, capturing the tensions within Italian literary life. Byron's later involvement in Italian revolutionary circles complicates this perspective further, underscoring the contradictions between his poetic imagination and his political engagement. By placing Byron's Milanese experience in dialogue with Hobhouse's reflections and the reactions of key Italian figures, this paper proposes to discuss how their perspectives enriched the European reception of the

classical-romantic debate, offering a nuanced view of the interplay between foreign observers and local intellectual currents during this transformative period in Italian cultural history.

Christine Kenyon Jones (King's College London)
Byron's Visual Afterlife

A picture is the past; even ere its frame Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.
Don Juan XVI,19)

This paper proposes the identification of a new genre of Byronic images that flourished after 1824, reimagining his life and re-presenting his appearance in the decades after his death. Responding to the new biographies of Byron published from the mid-1820s, to new printing and publishing techniques and to changes in the market for poetry, artists in the mid-nineteenth century used his existing portraiture and the story of his life to create new visual images of Byron for a readership whose enthusiasm was rekindled by his death in Greece and who continued to be imaginatively engaged with him. Visual developments that had begun during Byron's lifetime, such as satirical prints purporting to show aspects of his life, and illustrations that incorporated his own features and identity alongside those of the personae of his works, provided a basis for a new visual Byronism which broke free from many of the constraints of the portraits that had been created through 'from-life' encounters. Somewhere between fantasy, illustration, imagination, humour, caricature, artistic and dramatic licence, narrative origination, and memorialisation and homage, this new genre also moved away from paper, paint and canvas to flourish in a new decorative milieu, where pottery figures, objects such as trinket- and snuff-boxes, tobacco pipes, coins and medals could all be 'Byronized' to give them extra cultural value and collectability.

Greg Kucich (University of Notre Dame)
Bicentennial Byron in Rome: Byron's Trans-Mediterranean Waters of Consciousness, Then and Now

This paper examines the impact of the various Byron events and publications during the 2024 Bicentennial year, with a special focus on the Byron Symposium I organized in Rome with Jeffrey Cox and its central engagement with what we are calling Byron's "Trans-Mediterranean Consciousness," as experienced throughout his life and writings and in terms of its relation to the geopolitical conflicts raging today throughout the same Mediterranean region. The Byron Bicentennial issued in such a robust plethora of innovative lectures, conference papers, seminars, symposia, readings, and musical performances that it is impossible to summarize its overall range and scope. I will focus, however, on two of the most significant, related critical flashpoints in this terrific outpouring of Byron activities: a fundamental mode of chameleonic identity in Byron's life and writings, tracked by Andrew Stauffer throughout his new Byron biography, that constantly assumes multiple, shape-shifting forms of fluid selfhood; and, the main theme of our Byron Symposium in Rome, a profound embrace of cultural hybridity throughout the Mediterranean's vast multiplicity of intersecting races, ethnicities, nations,

empires, cultures, and languages. Speakers at the Rome Symposium brought many different angles of insight to bear on Byron's resistance to conventional binaries of and conflicts between West/East, Christian/Muslim, Democracy/Empire in his deeper immersion into an ever-moving exchange of Mediterranean identities akin to the metaphorical flow of a sea of diversity lapping up to and drawing from the many different cultural shores of the Mediterranean. Converging potently with Byron's affirmation of a mobility of identity in his own life and writings, this liberating vision of "Trans-Mediterranean Consciousness" offers a direct, potentially redemptive model for assuaging the terrible clashes of culture and identity that now afflict the same Mediterranean ground and, by extension, other geopolitical collisions throughout our world. My paper will conclude with a brief look at the imminent published outcomes of these critical insights in a special Byron issue of *Studies in Romanticism* and a book-length collection of essays from the Rome Symposium.

Dominik Łaciak (Jagiellonian University in Krakow)

Byron Uncloseted: Revisiting Jerzy Grotowski's 1960 Production of Cain

Despite Byron's assertion that *Cain* and his other "metaphysical" dramas were not written for the stage but for the "mental theatre of the reader" (*BLJ*, VIII, 210), several theatrical productions of *Cain* have come to life around the world. One of the most famous of them, alongside those by Konstantin Stanislavsky and John Barton, was the 1960 production mounted by Jerzy Grotowski at the Theater of 13 Rows in Opole, Poland. Though reviewed with some favor and hailed as a success by several critics, it has more often been viewed as evidence of *Cain*'s unfitness for the stage. As some of the most prominent critical responses to this production suggest, Grotowski seems to have largely disregarded the text of Byron's drama and staged what, in effect, was a mutilation of *Cain*, which had nothing to do with the play itself. In this paper, I challenge this long-standing scholarly consensus and argue that Grotowski's production offered an insightful, if stylistically distinct, interpretation of Byron's tragedy. By examining Grotowski's theatrical script, the reviews, and the photographs of the production, I suggest that it not only closely followed the text of *Cain* but also that, like Byron's drama, it offered a spirited defense of Cain and a scathing assault on God. I thus wish to demonstrate that Grotowski successfully breathed life into the text that has been insistently cast into the closet together with other Romantic plays deemed unsuited for the stage.

Marcin Leszczyński (University of Warsaw)

"Fanciful Guess-work"? Byron's Recontextualization in Scientific Discourse

The paper examines the influence of Lord Byron on the scientific discourse of the nineteenth century, particularly in astronomy and geology. It analyses how quotations from and references to Byron's poetry were used by scientists – ranging from popular authors of books on astronomy, such as Camille Flammarion, to researchers like John Herschel – to illustrate their theories, enrich their lectures, or legitimise scientific claims. Recognizing the rhetorical potential of

Byron's lines, scientists reinterpreted and recontextualized them in scientific works to strengthen their arguments, either by aligning themselves with them, or opposing them. When discussing the role of the Sun in his *Familiar Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, John Herschel quotes Byron's "Darkness", written "with the hand of a master of the horrible", and contrasts its poetic vision with scientific discoveries; he describes it as "fanciful guess-work" that was capable of appealing to the readers' imagination. On the other hand, in her notebooks, Mary Somerville juxtaposes William Herschel's observations of stars with quotations from *Cain*, interweaving science and poetry into a coherent discourse. The aim of the paper is to establish how the appropriation of Byron's poetry facilitated the structuring and articulation of scientific arguments through correction, allusion, or accommodation. It seeks to understand why and how scientists turned to Byron's works – both in scientific discourse and in their own poetry featuring Lord Byron (e.g., in the verse written by Humphry Davy and William Buckland). By exploring the scientific use of Byron's poetry, the paper delves into the complex, two-way relationship between literature and science in the nineteenth century, destabilising binary oppositions such as subjectivity and objectivity or imagination and truth.

Daniel Josef Lindegger (Independent Scholar)

Byron in Switzerland: Reflections on Landscape, Exile, and Creativity

Lord Byron's stay in Switzerland during the summer of 1816 remains a pivotal moment in his personal and literary development, shaping both his poetic output and his broader philosophical outlook. This paper explores Byron's engagement with the Swiss landscape as both a physical and symbolic space, examining how it serves as a backdrop for reflections on exile, liberty, and the sublime. Drawing on close readings of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto III) and *Manfred*, this study highlights Byron's negotiation of Romantic ideals of nature, solitude, and the human condition. Furthermore, the paper situates Byron's Swiss period within its historical and biographical context, focusing on his interactions with Percy and Mary Shelley, as well as his creative response to the "Year Without a Summer." Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary analysis with ecocriticism and cultural history, the paper argues that Switzerland offered Byron not merely a refuge from scandal but an essential creative space. It allowed him to synthesize personal turmoil with broader themes of displacement and transcendence, which would resonate throughout his oeuvre. This analysis positions Byron's Swiss period as a critical intersection of Romanticism's preoccupation with the self and nature, revealing the enduring relevance of his Swiss-inspired works in contemporary ecological and philosophical discourse.

Toby Lucas (Durham University)

'The page of her story – the brightest or blackest': Posterity in Byron's Napoleonic Poems, 1814-16

Throughout 1814-16, as the new Europe takes shape after the Napoleonic Wars, Byron composes several shorter works assessing the legacy of Napoleon, the detritus of his empire, and those impacted by the changing times. In these poems, Byron employs a variety of perspectives and poetic conceits: “Napoleon's Farewell” and “From the French” ventriloquise Bonaparte and one of his soldiers as they lament the end of an era, whilst “On the Star of ‘The Legion of Honour'” contemplates material artefacts from the war. “Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte” uses an epic lens, summoning a host of historical and mythological figures to evaluate Napoleon's downfall, whereas “On Napoleon's Escape from Elba” is a short, comic verse from Byron's personal correspondence. Several of these poems were originally written in response to Napoleon's first exile in 1814. In 1815, Byron complained that Napoleon's return from Elba was “utterly falsifying every line of mine Ode”. Waterloo, however, redoubles the relevance of these poems, reframing Byron as oddly prophetic, holding both past and present in synchronous suspension. This hybrid relevance is integral to understanding Byron's conception of posterity, as these works enable him to look both backwards and forwards. This paper draws this collage of forms and tones together, to see how Byron weighs the age that has passed and anticipates the post-war landscape.

Andreas Makridis (Athens Byron Society)

The Rainbow: "A sweet repentance of the skies" and a family reunion

It is well known to all that Lady Byron tried distancing her daughter from the joys of poetry so that she would not resemble her father. Despite this, Ada Lovelace did not lack poetic talent. And this can be seen not only in the imagination she displayed in her use of mathematics, but also in the sonnet she wrote to be engraved on her tomb. "The Rainbow" is a poem that contains familiar Byronic themes and appears to respond to philosophical objections that Lord Byron had formulated against the dominant Christian doctrine of his time regarding the fate of man after death, also containing dominant elements of the Socinian doctrine, which was embraced by Lady Byron. In this way, "The Rainbow" is not only an act of combining her parents' opposite religious approaches - it is also a move towards a historical reconciliation of two opposite people with a perspective of eternity. In this paper, in addition to examining this initiative of Ada against the background of her parents' religious beliefs, we also take the opportunity to talk about lesser-known and seemingly unorthodox conceptions regarding the afterlife, as formulated by Christian Fathers and Saints of the East.

Elisabetta Marino (University of Rome Tor Vergata)
"Indian Byrons": Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt

This paper investigates the legacy of Lord Byron's life and works in two nineteenth-century Bengali poets: Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809–1831) and Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824–1873). Born to an Indo-Portuguese father and an Anglo-Indian mother, Derozio was a fervent admirer of Byron. A free thinker, a social reformer, and a staunch defender of the ideals of freedom and independence, Derozio came to be known as the first Indian national poet. Before his untimely death from cholera, he composed two seminal collections of poems: *Poems* (1827) and *The Fakeer of Jungheera: A Metrical Tale and Other Poems* (1828), both of which, as this paper will demonstrate, were profoundly influenced by Byron's work. Michael Madhusudan Dutt followed in Derozio's footsteps, sharing his passion for Byron. Dutt adopted not only Byron's flamboyant andrebellious lifestyle but also his themes and motifs, initially expressing himself solely in English. Excerpts from Dutt's narrative poem *The Captive Ladie* (1849) will be analyzed to demonstrate his emulation of Byron's Oriental Tales.

Julia Markus (Hofstra University, NY)
Byron and Elizabeth Barrett Browning

When Elizabeth Barrett married Robert Browning she insisted on their following Lord Byron's path to Italy. The couple first settled in Pisa where Byron had lived more than three decades previously. At Pisa, through their older friend art historian Anna Jameson who traveled with them and was an intimate of Lady Byron, Barrett Browning learned details of Medora Leigh's life that influenced her late novel- in-verse "Aurora Leigh." Elizabeth's view of the great poet was much more enthusiastic than Browning's, a split in sensibilities that reflected the times. Years before, Browning's first music teacher, Isaac Newton, had told him of Byron's affair with his half sister Augusta Leigh. Browning would later share what he knew with Lady Byron's grandson and biographer, Ralph Noel. Barrett Browning, however, never wavered in her appreciation of Lord Byron as the great poet who left Italy to fight to free the Greeks from Turkish oppression. She had personal reasons as well to decry slavery. Just as Lord Byron strove for Greece, Elizabeth, in Italy, would follow in his footsteps and become, and be recognized by the Italians as the English poet of the Italian Risorgimento. Pisa was important in many ways, giving time for Barrett Browning to recuperate from the long voyage and to extend her honeymoon. Anna Jameson, who had become Medora Leigh's live-in chaperone in England, had time to reflect on Augusta Leigh's betrayal of her daughter and to tell of how Lady Byron saved her, bringing her and her natural daughter back to England from destitution in France so that Ada, Countess of Lovelace, could have a relationship with her half sister. In Pisa the Victorian period merged with the Romantic period in ways often neglected and which I hope to explore in this talk.

Ghislaine Mcdayter (Bucknell University)
Le Petit blanc que j'aime*: Byron, Slavery, and the Caribbean African Diaspora*

Sometimes Byron takes us to unexpected places – occasionally to places not even he had ventured – in this case, the Caribbean. The attached lithograph was created by Julien Vallou de Villeneuve, a popular French illustrator of Byron's poetry who created lithographic illustrations of the poet's work between 1824 to 1833. However, this image was based on one of the artist's original paintings, entitled "Le Petit maître que j'aime", painted around 1840, which shows no Byronic influence at all. Yet, in this undated lithograph we discover a curious compositional change; the face of the "little white master" has been replaced with that of Byron, and more specifically, a version of George Sanders's famous painting of the poet. The title has also been revised to "Le Petit blanc que j'aime", the "Little White," referencing the terminology of the Haitian Revolution – "petits blancs" played an important role in the white coalition against the freed Blacks and Mulattoes. This paper will explore De Villeneuve's lithograph, focusing on the impact of Byronism in the Caribbean. It will suggest that such Byronic images were mobilized both as a means by which to indicate the power of the Byronic to further global struggles for equality, but also as a commentary on the colonial privilege and power that, for many, the poet's identity inevitably signaled.

Innes Merabishvili (Tbilisi State University, Georgia)
Translating Lord Byron into Georgian

Literature is the only branch of art that is enclosed within its own linguistic limits and is accessible to the bearers of a definite language only. But any excellent piece of literature, and especially poetry, holds a powerful force that encourages an appreciative translator to bring a masterpiece to the notice and appreciation of other nations. Moreover, any translated version is the result of a textual interpretation that essentially adds to the perception and understanding of a literary piece and its author. Therefore, when analyzing translated versions, contemporary theories of text interpretation alongside with the methodology of text linguistics are of great help. But this translatological knowledge is mostly important for any devoted translator like myself, as I have been investigating and rendering Lord Byron into my native tongue for over four decades. The paper argues that in spite of the great popularity of Lord Byron in Georgia, on the one hand, and a long history of translation, on the other, many translated pieces from Byron deserve criticism. It should be also taken into consideration that many Georgian translators of the previous century followed Russian versions as English was not yet well known in Georgia. The paper aims to present several examples of misinterpretation of essential concepts from "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte", "The Prisoner of Chillon", *Don Juan* and the poem "To Thyrza".

Omar F. Miranda (University of San Francisco)
The Last Man *and the Shadownomics of Lord Byron's Celebrity*

This talk will focus on the portrayal of celebrity at the end of time in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*. It will show how the novel is concerned with a very specific type of celebrity: that pertaining to the lives and works of Germaine de Staël, Lord Byron, and their respective works – given Shelley's allusions to Staël and *Corinne* as well as the novel's thinly veiled representations of Byron as a major character in the narrative. With its compelling intertextual resonances, Shelley's speculative plot extends as much as cautions against the reaches of the global celebrity of her day, especially as portrayed in Staël's *Corinne* and Byron's *Don Juan*. The talk concludes by shifting from Shelley's novel to those warnings/implications associated with the original global celebrities (Staël and Byron) themselves: the costs of losing one's name and self-hood for global recognition, spreading one's celebrity out so broadly at the expense of being forgotten (in Staël's case), and the futile attempts of a female celebrity like Corinne who strove to "have it all" but ended up experiencing her own public meltdown instead.

Andrew Mitchell (Poet and Independent Scholar)
The Influence of Lord Byron on the Brontës

Patrick Brontë (1802-1806) and Lord Byron (1805-1807) overlapped each other at Cambridge by one year. This may partly account for the lifelong family interest in Lord Byron. When Thomas Moore's biography of Lord Byron was published in 1830 it was acquired for their library. Their sources of information probably extended beyond the formal through their curate William Weightman, who received his Divinity Degree from the newly founded University of Durham, close to Seaham where Lady Byron lived. From the creation of the Gondal and Angria Sagas in childhood, the Brontë children develop themes consistent with situations and characters in Byron's poems. That they had informal information is evident from three novels: Anne's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, where alcoholism with opiate intake are a major part of the narrative; Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, where Rochester with Newfoundland dog resembles Byron and Lady Byron's charge the he was insane is transferred to Rochester's wife; Emily's shared issues of love of animals, diet, insomnia, depression, emotional outbursts, religious views and keeping a domestic diary, along with the predatory capabilities of both Byron ('mad, bad and dangerous to know') and Heathcliff are evident in *Wuthering Heights*.

Vasileia Moschou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) .
Lord Byron: Agent of Literary Afterlives

The term "afterlife," as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, retains three meanings dating back to 1589. This paper focuses on the most recent definition, which conceptualizes "afterlife" as "influence." My study explores how Lord Byron, as a poet and literary critic, acts as an agent who propagates the literary afterlives of others while intertwining them with his own personas. Byron's engagement with literary tradition is evident in works such as *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (particularly cantos III and IV published in 1816 and 1818 respectively), *Don Juan* (1819), and his letters and journals. These texts are intricate mosaics of explicit and implicit references to a variety of poets and styles, thereby breathing new life into their legacies. For instance, in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron critiques Walter Scott by invoking the literary geniuses of Milton, Dryden, and Pope, whose contributions, he suggests, have been forgotten and now they must "[r]esign their hallow'd Bays to WALTER SCOTT" (McGann, 1980, p. 235). Beyond mere allusions, Byron's deliberate choice of forms and styles—such as the Augustan-inspired satire—demonstrates his role in re-imagining and perpetuating these traditions. This paper investigates Byron's role as a propagator of the literary afterlives of both his predecessors and contemporaries. Furthermore, it examines whether Byron's self-awareness of this role may have prompted his literary or other practices, in an attempt to influence the manner in which his own afterlives would be constructed by future literary successors. By situating Byron at the center of literary inheritance and influence, this study aims to showcase his enduring impact on the literary canon.

Małgorzata Nowak (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)
George Gordon Byron and Juliusz Słowacki on (D)Evil

Juliusz Słowacki is one of the most important Polish Romantic poets, and he was deeply influenced by Byron in relation to the problem of evil. At the same time, he is also closely associated with various aspects of modernity. Satan is a recurring figure in his works, inspired by Milton's Satan and the Byronic hero archetype. Using the theoretical frameworks of Paul Ricoeur's symbolism of evil and Odo Marquard's concept of theodicy in modernity, the paper analyses how Słowacki and Byron employ satanic figures in their writings. It explores the intricate relationship between divinity and demonism within humanity as depicted by both poets. Specifically, the analysis investigates how their protagonists attempt to absolve themselves and the world from divine responsibility for evil, grappling with their involvement in historical processes. A key question explored is whether this struggle against divine authority can be interpreted as a "tribunalization of Satan," suggesting a shift in moral judgment and accountability. By comparing Słowacki and Byron's treatment of satanic figures, the paper aims to illuminate the unique characteristics of Polish culture and history while simultaneously highlighting Słowacki's universal themes and his significant contribution to European Romanticism and the reception of Byron's works.

Kathleen Ann O'Donnell (British School at Athens)

Byron and The Future of Greece, Byron and The Destiny of Greece.

In 1811, Byron – who had hailed the necessity, and inevitability, of a universal republic – published his adaptation of Rigas Velestinlis' *Battle Cry*. Ten years later when the Greek Revolution broke out, Velestinlis's poem was not just an inspiration: he was hailed as the Revolution's "proto-martyr", having paid with his life in 1798 for founding the anti-Ottoman *Anatolian Confederation,* with its call for revolt and international solidarity. Also in 1811, Byron published his Ossian adaptation, *The Death of Calmar and Orla*, just as his friend, Ireland's bard Thomas Moore, had penned his *Imitation of Ossian* – in a sort of predictive call to his countrymen to emulate their heroic ancestors ahead of Ireland's 1798 Ossian as a political act – in protest at the English's crushing of Scotland's Highland cultural heritage in 1745, which was preserved by James Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian*. In 1850, Byron's adaptation was published in Greek media and circulated throughout the Balkans and Anatolia, just as London's monarchical regime was blockading the fledgling Greek state. Before dying at Messalonghi in 1824, Byron spent time on Kephalonia, in the then British-ruled Seven Islands. In 1825, Victor Hugo named Byron the new Rigas. At least five Kephalonians, supporters of Rigas, translated Ossian extracts, notably Velestinlis's re-incarnation, Panayiotis Panas, founder of the Democratic Eastern Federation in Athens in 1868, a year that also saw the start-up in Athens of the periodical *Byron*. What role did Byron's legacy play in Panas's endeavour to disseminate universal democracy?

Susan Oliver (University of Essex)

Byron's Transformative Geologies and the Stones of Venice.

My paper explores transformative geologies in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto the Fourth. Using an ecocritical approach, I investigate how stone in *Childe Harold* IV is neither static nor constrained by ruin and the past but exerts an energetic agency replete with memory and historical significance that actively shapes the onward literary imagination. Lines from the Venetian stanzas, "Those days are gone – but Beauty still is here. / States fall, arts fade – but nature doth not die" (23-24) are my point of departure. The resonance of Byron's imagery of stone in Venice, and to some extent in Florence and Rome, will be demonstrated through a comparison with John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853). Byron and Ruskin continue to influence how Venice is understood as a city where stone and water exist in a dynamic, elemental embrace. My use of the term "transformative geologies" recognises natural processes through which topographies and built environments are visualised and interpreted. In earth science, transformative geologies are ideas that have significantly changed how we understand the Earth. Byron's apostrophe in *Childe Harold* to the stones of Venice imagines the city's buildings as living but ancient forms that rise from and sink into the lagoon. Positioning himself as a modern voice echoing those of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, he represents stone, like art, as always in the process of change.

Naji Oueijan (Notre Dame University, Lebanon)

Lord Byron's Abiding Moral Legacy

The multifaceted and ever-evolving nature of Lord Byron's protean character defies exhaustive analysis. Byron himself confided to Lady Blessington, "I am such a strange mélange of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me." Despite this candid fluidity, his self-reflection stands as an unequivocal virtue. This paper focuses on the "good" Byron, who, in his personal life and literary endeavours, pursued ideals of freedom for Self and Other, ultimately emerging as a universal symbol of liberation. I argue that Byron's moral legacy is inextricably tied to his explorations of and reflections on the Continent and the East, particularly Italy and Greece, which deeply enhanced his conception of freedom. For Byron, the liberation of Self was inseparably linked to the emancipation of Other, as Self is profoundly influenced by its dynamic relationship with Other. His unwavering commitment to truth-telling anchored his Romantic literary career, while his readiness for immediate action exemplified a process of conceptual and physical exploration that transcended conventional boundaries. By embodying these ideals, Byron secured his status as a timeless literary icon of freedom—a legacy that endures and continues to inspire future generations.

Vincenzo Patanè Independent Scholar

Byron & Art

To publicise his image, Byron repeatedly turned to established painters and sculptors, whose works were then widely disseminated through the countless prints that accompanied his books. He thus used art instrumentally, despite his personal indifference and lack of emphasis on it in his life. Byron was also averse to the art world, particularly because of its perceived mercenary nature. He readily criticized merchants, critics, collectors, and archaeologists. In his view, they—and indeed, anyone who failed to engage with art sincerely and directly—missed the point. For him, true art had to evoke deep emotion and complete identification, as expressed in his 1811 poem, 'Lines Written Beneath a Picture'. Art appears only sporadically in his writings, primarily his letters and diaries, often serving to support other arguments, such as his vehement opposition to Lord Elgin's removal of the Parthenon marbles. Nevertheless, examining his reflections on art is worthwhile, as they reveal his views on various artistic disciplines—painting, sculpture, and architecture—as well as on specific artists. Despite his seeming indifference, painting profoundly influenced his literary work, with many verses possessing the expressive power of visual art. His works are also rich in references to paintings, sculptures, and, notably, ruins.

Emily Paterson Morgan (Byron Society)
Don Juan*, 'a moral tale, though gay'*

'[A]dultery is forbidden by the Law of God in the Bible, because it is prejudicial to the laws and happiness of mankind: whatever lessens our abhorrence of adultery is contrary to the Scriptures, and our own happiness; *Don Juan* does this – it is therefore immoral'. Taken from 'Animadversions on Byron's *Don Juan*', an 1820 review by 'Cato' in *The Imperial Magazine*, this contumacious passage articulates the prevailing perception of Byron's great epic as deliberately, wantonly immoral; a work which calculatingly undermines the very foundations of civilised society by advocating that most heinous of sins – conjugal infidelity. Few modern critics have questioned this perception of *Don Juan* as an immoral poem, a perception intimately shaped by the social and literary values of the middling classes. Indeed, scholarship often promulgates the notion of what Caroline Franklin terms the poem's 'subversion of sexual morality'. Yet Byron himself repeatedly repudiated such aspersions, stridently protesting that his epic was 'not an eulogy of vice' but in fact 'a moral tale' – designed to inculcate rather than titillate.

These protestations of didactic virtue lie uneasily alongside contemporary perceptions of the poem and have often been dismissed as further evidence of the poet's whimsical contrarian nature. Perhaps this is only to be expected of a poem which Byron described as 'quietly facetious upon everything'. However, in this paper I will suggest that Byron is serious in his claim to moral instruction, and explore the underlying framework which forms the basis for this assertion – namely the complex sociosexual mores governing adultery *á la mode*. For the Regency metropolitan elite viewed adultery as a socially acceptable amusement, tacitly tolerated provided circumspection was maintained and scandal avoided (the fashionable world, Byron notes with dryly alliterative brevity, "care but for discoveries and not deeds"). Read within this sociosexual framework, *Don Juan* is indeed 'a moral tale, though gay'.

Miklós Péti of Károli Gáspár University, Budapest
"This virtuoso wrestling" – A first look at Dezső Kosztolányi's recently found translation of Child Harold's Pilgrimage

Recent criticism has maintained that around the middle of the 19th century a significant shift of focus took place in the Hungarian reception of Byron's works: following an initial *Childe Harold* phase writers and translators increasingly turned to *Don Juan* which provided them with a "speaking point" at the intersection of "individual and national psychic features and characteristics" and the *Zeitgeist* (Orsolya Rákai). The 2024 discovery of the manuscript of a 1904 translation of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by one of the foremost Hungarian modernist writers, Dezső Kosztolányi, prompts us to reconsider this view. The translation was prepared for a literary competition, and even a fleeting glance at this hitherto unknown text makes it clear what previously we could only surmise from Kosztolányi's correspondence: the young poet (he was merely 19 at the time) considered his "virtuoso wrestling" with Byron an essential part of a new poetic programme, one that linked him with several members of the new generation of poets and artists who came to prominence around 1910. In my paper I will present some

important features of this translation, focusing on how Kosztolányi interpreted Byron's stanzas on (ancient and modern) Greece in Canto 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Marco Petrelli (University of Pisa)

"Who would be free themselves must strike the blow" African American Romanticism, Black Byronism, and Abolitionism

In an article published on July 14, 1848 in *The North Star*—the newspaper he himself edited—Frederick Douglass exhorts his fellow African Americans to revolt against racial subjugation and slavery by writing: *"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"* Douglass was particularly fond of these lines from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and quoted them again and again in his abolitionist speeches and editorials. But he was not the only African American writer to be inspired by Byron's words. Foremost among them, we find the first Black poet to be published in the US: George Moses Horton, a slave who taught himself how to write by reading Byron and imitating his style. To meet the popular taste of the times and gain some recognition, Horton often masqueraded his politically tinged works as derivative compositions mired in stereotypical romantic tropes. Just like fair-skinned Black people who escaped racial boundaries by "passing" as white—and in doing so demonstrated the artificiality of race itself—Horton's poems disguised as sentimental lyrics to cross the color line and spread support for abolitionism. This paper will trace Byron's influence on Horton, Douglass, and, more generally, on what Matt Sandler has defined as "the Black romantic revolution"—a literary movement that took inspiration from the romantic liberalism of the English poet and channeled it in the fight against American slavery.

Sara Pini (IUAV University of Venice)

A Solid Legacy: The Byronic Hero, Criminal Minds, and Work-Life Imbalance

Romanticism and its tropes are a solid presence in contemporary culture and scholarship. The Byronic hero has undergone numerous reinterpretations across diverse media and genres, attesting to his continued relevance. Already discussed by Mario Praz in relation to 19th-century vampires, his lasting legacy is unsurprising given his status as "a single commanding image" (Thorslev 1962: 12) that effectively coalesces pre-existing archetypes. This tendency toward hybridization is also a hallmark of crime fiction, a genre that has been defined as inherently mobile (Gulddal et al. 2019). Indeed, canonical figures within crime fiction, such as the British detective and the North American private investigator, share many psychological traits with the Byronic hero. Sherlock Holmes's societal maladjustment, the "loner" status of hard-boiled detectives like Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe (Peacock 2015), and the Byronic hero's quintessential position as an "outsider" (Stein 2009: 8) all highlight this shared psychological landscape.

This presentation focuses on a specific instance of the Byronic hero's contemporary re-elaboration. Through an analysis of the principal male characters in the TV series *Criminal*

Minds (2005-ongoing), it argues that these characters can be understood as modern iterations of the Byronic hero, incorporating traits derived from traditional crime fiction figures. Furthermore, it posits that emotions serve as the primary point of convergence between these archetypes. Drawing upon the concept of the "return of emotions" (Ascari 2013) in recent crime fiction, this presentation will explore how these emotions contribute to the Byronic characters' struggles with professional and familial obligations. Ultimately, it will demonstrate the inherent tension between the demands of work and personal life when the series' agents assume the role of the Byronic hero.

Carla Pomarè (Università del Piemonte Orientale, Vercelli)

Le avventure di Don Giovanni: Don Juan's *Metamorphoses in Twentieth-century Italian Translations*

In her 1945 monograph, Elizabeth Boyd retraced Byron's various forays into novelistic writing, including a project that involved *Don Juan*. More recent studies (Lansdown 1999; Bujak 2017; Allen&Felluga 2024) have explored the hybrid form of *Don Juan* as verse-novel, mainly considering it in its nineteenth-century context. Since Carlo Rusconi's 1853 prose translation, *Don Juan*'s novelistic potential has been drawn out in Italian translations, either by abridging the text, converting it to prose, or both. While this trend is evident in the title of Franco Giovanelli's partial verse translation, *Avventure di Don Giovanni* (1991), a more striking example comes from Alex Alexis' (pen-name of Luigi Alessio) 1961 translation, published by the Milan-based Dall'Oglio as part of its European masterpieces series *I Corvi – Universale moderna*. Intriguingly, *Don Juan* was included in the series' "scarlet section," dedicated to *romanzi d'amore, intimisti e psicologici* (romance novels, intimate and psychological). My paper will retrace the editorial history of this translation, examine its connections with other Italian translations by Betteloni (1982 [1897]), Simone Saglia (1987), and Franco Giovanelli (1991), and assess their collective influence on the Italian twentieth-century reception of Byron's poem.

Denis Rafter (Actor and Director)

Byron: Reawakening Emotions. An Actor's Approach to Byron

This is an interpretation of a selection of the poet's works based on the themes of Love and Death. It is an actor's approach to his poems which captures the depth of the emotions and thought, as well as his political philosophy both of what it means to be human and of his own life. Through an emotional anthropology of the texts the presenter focuses on the universality of the passions that inspired Byron and the truth and significance of what he said. Reading excerpts from some of his most celebrated works, such as *Hours of Idleness, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Don Juan and other poems,* the actor captures, not only the depth of emotion and significance of the words, but he also highlights their relevance to contemporary morality and society. In the words of the distinguished expert on the Romantic poet, Professor James Drummond Bone: "You have to hear Byron; it is quite difficult for modern readers to just read

Byron on the page". This reading offers the listener that opportunity, to hear and enjoy the poet's works become alive by moving from the page to the stage. There were many contradictions in the poet's character and life but it is through his texts that we can get a glimpse of his soul. Like Oscar Wilde, another, great writer, who also scandalized British society, when he was shunned and hounded by the very society who had previously adored him, his death was tragic and lonely, but even then and through the circumstances of his death we are drawn to his greatness and the depth of his humanity.

Alan Rawes (University of Manchester)
Forgetting Byron's Venice in The Aspern Papers

James's preface to *The Aspern Papers* stresses that his story was “thinkable only in Byronic and more or less immediately post-Byronic Italy”, and that the “absolute” lack of any “refinement” of Venice's “mouldy rococo” presents Byron's Italy as a “palpable imaginable *visitable* past” that we “may reach over to as making a long arm we grasp an object at the other end of our own table”.
Yet *The Aspern Papers* itself fictionalises the late nineteenth-century 'take over' of Venice by American tourism. Its American narrator goes to Venice to seek out other Americans, in search of papers belonging to another American, while spending his leisure hours among yet more Americans in Saint Mark's square. The past James's narrator reaches for in Venice is that of the “romantic”, “almost heroic”, “early movements” of his own “countrymen as visitors to Europe” in the 1820s.
This paper will explore this seeming contradiction to suggest that James's novel is interested in the American nineteenth-century colonisation of Venice precisely as the moment in history that saw Byron's Venice, the dominant “visitable” Venice for much of the earlier nineteenth century, being forgotten and falling away into those “intrinsically more strange” “times beyond” the “visitable past”. In James's snapshot of 1880s Americans in Venice, a whole new “visitable” Venice is coming into being, while the “afternoon light” of the “Byronic Age” fades into the “famous” “moonlight” of Venetian history.

Enrico Reggiani (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan)
“A Byron in [musical] daring”: Robert Schumann’s Compositional Reception of the Hebrew Melodies

Lord Byron’s “erga kai emera” have always been highly, extensively, and incisively influential on the formation, mentality and creative experience of many Western composers, also well after the obvious temporal span of Byron’s epoch and life. It will suffice here to list just a few of them, among the most relevant to the subject of my paper, of different historical, national, cultural, and compositional orientations: in chronological order, Donizetti (1797-1848), Berlioz (1803-1869), Liszt (1811-1886), Verdi (1813-1901), Bennett (1816-1875), Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Nietzsche (1844-1900), Edward MacDowell (1860-1908), Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Schönberg (1874-1951). Often short-sightedly defined as “torn between disciplines”, Robert

Schumann (1810-1856), whom I may define as an acknowledged “Byron in musical daring”, set the English poet at the heart of what John Daverio has characterised as his “youthful musico-poetics”, his “evolving notion of music as a kind of literary activity”, and, more generally, his “outlook on music as a form of literature”. My paper will apply a transdisciplinary, intersemiotic, and melopoetic approach to his compositional reception of Byron’s *Hebrew Melodies* (1815).

David Roessel (Stockton University)
Byron and Shelley in Conversation: A Performance of Poems and Letters

This presentation began with the idea of performing Shelly's "Julian and Maddalo: A Conversation" at the Byron Conference at Pisa. As we began working on that concept, and to make the performance more of a conversation between the Byron and Shelley characters, we found that we had to adapt the text and reduce, but not remove, some of the lines of the maniac. As we were doing this work, we looked at letters between Byron and Shelley from the years 1818 to 1820, and thought we could incorporate some of their actual epistolary conversation beside Shelley's poetic one, as well as some other poems written by the two poets in this period. The goal of this project is to produce a text in which Byron and Shelley have a conversation in their own words. One of the major influences on this effort, although much has been written since, has been Charles Robinson's volume on this very subject, Shelley and *Byron: The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight*. By offering a dramatic version of the 'conversation' between Byron and Shelley, we hope to have the audience see the texts in a new way and generate new discussions.

Chiara Rolli (University of Parma)
Manfredo/Manfredi: *Italian Versions of Byron's* Manfred *(1818-1926)*

This paper is a work in progress on the Keats-Shelley House's collection of Italian translations of Byron's *Manfred*. Consisting of seven texts published between 1818 and 1926, this fascinating collection witnesses to the widespread interest in Byron in the Italian peninsula, not just while the poet resided in Italy but also, significantly, after his death. Indeed, an in-depth analysis of these largely unexplored translations may help to illuminate several aspects of the reception of Byron in Italy. From a geographic perspective, for example, there is clear evidence that Byron's dramatic poem was published in Lombardy, Tuscany, and in the South. In terms of gender, instead, it is worth stressing that one of the translators, Carmelina Vittori, was a woman, who dedicated her translation to her mother ("Cara mamma"). It should also be noted that some of these renderings were reviewed both in Italian and English periodicals. Among the Italian versions of *Manfred*, Silvio Pellico's translation appears to be relevant for a number of reasons. To start with, Pellico was a renowned patriot and dramatist, and belonged to the revolutionary "Società Romantica" of which Byron was a member. Also, attention should be devoted to Pellico's choice to translate Byron's dramatic poem in prose – a choice that was criticized by the *The Quarterly Review*. First issued in Milan in 1818, Pellico's *Manfredo* was published

again in Florence in 1883. Tellingly – as the Florentine publisher highlighted – Pellico's translation "restava ancora non conosciuta da molti" (was still unknown to many). After almost 150 years, *Manfredo* still lies largely unnoticed. This paper ultimately aims to draw attention to it and to pave the way to further studies.

Kaila Rose (The Byron Society of America & IABS).
"A small drop of ink": the Link of Ages in Byron Tattoos

For the 49th IABS Conference in Pisa, I will explore a rather niche world of Byron and Byron-related representations in the most permanent fashion: Byron tattoos. While many people know me as the girl with the Byron tattoo, over the years I have found a plethora of others—academics and beyond—who have marked their bodies with Byron. These range from quotes, to signatures, to single words, to images. As happened with past lectures and papers I gave, presenting works and conversations with artists who were inspired to explore themselves through artistic productions related to Byron, the content of this paper will be comprised of interviews with individuals sporting body art, images of their tattoos, and a more theoretical examination of how we can understand body modification in relation to Byron's own relationship with his physical body and the lasting corpus of his work. Indeed, through his own drops of ink, he has formed "a lasting link / Of ages" that "Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's his" on the bodies of his readers. To mark one's skin with ink has been around for thousands of years. The reasoning for modifying our bodies in this way is unique to both the person and the content itself. A tattoo could be a statement about beliefs, celebrating a life achievement, or, as the Smithsonian's recent research captured "Sixty-nine percent of tattooed adults . . . got inked to 'honor or remember someone or something,' . . . and 32 percent say they got tattooed to improve their personal appearance." Such remembering or improving on—and in—the body is what I will strive to showcase. And, because I like audience participation, I will also be bringing temporary tattoos for any audience member interested in joining us to celebrate Byron's enduring legacy.

Dr. **Susanne Schmid** of Freie Universität Berlin.
Urban Shopping and Consumerism in Byron's Don Juan

Byron's epic *Don Juan* is a text which employs numerous fashionable items, ranging from extravagant clothes to fancy goods, from popular drinks to popular books, glassware and writing tools, even weapons, using them as comic props of the hero's and other protagonists' dramatic performances. My contribution argues that there is a direct link between the choice of many of Byron's objects and early nineteenth-century urban shopping. If the last decades of the late eighteenth century saw the invention of the shopping street, in the years around 1800, showrooms for luxury goods (china, furniture), speciality stores, the first compartmentalized stores such as Harding, Howell, and Co., and bazaars, shopping spaces with individual stalls, all under one roof, sprang up in London. Many comic tensions in Don Juan stem from the contrast between foreign, often exotic settings and characters as opposed to very English habits

and items, even quotations from English writers. My argument is that he also draws on his English readers' shopping experiences by mentioning the very items they would buy or crave for: female beauty articles (Julia's combs and other trinkets), ribbons, Italian handkerchiefs, fabrics, furniture, popular books ('Anacreon Moore'), pets (the spaniel), and jewellery, to name just a few. Thus, the cantos contain an undercurrent of urban shopping and consumerism. This paper is based on a recently finished project: Temples of Luxury: Volume II: Department Stores, ed. Lise Shapiro Sanders/Susanne Schmid (Routledge, 2024), https://www.routledge.com/Temples-of-Luxury-Volume-II-Department-Stores/Sanders-Schmid/p/book/9780367425883

Maria Schoina (Aristotle University, Thessaloniki)

Mary Shelley's Re-writing of Byron and the Greek Revolution in The Last Man *(1826) and in* Falkner *(1837)*

Byron has been long recognised as the model for Raymond in Mary Shelley's pandemic novel *The Last Man* (1826). As it has been suggested by scholarship in the field, by emphasizing Raymond's failed Napoleonic-style aspirations and lofty ambitions regarding Greece and its liberation from the Ottoman rule, Mary Shelley criticises excessive (male) political idealism and debunks the myth of the Romantic hero. However, despite the disillusioning view on the Greek cause, Mary Shelley, in this futuristic fantasy written while the Greek War of Independence was still waging, portrays Raymond as an acclaimed hero of the Revolution who returns to England instead of dying at Missolonghi. This paper will reassess Mary Shelley's re-construction of Byron's paradigm as a hero of the Greek War of Independence in the novel, and counterpose it to her intriguing reconfiguration of the paradigm in her late, largely overlooked novel, *Falkner* (1837). Falkner's travel to Greece to fight for the cause is a belated allusion to the Greek War of Independence and Shelley's affectionate tribute to Byron's involvement in it. Byron's shadow looms large in *Falkner*, but, as I argue, the setting of the Greek Revolution is imbued with new meanings and modern-day aspirations. Shelley takes the reader's attention away from the titular character and his heroic struggles on the battlefield, directing it instead to her young heroine Elizabeth and her deep connection to Modern Greece. Shelley thus repurposes the Greek struggle for freedom to serve her social and gender struggles for liberty and justice. I suggest that, in this way, Mary Shelley's philhellenic feeling takes on a decisively new direction in *Falkner*, one that enlarges the aims of *The Last Man* and recalibrates the role of Greece (and Byron) in early Victorian discourse.

Emma Sdegno of Università Ca' Foscari Venezia.

"The truest, the sternest, Seer of the Nineteenth Century": Ruskin Reading Byron

Byron was a childhood reading of Ruskin – "I knew he was to be my master in verse, as Turner in colour" – he writes in his autobiography, and his early travel poetry, *Iteriad*, was declaredly modelled on *Don Juan*. Throughout his life, in the context of a growing depreciation of the poet, Ruskin was among the few and more convinced defenders of Byron. In my paper I shall qualify Ruskin's appreciation of the poet, and particularly focus on Ruskin's later work, considering i) the way his 1880 essays and drafts articulate the discourse on the Romantics poets and acknowledge Byron as "the truest, the sternest, Seer of the Nineteenth Century"; ii) some of the numerous intertextual references to Byron's poems that occur in Ruskin's late work.

Maria Gemma Silva Ferrández (University of Stirling)

'Mad, bad, and dangerous to know': Re-Imagining Byron from Lady Caroline Lamb's Glenarvon *to 21st century Fanfiction.*

The enduring presence of texts and authors in cultural memory hinges on their capacity to resonate with successive generations of readers. This paper highlights the crucial role of Byron's readership in shaping his multifaceted afterlives, focusing on how readers become active participants in his legacy through creative responses to his work. These responses, often facilitated by evolving technologies, transform readers into authors, a process Tom Mole has termed 'media ecology'. However, these creative engagements can also generate independent interpretative traditions, create simplistic popular icons, and potentially obscure the original context and complexities of Byron's work. To illustrate this dynamic, I propose a revision of Robert Darnton's communications circuit, specifically expanding the stage of reception to highlight the reader-to-author transformation. Byron himself cultivated a sense of intimacy with his readers, blurring the lines between his persona and his fictional creations, effectively laying the groundwork for a tradition that would ultimately escape his control. This paper will explore the persistent trend of portraying Byron as a character with Gothic, vampiric, and even murderous traits in fictional narratives, either explicitly or implicitly. It will trace this phenomenon chronologically, from Romantic-era responses like Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816) and Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), to contemporary films and fanfiction, with a particular emphasis on *Gothic* (1983) and the fanfiction novel *Jane and the Madness of Lord Byron* (2010).

Amal Bou Sleiman (Lebanese University)

Byron and Death Anxiety in 'The Prisoner of Chillon': A Shift from Repression to Acceptance

Having lost the loved ones at a young age, Lord Byron was no stranger to death. He often explored themes of mortality, love, and human experience. The poet wonders: "What is Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset; And mortals may be happy to resemble the Gods but in decay". Unlike many poets, Byron had a unique perception of death. He even dived deeply into unraveling its complexities. The scrutiny of death was central in his famous poem "The Prisoner of Chillon" and echoed throughout the multiple death experiences the protagonist Bonivard encountered during his imprisonment. In this paper, I will scrutinize the poem to show the way Byron's point of view regarding death parallels the two modern theories about death anxiety: the Meaning Management Theory (MMT) and the Terror Management Theory (TMT). To do so, I will examine Bonivard's attitude inside the prison to show the shift in his mindset: from implementing the TMT ways of managing the fear of death to adopting MMT mode of thinking, from repressing death to its acceptance, from the defensive mode of dealing with death to the proactive ways of coping with it. Hence, due to the implementation of the MMT coping mechanism, Bonivard was capable of conquering death and consequently culminates in self-actualization.

Jane Stabler (University of St Andrews)

What happened to Byron's 'Epistle to Augusta'? N/A

[An early version of this paper was presented at the 'Byron Now' *convegno* in Venice in January 2025. I have now been able to consult the American MS material, so the textual evidence is more complete.]

This paper explores the idea of Byron's legacy by tracing what happened to the manuscripts of one of his most enigmatic poems, the 'Epistle to Augusta' (although the draft manuscript doesn't have a title, and later documents simply refer to it as 'an epistle to Mrs. Leigh' or the 'lines' to Mrs Leigh or 'an Epistle &c'). By investigating what we know of the publication history, and adding new manuscript evidence, we can trace the complex factors which have determined how the text of this poem has come down to us, what the text was then (1816-1986) and what it might be now (2025-). The talk will be illustrated with MS images and so will need PowerPoint equipment.

Miranda Stanyon (University of Melbourne)
Andromache's *Nachleben*: impure time in *Don Juan* and *The Age of Bronze*

In an influential essay of 2003, Georges Didi-Huberman argued that Aby Warburg's concept of the *Nachleben der Antike* (afterlife or survival of antiquity) had introduced into art history a disconcerting 'dialectical structure': a 'double rhythm, comprising both survivals and renascences'. Combining continuity with return, persistent transmission with traumatic rupture, *Nachleben* 'renders hybrid or impure the temporality of images and motifs'. For Didi-Huberman, it thus offered an insight into temporality with which historians of many stripes were still to reckon. Afterlives has become a popular term in literary studies, but aspects of this concept and its cluster of meanings invite closer attention. This paper reflects on Byron's representation of 'impure time' through his fleeting images of a figure from classical antiquity, the Trojan woman Andromache. Recalled in very different contexts in two pieces Byron completed in 1822, *Don Juan* canto 8 and *The Age of Bronze*, Andromache is deployed in ways which at once reframe this icon of sentimental culture, and offer wider food for thought on the nineteenth-century afterlives of antiquity. Although Andromache often appears at the margins of Romantic culture, Byron's views of her *Nachleben*—her survival, heritage, and spectral life after death—suggest her potent place among what we might call Byron's 'riddles of futurity', images that implicate the relics of a deep past and promises of an uncertain future in an ineradicably impure present.

Andrew Stauffer and **Jonathan Sachs** (University of Virginia)
The Making of Byron, 1824-2024

This will be a joint presentation by me and Jonathan Sachs, in which we reflect on two related projects. Jonathan will focus on our 21st-century Oxford Authors edition of Byron's selected works (2023) and the editorial histories that formed the backdrop of our choices and decisions in presenting the texts. Andrew will focus on his recent biography of Byron (2024) and its place in the long line of biographical treatments of the poet.

Alessia Testori of Università di Parma.

"Thy Death is Nearer than Thy Recent Birth": Lord Byron on Death, Posterity and Futurity in The Liberal

This paper aims to explore Byron's ideas on death in the infamously known periodical *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South* (1822-1823). *The Vision of Judgement* (1822), *Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh* (1822) and *Heaven and Earth* (1823) all investigate Byron's opinions on posterity, as well as futurity in different ways. The first two compositions posthumously comment on two crucially important figures of the nineteenth century British political scene, respectively, King George III and Lord Castlereagh; these works are central to Byron's critique of Britain's restoration of corrupt and bloodthirsty European monarchies after the defeat of Napoleon. *Heaven and Earth*, on the other hand, is a lesser-known piece of satire based upon an episode of the Genesis, which provides a more general critique on humanity and serves as a cautionary tale against an impending and inevitable catastrophe. Furthermore, *The Vision of Judgement* and *Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh* contribute to the genre of Byron's 'political demonology', exhibiting how the poet wanted George III and 'Bloody Castlereagh' to be remembered as by posterity. Conversely, *Heaven and Earth* investigates religious themes, such as life and death, mortality and immortality, heaven and hell, the good and the evil, while also engaging with images that deeply resonate with current debates on the Anthropocene, the climate crisis, and the uncertainty of the future. These themes, central to ecological literature and to the field of "ecocriticism", contribute to the fundamental question: 'was Byron a pre-environmentalist poet?'.

Maria Gabriella Tigani Sava (University of Malta)

The Italian Press and Lord Byron: Emotions, Memories, and Representations in the Nineteenth Century

This paper examines how Lord Byron and his works were represented in various Italian newspapers and periodicals. The primary objective is to explore aspects such as theatrical criticism and capture the emotions that the staging of his works evoked in audiences. The analysis includes publications like «Il Diavoletto, Giornale Triestino,» «Teatro Universale,» and «Il Poligrafo.» Rivista scientifica letteraria ed artistica per la Sicilia»; «L'Italia musicale: Giornale di teatro, letteratura, arti e varietà»; «La Farfalla»; «Il Gondoliere». This research also compares notable national figures, such as Dante (featured in «La Rivista dantesca»), Tasso (highlighted in «Il Gallo: Giornale che Canta»), and Paganini (referred to in «Il Pirata, Giornale artistic, letterario e teatrale»). Additionally, the study reviews biographies of Byron written during this period, as seen in the «Nuova Antologia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti» and expressions of friendship towards Byron in the «Gazzetta Letteraria.» It also explores Byron's love for the mountains, illustrated in the «Rivista Alpina Italiana,» and his relationships with women, discussed in the «Rivista Minima di Scienze, Lettere e Arti.». It further covers his departure for Missolungi, reported in «La Vita Italiana: rivista illustrata», and then his mission in Greece as depicted in «L'Omnibus pittoresco: Enciclopedia letteraria ed artistica». It also investigates reflections on the various perceptions of Byron's image—such as melancholy, satanic, and immoral—and the

relationship between the author of *Childe Harold* and his publisher, John Murray, as discussed in «Minerva». This essay particularly emphasises the perception and emotions associated with the figure of the 'Pilgrim of Eternity,' both as a poet and a man. In other words, the goal is to shed light on the reception of Byron in the Italian press during the nineteenth century.

Paola Tonussi (Independent scholar)

Hints from Byron: Rupert Brooke's Byronic Outlook

Rupert Brooke was early captivated by Byron's flamboyant personality and good looks, his adventurous travels, a life full of defiance and scandal, his love for freedom, the Hellenic ideal and political engagement. And, not least, his individualistic, rebellious spirit. Brooke's letters are scattered with hints from Byron, drawn from *Don Juan* and the *London* and the *Ravenna Journals*. And they are linked by a series of striking coincidences, both human and literary, all creating a larger-than-life myth.

Valentina Varinelli (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)

Byron's Netflix Afterlife: The Image of the Poet in Bridgerton

The paper explores the subtle yet significant presence of Lord Byron in *Bridgerton*, the popular Netflix series set in Regency London. While the show makes no claims to historical accuracy, functioning more as a pastiche than a traditional period drama, it is replete with allusions to Romantic art and literature. Across its first three seasons, Byron emerges as the most frequently referenced contemporary figure, unsurprisingly, given that the series' timeframe aligns with his peak fame.

Direct quotations from his poetry intertwine with pointed references to his life and public persona, which appear to inform the characterization of several male protagonists. These include the Duke of Hastings in Season 1, initially presented as the quintessential Regency rake with a penchant for pugilism, and, most notably, young Colin Bridgerton, who embodies the Byronic myth upon his return from a Continental tour in Season 3, complete with a manuscript in hand. Reflecting the show's glamour portrayal of the Regency era, Byron's image is similarly idealized, both in the physical appearance of these characters and in their inner lives and narrative arcs. Focusing on the latter, this paper argues that *Bridgerton* reconfigures the Byronic myth, participating in a broader project to reclaim aspects of Regency culture for a contemporary audience.

Dan Wall (University of Aberdeen)
According to Medwin: Byron in his own Words?

The hotly contested arena of Byron biography opened up almost as soon as Byron had died in April 1824. Due to the efforts of one of his friends in particular, controversies surrounding Byron's life, reputation and opinions were swiftly reignited. The catalyst was Thomas Medwin's *Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron,* featuring fragments and recollections of a selection of conversations with his late friend, which first appeared in October 1824. Medwin's *Journal* promised insights not only into the public controversies surrounding Byron, but it also engulfed its author in controversy, sparking debates concerning Medwin's propriety, his intentions, and ultimately leading to arguments concerning the fundamental authenticity of the contents of Medwin's *Journal*. As the first major intervention in Byron's posthumous biographical representation, it was discussed at length amongst reviewers and led to concerns amongst the Byron/Shelley circle regarding its contents. This paper will suggest that Medwin's *Journal* represents a significant milestone in the evolution of Romantic-Period Life writing, by seriously attempting to present genuine insights concerning the mind and opinions of the late poet to the reading public. However, this paper will also suggest that it is possible to view Medwin as being subject to similar impulses to silence and censor as his subject – thus highlighting profound anxieties concerning the intersection of celebrity and Romantic life-writing. This paper aims to explore key factors underpinning the approach to Byron's life taken by Medwin, and in the wake of the two-hundredth anniversary of Byron's death, will attempt to reconsider the significance of Medwin's *Journal*, both in terms of its impact upon Byron's posthumous reputation as well as its wider significance to Romantic-period life-writing.

Matthew Ward (University of Birmingham)
"What matters a few syllables?": Byron's Open Variants in Marino Faliero

In my paper I want to explore and interpret textual details and affects in Byron's manuscripts as a way of reflecting on his authorial approach, and the legacy he left for his first editors and all future ones. The new Longman edition of *Don Juan*, edited by Jane Stabler and Gavin Hopps, brought more clearly to the fore Byron's open variants – that is, moments in draft where he left it up to others (generally amanuenses or publishers) to decide on what particular phrase, line, or even stanza, should be preferred for the printed edition. There are a number of them scattered across dozens of his works – enough to reflect both a personality and style of creativity that feels distinctly Byronic in being so decidedly undecided. These open variants are far more prevalent in his historical drama *Marino Faliero*, however. I want to think more, then, about how a play so preoccupied with matters of authority and governance gets shaped by an authorial method that is determined not to be authoritarian. Likewise, given the parallels often noted between the play's fourteenth-century Italian context and English politics during Byron's lifetime, how might we read his open variants as setting up alternative paths and possibilities, or doublings across time and place? Byron's use of the conjunctive 'or' to relay these textual variants to his publisher embodies contingencies of various kinds, keeps in play other fates or futures, even while

acknowledging that these things do get decided by time or the printed page. As such, they offer, also, the possibility of a new reading text, which the Longman sets out to achieve

Karen Weisman (University of Toronto)

Byron, Pirates and Anglo-Jewish Poetry of the Nineteenth Century

The Anglo-Italian Byron in engaged by the Anglo-Jewish Romantic poet on the ground of the pirate's space: a space complicated by orientalist fantasy and further inflected by Jewish involvement in the Italian Risorgimento. My primary example will be drawn from the poetry of Marion and Celia Moss, Jewish authors who jointly published an important volume of poetry in England in 1839, and which I read partly in terms of its refraction of Byron's work, which they esteemed. I argue that in such poetry, we find poetic fictions in which the outlaw is granted a subjectivity that defines personhood outside of the bounds of normative ethics. For the Mosses to evoke the Byronic pirate in a poetic volume alongside Jewish scholars, sanctified lovers, and Sabbath-observers is to evoke a world of equivocal moral definition. In so doing, it signals the instability of the categories of collective memory that play key roles in the national myths of England, of Italy, and of Jewish self-definition. A good test case for the cultural dynamic in which I'm interested may be found in the Mosses's poem, "Bertha, or the Pirates' Isle," a long, epic-like poem which at once serves as a response to Bryon's *Corsair* and an audacious assertion of cultural authority. In the Mosses' poem, the pirate's wooing and then abduction of an Italian woman supplies the forum for a kind of allegorizing of fundamental tensions in Jewish culture in early nineteenth-century England. I situate this particular example within the larger matrix of Anglo-Jewish engagements with Byron, and tease out the stakes of appropriating Byron's poetry in a Romantic Anglo-Jewish literature.

Steve Wharton (The University of Bath)

Stags, satire, and similarity: Thomas Hood, The Stag-Eyed Lady*, and* The Giaour

Lord Byron-like – he's not a Bard –
There's no Romance in that
Thomas Hood, *There's no Romance in that* (1833)

Though Thomas Hood (1799-1845) never met Byron, his teenage years saw him an ardent Byronist. However, as time passed Hood's eye for satire did not prevent him from occasionally gently mocking Byron's work, albeit allusively. This can best be observed in his short poem *The Stag-Eyed Lady – A Moorish Tale*, published in the *London Magazine* in 1822. It gives a particular take on aspects of *The Giaour* and Orientalist tropes, reviewing the *ottava rima* of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* to do so. This paper proposes a close reading of Hood's poem together with points of comparison and contrast in *The Giaour*, to explore to what extent "Hood's comic vision of the despotic Ben Ali is…a parodic vision of Byron's egotism", as Sara Lodge suggests in her 2007 book on Hood and his works.

Alexander Williams (UCLA)

From Byron to Glover: A Literary Analysis of Childish Gambino as a Black Byronic Hero

There are bodies of literature exploring the connection between Romanticism and the Black body, but how can we use Byron and the Byronic Hero to supplement our discussion of the Black male rapper as a literary archetype? Childish Gambino, as a Black Romantic, seeks to unpack this question through his critical explorations of ruin and his beginnings as a Byronic Hero. For Gambino, his Black body performing the concept of a ruin mirrors his commentary on the idea of love itself being a ruin, and not just interpersonal love, but abstract love such as a love for work or a love for freedom. These ideas are in critical conversation with Lord Byron's Romantic probing of love as a metaphysical site of ruin and the paradoxical tethering that can arise from the loss of love. At the beginning of his career, Donald Glover constructed Gambino as a Byronic Hero to understand the ontological site of fracture and its manifestations on the Black condition. In this project, I will argue Byron's importance as a mediating figure between Gambino and Romanticism and show how certain Romantic qualities help us understand Gambino as a Byronic Hero. I will start by establishing the palpable connection between the Byronic Hero and Du Bois' 'twoness' before articulating how the Black Byronic Hero's body is a conjunction of social and psychological division. Finally, I will use this connection to describe Childish Gambino as a Black Romantic and his Romantic explorations into his Black body as a ruin.

David Woodhouse (The Byron Society)

Unread in the Human Heart: Byron, Mary Shelley and "Madame D'Houtetot"

The 'sapless cinders' of P.B. Shelley's funeral pyre had a deep personal effect on Byron and Leigh Hunt, and also symbolised the way the *Liberal*, the project they had gathered together in Pisa to conduct, would soon be turning to ashes. But Byron, and the books in his library, may have helped engender Mary Shelley's "Madame d'Houtetot", the first serious piece of writing she undertook after the death of her husband (published in the third number of the *Liberal* in April 1823). The workings of this chaste biographical sketch of Rousseau's muse can seem as "unpretending and unnoticed" as its *salonnière* subject, but it represents the first chapter in Mary's curation of P.B.'s afterlife, opening itself to a range of psycho-biographical readings. The paper argues that – as so often in the immediate post-Napoleonic period of 'paper pellets' – the gate-key to the essay is the context of periodical controversy in which Byron, Hunt and the Shelleys had been involved, and which the *Liberal* only pretends to transcend.

Simos Zenios of Stony Brook University.
"Not now my theme:" Chronopolitics in The Corsair

In this talk, I read *The Corsair, a Tale* as a site where primitive rebellions and future-oriented modern revolutions are contrasted *and* temporally related to each other via the juxtaposition of the poem's narrative perspectives. The first part of the presentation establishes a theoretical framework based on the recent "temporal turn" in intellectual history (Koselleck, Davis, Edelstein et al.) and on theorizations of outlaws in political anthropology and history (Hobsbawm, Scott, Linebaugh & Rediker). I focus particularly on works that argue that the consolidation of modern forms of sovereignty—whether that of the state or of revolution—since the eighteenth century creates a temporal divide between an assumed pre-modern, ahistorical period and a future-oriented modernity. In the main part of the talk, I argue for a certain division of labor between, on the one hand, the narrator's voice and that of Gulnare, and, on the other hand, that of Conrad and the outlaws. I first highlight the pirates' own self-perception as existing beyond the law. Next, I contrast this with the perspectives of the narrator and Gulnare, drawing attention to the descriptions of Greek landscapes and ruins, which serve as prefigurations of modern freedom, alongside the heroine's anti-tyrannical discourse. These more modern perspectives depict the outlaws as proto-revolutionary actors challenging illegitimate state power. By avoiding the explicit thematization of this contrast, *The Corsair* invites its readers to reflect on the distortions that accompany the invention of modern historical time and the retrospective projection of its political categories.

Nizar Zouidi (University of Gafsa)
Performing the Rejected Body in The Deformed Transformed *by Lord Byron*

Based on *The Tale of the Three Brothers* by Joshua Pickersgill and influenced by Goethe's *Faust*, *The Deformed Transformed* by Lord Byron dramatizes a narrative about body economics. Obsession with strength, health and beauty draws attention to the rejected bodies that are pushed to the margins. The stranger who later takes the body of the main protagonist (the deformed Arnold) and names himself Caesar speaks for the invisible and the rejects. He plays a double role reminiscent of Goethe's Mephistopheles and the vice of the Medieval and early Tudor dramas. The play is understudied since Lord Byron is more appreciated for his poetry. Even when considered, the performative and theatrical aspects of the play are given little attention despite the importance of performing bodies with respect to the thematic and philosophical aspects of the play. This presentation (and the paper that will follow) will study this overlooked aspect of the play. It will focus on the theatrical representation of disabled and rejected bodies and study the corporeal economy that underlies it.