

WHY WE NEED A NEW TEXT OF *BEPPO*

Peter Cochran

In asking for a return to Byron's *Beppo* manuscripts, I do not wish to raise the issue of authorial intention. Motive is forever cloudy, perhaps even stormy, and anyone who writes regularly knows that one's real motive for writing is often quite different from what observers take it to be, or from what, after the event, one realises oneself it was. The still harder question of whether or not a writer may be said to possess an "intention", or even what the word implies, is likewise not my concern.

I am, however, concerned about the way what authors write is transmitted, whatever their intention, and whatever "intention" may be. Again, anyone who does write and gets published knows that the way censors, editors, sub-editors, and keyboard operators work is not always a process of friendly collaboration, but can itself be motivated by other considerations – of ideology, for example, or of politeness (or impoliteness). The strange new problems engendered in our time by electronic storage, editing and retrieval are things with which Byron didn't have to trouble himself – though if only he'd had faxes and e-mail, how much easier his lines of communication with Murray and Hunt might have been, and how much more authoritative our texts of his work! He did have two problems, however, which modern communications still might not have solved: Murray's greed, and Murray's editorial coterie's caution. These two mutually incompatible factors affected – and continue to affect – the text of *Beppo*; but as the poem's manuscripts survive, they may still be countered.

Byron wrote most of *Beppo* at La Mira on the nights of October 8th / 9th and 9th / 10th 1817. He then worked at fair-copying it (none too carefully) and lengthening and revising it, throughout the next two-and-a-half months. He dispatched most of it to Murray on January 19th 1818,¹ two weeks after Hobhouse had left Venice with the manuscript of *Childe Harold IV*. Hobhouse, overwhelmed by the collaboration he had enjoyed with Byron in the longer work, had not seen *Beppo* in any light other than that of a clever imitation of Frere's *Whistlecraft*, its immediate inspiration.

Murray saw the apparently slighter poem as such a good marketing proposition that he brought out three editions (the first on February 28th, the second on March 12th)² before Byron had had time to correct the proofs, or even add his last thoughts – including Stanzas 28, 38, 39 and 80 – a characteristically impetuous act on the publisher's part, involving some guesswork, given the faulty nature of the copy which Byron had prepared.

In this, line 88 (Stanza 11, 8) goes *Or stepped from a picture by Giorgione*, which only scans if *stepped* is given two syllables, or *Giorgione* four. Someone – Gifford, the editor, or Davison, the printer – changed it to *Or stepping from a picture by Giorgione*; the corrected fourth edition has *Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione*, which is Byron's rough draft reading, except for the first two words, which are, in rough, *Just stepped*.

Line 190 (Stanza 24, 6) is in both manuscripts ... *A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool*). The first editions misread the fair-copied line as ... *A well-tuned wedding makes the scandal cool*); the fourth edition restores the manuscript reading.

Line 428 (Stanza 54, 4) is miscopied by Byron *Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth to break them*; but either Gifford or Davison guessed the missing word, and all editions therefore have *Their chains so slight 'twas not worth while to break them*. Byron also saw it, & *[it] drives me crazy*, he wrote,³ three days before publication (he could be referring to line 672). He must have corrected it in the proof, even though the professionals had got there already.

1: BLJ VI 7-8.

2: CPW IV 483, and *Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. E.H. Coleridge, VII 171.

3: BLJ VI (letter to Murray of February 25 1818).

Line 497 (Stanza 63, 1: 60, 1 in the first three editions) has a word written twice by Byron in fair-copying, and there reads *To turn and and to return, the Devil take it!* Albemarle Street removed the repetition (and added two dashes, a comma, and a semi-colon). Line 672 (Stanza 84, 8: 80, 8 in the first three editions) loses the word *may* in the fair copy, and reads *You still mark her cheek, outbloomng all*. Once again Gifford and Davison put it right.

Byron changed two lines in proof. The first was 623 (Stanza 78, 7: 75, 7 in the first three editions) which is in both manuscripts and the first three editions *They gaze not on the Stars from out their Attics* (*Stars* is uppercased in fair copy only, *Attics* in both manuscripts). Byron substitutes the more alliterative *They stare not on the stars ...* The other was 695 (Stanza 87, 7: 83, 7 in the first three editions) which reads in both manuscripts *Sate Laura, with a kind of comic horror*. This becomes, post-proof, the ludicrous internally-rhymed *Sate Laura by the side of her adorer*.

We now come to details where it seems to me that, in their endeavour not to give too much offence, the Murray establishment spoiled the poem. Lines 39-40 (the couplet to Stanza 5) are in the fair copy

For, bating Covent Garden, I can't hit on
A Place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.

This becomes, in all editions

For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.

Jerome McGann, in his Oxford edition, credits Hobhouse with the alterations ... *which try (successfully, one must allow) to improve the sound relationships among the words*.⁴ What he omits to say is that they also lessen the power of a joke, for "to hit on" was "to enjoy a sexual encounter at" (compare *Don Juan* IX 614: Stanza 77, 6). Hobhouse had, in Byron's company, enjoyed several such hits while at Venice, on, or off piazzas: ... *although your poets are shy as elephants or camels of being seen in the act of procreation yet I have not unfrequently witnessed his lordship's coupleting* he writes to Murray, on 7th December, 1817.⁵ He may have thought that this particular couplet came a bit too close for comfort, for the Piazza Coffee House was indeed a "meeting-place" in Covent Garden; and so posterity has been denied it in its Byronic form ever since.

Lines 575-6 (Stanza 72, couplet: 69, couplet in the first three editions) is always

No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
"That charming passage in the last new poem."

Both manuscripts give a singular, *Botherby*, and the fair copy underlines the name:

No bustling Botherby have they to show 'em,
"That Charming passage in the last new Poem!"

Murray, Gifford, Hobhouse and co., seem to have felt that the feelings of William Sotheby would be hurt less if the text implied that there was more than one of him; so this emendation has remained, too. Sotheby's professed innocence of the charge which had occasioned the Stanzas against him (it was one of slanderous marginalia to one of

4: CPW IV 483. Hobhouse's diary records visits to Murray's on February 4, 6, 10, 13 and 16 (B.L. Add. Mss.4724 54r-6r and 47235 1r). He goes principally to work on the *Childe Harold* proofs; there is no reason why he should not have been consulted over *Beppo*, too. He records that it is "out" on February 24, and that it is "making a great noise" on March 13.

5: John Murray Archive; see also *Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. E.H.Coleridge, II 315.

Byron's books)⁶ had not lessened Byron's determination to *stick a pin through this old Blue-bottle*⁷ and if Robert Southey is to be believed, the damage could well have been fatal: *Poor Sotheby*, he wrote to Grosvenor Bedford, *those stanzas in Beppo will half kill him*.⁸ Why we should still be deprived of the simplicity of Byron's version is only clear if we adopt a necessitarian view, whereby once a compromise text has been created, history cannot atone.⁹

It will be objected that history has no need to "atone", because Byron, who corrected the proof, must have sanctioned the alterations. But this is again to ignore what every writer knows, namely that you very often allow things through because they don't seem that important, or because old so-and-so obviously feels strongly about it, or even (whisper it) because there's no time, or because you can't be bothered, or – anything for a quiet life. To pay attention to the proof-corrections of a work which was already several editions into the public domain seems in any case no more than a polite gesture on Murray's part – though the knowledge that a new and improved edition was out doubtless encouraged some of those who had already bought the poem to buy it again.

For evidence that Byron still felt strongly about the detail of his text, let us look the next line which remains in a less-than-authoritative state. It also refers to Sotheby, and is 590 (74, 6: 71, 6 in the earliest editions). In all editions the complete stanza runs

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means GOOD in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teazing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

In a letter to Murray of April 11th 1818 Byron has further thoughts about the line:

... When you can reprint "Beppo" – instead of line
"Gorging the little Fame he gets all raw"
insert –
["Gorging the slightest slice of Flattery raw"], –

because – We have the word "Fame" in the preceding Stanza – (also as a rhyme too) – perhaps the line is {now} a little weakened – because "all raw" expresses the Cormorant Cameleon's avidity for air – or inflation of his vicious vanity – but – ask M^r Gifford – & M^r Hobhouse – & as they think so let it be – for though repetition is only the "soul of Ballad singing" & best avoided in describing the Harlequin jacket of a Mountebank – yet anything is better than weakening an expression – or a thought. –¹⁰

Gifford and Hobhouse – perhaps sensing a social challenge which they preferred to ignore – demurred. If, however, one went by Byron's last thoughts (and adhered to his old-fashioned uppercasing as seen in the letter above, as well as in the fair copy) the stanza would run

A Stalking Oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means GOOD in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The Bluest of Bluebottles you e'er saw,

6: See BLJ VI 24 and 35-6.

7: BLJ V 252-3.

8: Bodleian M.S.English Letters d.47.86.

9: See McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago 1983) pp.34-5, 43-4, 51, 75 and 113. For a riposte, see *ibid*, p.126.

10: John Murray Archive: BLJ VI 26.

Teazing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the slightest slice of Flattery raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And Sweating Plays so middling, Bad were Better. –

How about this for *improv(ing) the sound relationships among the words*? The repeated “l”s and “s”s of the new line six alliterate with all those in lines five and seven, and add to the stanza’s sibilant, as well as its substantive, power. They also strengthen the idea of Poet as Pig of Power, or as Gormandizer of Greatness.

This leads on to the last and hardest of all the textual problems. Stanza 60 (57 in the first three editions) which is about (*inter alia*) Brummell, runs, in the fair copy,

This is the Case in England, at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of Imitated Imitators; how soon! how
Irreperably soon decline Alas!
The Demagogues of fashion, all below
Is frail, how easily the World is lost
By <l> love, or war, and, now and then, by Frost.

We do not know who grasped the nettle of Byron’s supposedly faulty English at the fourth line here (line 476); but we may query their sympathy for the way his mind was working. The verb *to imit* has never existed, but *imitable* is allowed by the OED, and *to immit* is a rare antonym for *to emit*. An “Imitated Imitator” would thus not just be one who imitates and is in turn imitated; it could also be one who has swallowed something – “gorged” it “raw” perhaps – and is in turn swallowed by someone or something else – a Jonah fresh from dinner. No-one at Murray’s was prepared for such weird thoughts, however, and the stanza was made to run

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators: – how
Irreperably soon decline, alas!
The demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By love, or war, and now and then by frost!

One might suspect the pedant Gifford rather than the libertine Hobhouse to be at work here: but a glance at Hobhouse’s Venice diary may allow us to infer something interesting about his attitude to imitators (or “imitors”) and to imitations. Here are the three entries which relate most immediately to the writing of the first draft of *Beppo*:

Thursday October – 9

Went to the public library which is not public now but is still open to me for a promised reward. – wrote until one – then at the Apollo – dined at the Pellegrino – walked in the garden – cold weather [–] came home and wrote poetry in the <the> Childe’s style – it is difficult but not inimitable – B[Byron] has imitated Frere’s imitation in a description of Venice and done it well –

<Saturday>
Friday October 10

At the public library from 10 until 2. then at the Apollo [–] dine at home – I am very ill – at least out of sorts – no diet agrees with me – my ears ring so that I sometimes feel as if I were going mad – and now comes this cursed mishap –

Saturday Octo. 11

at the library until past ½ 2, having first visited the hideous *pozzi* – Then walked about with Claridge in the gardens – the first warm day we have had [–] we dine and go to the S^t Moise together – he is a lawyer and shoppy – he told me a curious lech – a man in the temple keeps a coffin and sends for the girls in the town – those who fit the coffin he honors with his embraces – those two [sic] long or too short he dismisses – B[yron] tells me the story of the husband at the Queen of Hungary is false –¹¹

I will try an interpretation of these entries. Byron roughs-out the first half of the poem on the night of October 8th / 9th. He shows it to Hobhouse, who is busy researching his *Historical Illustrations to Childe Harold IV*. Whether or not inspired by Byron's imitation of Frere, Hobhouse tries his hand at an imitation of Byron – albeit of his dignified Spenserian style, not of his new, frivolous, ottava rima one. Byron, who is unlikely to have reached Stanza 60 on his first night, adds a joke in it on the night of the 9th / 10th about imitators, in part consequent upon Hobhouse's attempt at imitating what he may already see as the out-dated manner in which *he* imitated Spenser (or Beattie, or Thomson). He dates the first sheet of the draft "O^{ct}. 10th. 1817".

On the 11th, one of Hobhouse's standard bouts of illness seems exacerbated by a problem (*this cursed mishap*) which he has picked up in addition – perhaps, as I have said, as a result of imitating Byron on the Rialto as well as on the page. The following day, having visited either the dungeons of the Ducal palace or a sweating-tub, depending on how *pozzi* is interpreted – in his 1859 book *Italy*¹² he insists it is the former – he meets, firstly an English *cognoscento* of opera and perversion, and secondly Byron, who tells him that the story of the returning husband, which the by-now-roughed-out *Beppo* is based on¹³ is a lie: deliberately devaluing his new poem, at least to Hobhouse's innocent mind.

It is Hobhouse who, in his December letter to Murray, will equate copulation with writing – which is no more outlandish than to equate reading, and imitation of the work read, with eating and digesting, the meaning of Byron's original line 476. In writing his joke about *Imitable Imitators* Byron was not employing an idea which Hobhouse would not employ – though Hobhouse, back in respectable London, might not have been keen to be reminded of its context in a new comical Byron poem. If we take into account all the possibilities in *imitable*, we may read into the line a joke about oral sex, by which he could well have been embarrassed. A year later Byron was to write the Dedication to *Don Juan*, in which Southey's sexual sterility was to be used as a metaphor for his limp versifying, and Castlereagh's inarticulacy at the Despatch Box is imaged-forth in the idea of him as an *intellectual eunuch*.

However, it was Byron's idol Gifford who, according to Hazlitt,

... stands over a contemporary performance with all the self-conceit and self-importance of a country schoolmaster, tries it by technical rules, affects not to understand the meaning, examines the handwriting, the spelling, shrugs up his shoulders and chuckles over a slip of the pen, and keeps a sharp lookout for a false concord and – a flogging.¹⁴

To such a mind, a neologism like *imited* would deserve a flogging, or, with the perpetrator out of reach in Venice, replacement. Surely, possessing Byron's original as we do, we need not be tied by Gifford's lexicographical decision, by Hobhouse's differently-motivated decision, or by their resulting re-write?

11: B.L. Add. Mss. 47234 28v-9r.

12: Lord Broughton, *Italy* (John Murray 1859) I 104. The word *pozzo* refers to the dungeons beneath the Doge's Palace in Venice.

13: See CPW IV 484.

14: William Hazlitt, *Mr. Gifford in The Spirit of the Age, Works* ed. Waller and Glover IV 299.

It is a question of conflicting loyalties. Do we continue to honour Byron's respect for Gifford and Hobhouse – his deference to their judgement, shown paradoxically in the letter about line 590 and the *Cormorant Cameleon*, in which he displays powers of close analysis finer than anything they could offer – or do we concede that, all the original parties being well buried, it's time to implement the better line?

To turn for a moment to the vexed question not of "substantive" but of its eucharistic opposite "accidental" (see Chaucer, *The Pardoner's Tale*, 253). Capitalisation *à la manière de Pope* had been outlawed by printers well before 1818,¹⁵ and nearly all Byron's manuscript gestures towards its retention were systematically ignored – by Davison (John Hunt was to be more respectful over *Don Juan*). But look again at Stanza 74, in the pallid current version:

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "Good!" (by no means GOOD in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teazing with blame, excruciating with praise;
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

Do the reverse of what Davison did – *augment* Byron's half-hearted gestures in upercasing (and give his last thought for the sixth line) – and you get

A Stalking Oracle of awful Phrase,
The approving "Good!" (by no means GOOD in law)
Humming like Flies around the newest Blaze,
The Bluest of Bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teazing with Blame, excruciating with Praise,
Gorging the slightest Slice of Flattery raw,
Translating Tongues he knows not even by Letter,
And Sweating Plays so middling, Bad were Better. –

It's only taking the same sort of liberty Davison took, except that it builds on Byron's capitalisation habit, rather than forbidding it. The critique gains Popean authority, Byronic personality, and more alliterative and emphatic power, if one takes such a bold but natural step.

The remaining "substantive" question is the poem's subtitle, which is in all editions *A Venetian Story*. The adjective appears in neither of the manuscripts, and I'm sure it's an editorial attempt at neutralisation, trying to stress the provincial qualities of the work at the expense of its universality. Venice was, after all, in English bourgeois myth, *what Paris is now – the Seat of all dissoluteness*. Samuel Ayscough has it thus in his smug annotation to Rosalind's lines from *As You Like It*, which Byron appends to the fair copy, for his epigraph. To move from the editorially-hypocritical subtitle, straight to an unconscious joke against English editorial hypocrites, is a mite incongruous: though perhaps the banana-skin placed beneath themselves by his Albemarle Street associates may have seemed so funny to Byron that he let it stand.

15: Readers interested in this point could perhaps start by looking at John Smith, *The Printer's Grammar* (1755) pp.50-1, and Philip Luckombe, *History and Art of Printing* (1771) pp.248-9; then Caleb Stower, *The Printer's Grammar* (1808) pp.60-1, and John Johnson, *Typographia* (1824) Volume II pp.32-3. Pope was in fact not at all consistent with regard to capitalisation of nouns, and seems to have become less attached to the convention as time went by. See Foxon and McLaverty, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth Century Book Trade* (Oxford 1991) Chapters 4 and 5. The implication here is that the *Twickenham* Pope, in adhering to the capitalisation and italics of the first editions, would not have had Pope's approval.

But *A Story* implies “a lie”, which is part of the *Beppo* joke. *You don’t believe the half of them*; or rather, as Byron’s underlining in fair copy of the fourth word in line 784 (Stanza 98, 8) would have it, “*I don’t believe the half of them.*”

The paradox of *Beppo* (that’s a polite way of saying its calculated duplicity) lies in the huge masses of factual detail with which it crowds out our view of its inner humbuggery: those massless *Whistler*-inspired lists which, in appearing to catalogue all possibilities exhaustively, end by destroying the reader’s faith in the very processes of categorisation, cataloguing, and thus of definition itself. The poem undermines one’s hold on “reality”, as surely as Laura’s endless stream-of-consciousness prattle undermines Beppo’s attempt at playing Odysseus, or Othello. Some of Byron’s “factual” bluffs can only be seen in the manuscripts – I’m thinking especially of his assertion at line 798, that his *pen is at the bottom of a page*. This is literally true in the rough draft, so that one might almost think he did finish the poem because he ran out of paper (he didn’t, of course – he added several stanzas on scraps afterwards). The greatest of unreproducible comic sights lies in seeing his desperate but failed attempt in the fair copy, via double-sized, sloping handwriting and wrap-around, to ensure that the printer will find that his pen is at the bottom of a page there, too. This can only be seen in the original; but that’s no reason to deprive ourselves of such delights as can be transmitted in ordinary print. Byron is funnier than Gifford, Davison and Hobhouse allowed him to appear.

NOTE: The rough draft of *Beppo* is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The fair copy is in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection, New York Public Library. I am grateful to the staffs of both libraries, and in particular to Steven Wagner at the Pforzheimer and Katherine Reagan at the Morgan, for their courtesy and assistance.

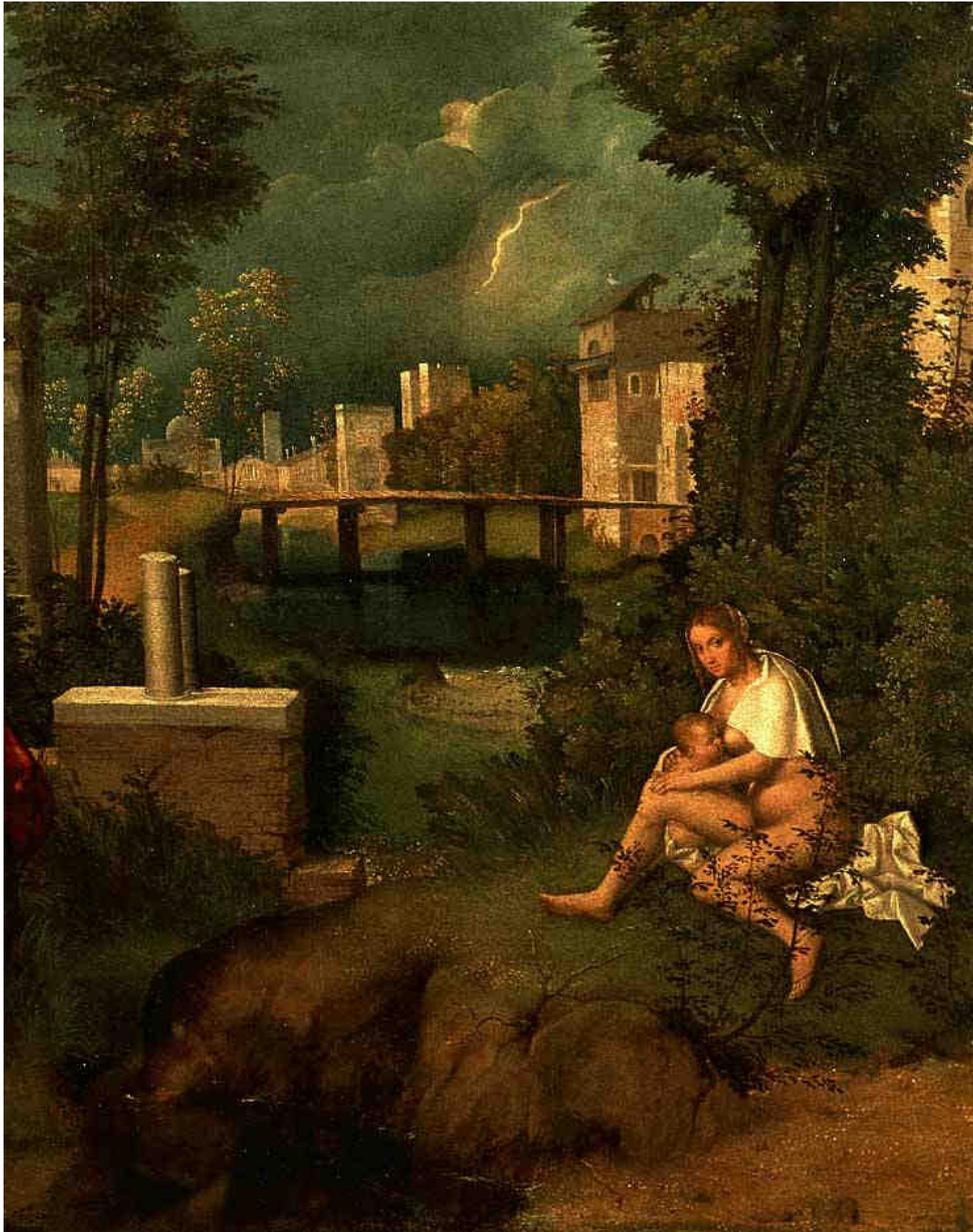
The rough draft is reproduced in *The Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics, Lord Byron, Volume I, Poems 1807-1818*, ed. Jerome J. McGann and Alice Levine (Garland Publishing 1986) pp. 135-94, and the fair copy transcribed by Ricki B. Herzfeld and Doucet Devin Fischer at *Shelley and His Circle, 1773-1822*, Vol. VII, ed. Donald H. Reiman (Harvard University Press 1986) pp. 234-97.

BLJ: *Byron’s Letters and Journals*. ed. Leslie A. Marchand (John Murray 1973-1994).
CPW: *Lord Byron the Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller (Clarendon 1980-93).

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This text of *Beppo* was performed at the International Byron Conference in Kyoto, September 2002, directed from a blueprint by Peter Cochran by Edward Burns. Cast: Male Speakers: Bernard Beatty, John Clubbe, Itsuyo Higashinaka; Laura: Joan Blythe, Shobhana Bhattarcharji; the Count: Allan Gregory; Beppo: Edward Burns.

It was repeated at the International Byron Conference on the Isola San Servolo, Venice, July 2007, with the following cast: Male Speakers: Bernard Beatty, Drummond Bone, Peter Cochran; Laura: Dianora Bond; Beppo: Geoffrey Bond; The Count (and the Prose Notes): Kelvin Everest.



Giorgione, *La Tempesta*.

*That Picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to your Zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so;
'Tis but a Portrait of his Son and Wife
And Self; but such a Woman! Love in life!*

See note below to stanza 12, line 8.



Triple Portrait, attrib. Titian.

*That Picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to your Zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so;
'Tis but a Portrait of his Son and Wife
And Self; but such a Woman! Love in life!*

See note below to stanza 12, line 8.

BEPPO: a Story. –
edited by Peter Cochran

Motto. Rosalind. – “Farewell, Monsieur Traveller; look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think that you have swam in a gondola. – *As You Like It*, Act 4. Scene 1.¹⁶

Annotation of the Commentators. “That is, been at *Venice*, which was much visited by the young English Gentlemen of those times, and was then what *Paris* is *now* the Seat of all dissoluteness. S.A. –¹⁷

1.

’Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The People take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance ere they grow devout, 5
However high their rank, or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,¹⁸
And other things which may be had for asking.

2.

The moment Night with dusky mantle covers
The skies (and the more duskily the better)¹⁹ 10
The Time – less liked by husbands than by lovers –
Begins, and Prudery flings aside her fetter,
And Gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the Gallants who beset her;
And there are Songs, and quavers, roaring, humming, 15
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.²⁰

1: Epigraph 1: Shakespeare, *As You Like it*, IV i 30 *et. seq.* Rosalind is mocking Jacques for his affectation of cosmopolitan sophistication, a front for bitterness, arrogance, and failure to love. *Gondola* is of obvious topographical relevance to *Beppo*.

17: Epigraph 2: an authentic academic note to Epigraph 1. S.A. is the editor Samuel Ayscough, from whose 1807 edition of Shakespeare Byron has just quoted. Ayscough – whose note actually has *licentiousness*, not *dissoluteness* – has fallen into the opposite trap from Jacques’. In his case provincial smugness is the mask for bitterness, arrogance, and failure to love.

18: See Byron, letter to Kinnaird, February 3 1817 (BLJ V 168): ... *of Venice I say nothing – there is little going on but fiddling – masquing – singing – & t’other thing.*

19: Prefigures several Byronic passages about dusk; see *Don Juan* I ll.441-2 and III sts.101-8.

20: *strumming:* slang for sexual intercourse.

3.

And there are dresses, splendid but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations,²¹ Turks and Jews,
And Harlequins and Clowns with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles and Hindoos, 20
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,²²
All people, as their fancies hit, may chuse;
But no One in these parts may quiz²³ the Clergy,
Therefore take heed Ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.²⁴ –

4.

You'd better walk about begirt with briars, 25
Instead of Coat and smallclothes,²⁵ than put on
A single stitch reflecting upon Friars;²⁶
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,²⁷ 30
Nor say one Mass to cool the Cauldron's bubble²⁸
That boiled your bones – unless you paid them double.

21: *Masks of all times and nations:* Byron gives the Carnival universal significance. Compare Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Book 8 Chapter 15: "... those who travel in order to acquaint themselves with the different Manners of Men, might spare themselves much Pains, by going to a carnival at Venice; for here they will see at once all which they can discover in the several Courts of Europe. The same Hypocrisy, the same Fraud; in short, the same Follies and Vices, dressed in different Habits." It is also during the Venice Carnival that Candide and Martin meet the six dethroned monarchs, each intoning "Je suis venu passer le carnaval à Venise" like a dirge. See Voltaire, *Candide*, Chapter 26.

22: *except the ecclesiastical:* in the Venetian Lenten carnival religious disguises were outlawed. The atmosphere here may owe as much to Byron's experience of the Athenian carnival in 1810 as it does to his experience of the Venetian: *They [the Franks in Athens] have balls and parties in the winter and spring of the year, in their own small circle, to which the principal Greeks are invited, and particularly during the carnival, when they and many of the inhabitants are in masquerade. We were present at that season, and were visited by a young Athenian in an English uniform, who was highly delighted with his metamorphosis. The most favourite fancy of the Greeks seemed to be that of dressing themselves up like the Waiwode, the Cadi, or other principal Turks, and parading the streets with attendants also properly habited. One more daring humourist of my acquaintance, on one occasion mimicked the Archbishop himself as if in the ceremony of blessing the houses, but found the priests less tolerant than the Mahometans, for he was excommunicated* – Hobhouse, *Journey Through Some Provinces of Turkey* (1813, I 299-300). None of Byron's Venetian friends seems to have quizzed the clergy, or been excommunicated.

23: *quiz:* satirise; play jokes on.

24: The *clergy / charge ye* rhyme is from Swift, *The Grand Question Debated* 189-90 (see BLJ IX 191).

25: *smallclothes:* undergarments. See below, 1.780 and n.

26: *reflecting upon Friars:* with perhaps a glance at Voltaire's Frère Giroflée in *Candide* Chapter 24, first seen arm-in-arm with a pretty prostitute in Venice.

27: *Phlegethon:* one of the rivers of the underworld. See *Don Juan* IV 418. *every mother's son:* echoes *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I ii 69 (*That would hang us, every mother's son*) and III i 65 (*Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts*).

28: *the Cauldron's bubble:* echoes *Macbeth*, IV i 10-11: *Double, double, toil and trouble, / Fire burn, and cauldron bubble*.

5.

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
 You like by way of doublet, cape or cloak,
 Such as in Monmouth Street, or in Rag Fair,²⁹ 35
 Would rig you out in Seriousness, or Joke;
 And even in Italy such places are
 With prettier names in softer accents spoke,
 For, bating Covent Garden, I can't hit on
 A Place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.³⁰ 40

6.

The feast is named the Carnival,³¹ which being
 Interpreted implies "Farewell to Flesh",³²
 So called because, the name and thing agreeing,
 Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh;
 But why they usher Lent with so much glee in 45
 Is more than I can tell, although I guess
 'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting
 In the Stage-Coach or Packet,³³ just at starting.

29: *Monmouth Street ... Rag Fair:* Monmouth Street (not the present one, but running between Charing Cross Road and the present Broadwick Street) was famous for its second-hand clothes shops; Rag Fair was the corresponding place, of unsavoury repute, in the East End. The wife of Morgan, friend of *Roderick Random*, is accused of keeping a gin-shop there (XXVII). Many went to both places in Seriousness (36): Random twice has to sell his clothes in Monmouth Street in Joke (LIII and LX).

30: bating Covent Garden, I can hit on / No place ... (all previous edns.) *bating Covent Garden, I can't hit on / A place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain:* a covered arcade, designed by Inigo Jones, skirted two sides of Covent Garden, which was famous for its gaming houses, Turkish baths, and brothels. To "hit on" somewhere was to have a sexual encounter there (see *Don Juan* IX, 77, 6); and one coffee house was called The Piazza.

31: *The Carnival:* for a previous, and contrastingly pompous, treatment, not of the Venetian Carnival but of the Constantinople Carnival, see *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* II st.78:

*Yet mark their mirth – ere lenten days begin,
 That penance which their holy rites prepare
 To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin,
 By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
 But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
 Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
 To take of pleasaunce each his secret share;
 In motley robe to dance and masking ball,
 And join in mimic train of merry Carnival.*

This is in turn self-borrowed from the fourth stanza of the fragment *Il Diavolo Inamorato* of 1812, which also furnishes material for *Beppo*: see below, l.551n. B. had not been to Venice when these earlier poems were written.

32: "*Farewell to Flesh*": the Latin roots of carnival are *carnis*, "flesh", and *vale*, "farewell".

33: *Stage-Coach or Packet:* emblems of departure; a packet was a small ship.

7.

And thus they bid farewell to Carnal dishes,
 And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,³⁴ 50
 To live for forty days on ill-dressed fishes,
 Because they have no sauces to their stews –
 A thing which causes many “poohs” and “pishes,”
 And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse)
 From travellers accustomed from a boy 55
 To eat their Salmon, at the least, with Soy.³⁵ –

8.

And therefore humbly I would recommend
 “The Curious in Fishsauce,”³⁶ before they cross
 The Sea, to bid their Cook, or wife, or friend,
 Walk or ride to the Strand,³⁷ and buy in gross 60
 (Or if set out before hand these may send
 By any means least liable to loss)
 Ketchup, Soy, Chili-Vinegar, and Harvey,³⁸
 Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well nigh starve ye.

9.

That is to say, if your Religion’s Roman, 65
 And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
 According to the proverb – although No man
 If foreign is obliged to fast, and You –
 If protestant, or sickly – or a Woman –
 Would rather dine in sin on a ragout,³⁹ 70
 Dine and be d—n-d; I don’t mean to be coarse,
 But that’s the penalty, to say no worse. –

34: *ragouts*: highly seasoned meat and vegetable stews.

35: *Soy*: the first recorded use of soy sauce in England is 1696.

36: “*The Curious in Fishsauce*”: either pastiche advertising jargon, or borrowed from the real thing.

37: *the Strand*: fashionable then for dining and shopping.

38: *Harvey*: Harvey’s Fish Sauce, very popular at the time; see B.’s 1811 epigram *The Composite Merits of Hervey’s Fish Sauce and Hervey’s Meditations*.

39: *dine in sin on a ragout*: in Thomas Shadwell’s *The Libertine* – an adaptation of Tirso de Molina’s *Don Juan* play – the protagonist, threatened by the statue of the man he killed, and about to be dragged off to hell, says calmly *Here’s excellent meat, taste of this ragout*. The line – which occurs in the Spanish original, too – is quoted by Coleridge in Chapter XXIII of *Biographia Literaria*, to which B. alludes slightly at *Don Juan* Dedication ll.13-16. See also *The Devil’s Drive* (1813) l.3, where Satan *dined on some homicides done in Ragoût*: B. evidently associated the French dish with transgression. See also *Don Juan* V 251-2, XIII 789-92, and XV 494-6, and Burns, *To a Haggis*, 25.

10.

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball, 75
And Masque, and Mime, and Mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore,
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That Seaborn City was in all her Glory.⁴⁰ – 80

11.

They've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arched brows, and sweet expressions still,
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In antient Arts by Moderns mimicked ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's⁴¹ 85
(The best's at Florence⁴² – see it – if ye will)
They look when leaning over the Balcony;⁴³
Or stepped from out a picture by Giorgione,⁴⁴ – – –

40: *That Sea born City was in all her Glory:* B. deliberately leaves the period uncertain – see below, 162. Venice was in decline throughout the eighteenth century; she was finally eclipsed by the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797, by which she was handed over by Napoleon to the Austrians, who were still ruling her when B. lived there in 1816-18.

41: *so many Venuses of Titians:* Titian (1487/90-1576) highly influential Venetian painter on religious and classical subjects, including several Venuses.

42: *The best's at Florence:* see BLJ V 218: *I went to the two galleries – from which one returns drunk with beauty – the Venus is more for admiration than love – but there are sculpture and painting – which for the first time at all gave me an idea of what people mean by their cant & ... “entusimusy” ... about those two most artificial of the arts ... What struck me most were ... a Venus of Titian in the Medici gallery – the Venus ...*

43: *Balcony:* in 1817 the correct stress was on the second syllable.

44: *Giorgione:* earlier Venetian painter (1478-1511) Titian's teacher, an innovator who created a new highly coloured yet intimate style – a Byronic alter ego.

12.

Whose tints are Truth and Beauty at their best;
 And when you to Manfrini's palace go,⁴⁵ 90
 That Picture (howsoever fine the rest)
 Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
 It may perhaps be also to *your* Zest,
 And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so;
 'Tis but a Portrait of his Son and Wife 95
 And Self;⁴⁶ but *such* a Woman! Love in life!

13.

Love in full life and length, not Love ideal,
 No, nor ideal Beauty, that fine name,⁴⁷
 But something better still, so very real,
 That the sweet Model must have been the same; 100
 A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
 Were't not impossible, besides a shame;
 The face recalls some face, as 'twere with pain,
 You once have seen but ne'er will see again.

14.

One of those forms which flit by us, when we 105
 Are young and fix our eyes on every face;
 And Oh! the Loveliness at times we see
 In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
 The Youth, the Bloom, the Beauty which agree
 In many a nameless being we retrace, 110
 Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
 Like the lost Pleiad⁴⁸ seen no more below. §

§: Note, "Quae septem dici sex tamen esse solent." Ovid.

45: *Manfrini's palace*: a Venetian palace famous for its art treasures, including Titians and Giorgiones. See B., letter to Murray, April 17 1817 (BLJ V 213): *I also went over the Manfrini palace ... What struck me most ... was the extreme resemblance of the style of the female faces in the mass of pictures – so many centuries or generations old – to those you see & meet every day among the existing Italians. Hobhouse's diary*, Saturday September 20 1817: *This morning went about with the Kinnairds to St. Mark's place, church, to the Manfrini pictures. We all admired Giorgione most his three portraits of wife and son and self – Byron and the Kinnaird's and I dined at my inn.* (B.L.Add.Mss. 47234 f.24.)

46: *Portrait of his Son and Wife*: see BLJ V 213 again: *The Queen of Cyprus and Giorgione's wife – particularly the latter – are Venetians as it were of yesterday – the same eyes and expression – & to my mind there is none finer. You must recollect however – that I know nothing of painting – & detest it ...* B.'s reference is sometimes said to be to the picture by Giorgione now commonly known as *La Tempesta*: featuring a military figure in the left foreground, staring at a mother suckling her child in the right foreground, while a storm gathers behind them, it is not now thought to be of Giorgione's son and wife. See Ian Scott-Kilvert, *Byron and Giorgione* (*Byron Journal* 1981, pp.85-8). However, Hilary Gatti (*Byron and Giorgione's Wife, Studies in Romanticism*, Summer 1984, pp.237-44), argues for the triple portrait which may be by Titian or of his school, now in the Alnwick Castle Collection. See illustrations at top of this document.

47: *ideal Beauty, that fine name*: compare *Don Juan* II 943-4 and 1686-8.

48 **Byron's note:** *the lost Pleiad*: the Pleiades were the seven daughters of Atlas; one, Merope, was seduced by a mortal – Sisyphus – and when all were translated into a constellation she shone very faintly, because ashamed. A model thus for non-Platonic beauty. The line is from *Fasti* iv 170, and means *they are normally called seven but normally are six*.

15.

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
 Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
 Particularly seen from a balcony 115
 (For Beauty's sometimes best set off afar)
 And there just like a heroine of Goldoni⁴⁹
 They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
 And truth to say they're mostly very pretty,
 And rather like to show it, more's the Pity! 120

16.

For Glances beget Ogles, Ogles Sighs,
 Sighs Wishes, Wishes Words, and Words a Letter,
 Which flies on wings of light-heeled Mercuries,⁵⁰
 Who do such things because they know no better,
 And then God knows! what Mischief may arise, 125
 When Love links two young people in one fetter:
 Vile Assignations, and adulterous beds,
 Elopements, broken vows, and hearts, and heads. –

17.

Shakespeare described the Sex in Desdemona
 As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,⁵¹ 130
 And to this day from Venice to Verona
 Such matters may be probably the same,
 Except that since those times was never known a
 Husband whom mere Suspicion could inflame
 To suffocate a wife no more than twenty, 135
 Because she had a "Cavalier Servente."⁵²

49: *Goldoni*: Carlo Goldoni (1707-93) Venetian comic dramatist, an innovative realist like Giorgione, or B. himself. **Hobhouse's diary**, Friday November 14 1817: *Fine day. dined at home on dinner of Battista's dressing. [see Don Juan I 447-8] play in the evening at St Benedetto, with Byron. one of Goldoni's, Il Maldicente. Ludicrous. Coffee house life natural here. Vestris is certainly a good actor and there is something natural that is the exaggerated nature of the Italians in all their acting – brandy and water with Byron.* (B.L.Add.Mss. 47234 f.33.) One of several entries recording seeing Goldoni's plays at Venice. Titles mentioned include *La Vedova Scaltra* and *Il Poeta Fanatico*.

50: *Mercuries*: Mercury was messenger and go-between to the gods.

51: *Shakespeare described the Sex in Desdemona / As very fair, but yet suspect in fame*: see the words of Iago at III iii 205-8:

*I know our country disposition well;
 In Venice they do let God see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
 Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.*

or those of Othello at IV ii 68:

*O thou weed
 Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
 That the sense aches at thee!
 Would thou had'st never been born!*

See also below, 784 and 785nn; compare also Shakespeare, Sonnet 94.

52: "*Cavalier Servente*": socially accepted lover of a married woman. See *Don Juan* III 190, and IX Stanza 51. Scott uses the term in *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) Chapter XXII: but seems not to

18.

Their Jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
 Is of a fair complexion altogether,
 Not like that sooty devil of Othello's⁵³
 Which smothers women in a bed of feather, 140
 But worthy of these much more jolly fellows –
 When weary of the matrimonial tether
 His head for such a wife no Mortal bothers,
 But takes at once another, or *another's*. –

19.

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear 145
 You should not, I'll describe it you exactly;
 'Tis a long covered boat that's common here,
 Carved at the prow, built lightly but compactly –
 Rowed by two rowers, each called "Gondolier" –
 It glides along the water looking blackly, 150
 Just like a Coffin clapt in a Canoe,⁵⁴
 Where none can make out what you say or do.⁵⁵

20.

And up and down the long Canals they go
 And under the Rialto shoot along
 By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,⁵⁶ 155
 And round the theatres, a sable throng,
 They wait in their dusk livery of woe,
 But not to them do woeful things belong,
 For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
 Like Mourning Coaches when the funeral's done. – 160

comprehend its implications. **Hobhouse's diary**, Thursday July 31 1817: *I set out at 9, changed horses at Dolo. and arrived at Mira and Byron's house on the Brenta by half-past eleven – I saw my friend well and in spirits – Mr Matthew Lewis [author of "The Monk"] was in the house with him – and part of the house was occupied by Signora Zagati [sic: for Segati] of Venice the drapier's lady – who in a country where women gain character by having a cavalier servente of rank has risen since she has been companion in ordinary to Byron – It is amusing to hear her talk about "cattive donne" ["wicked women"] with the greatest simplicity – Signor Piero her husband visits her on a Saturday and Sunday and attends another lady.* (B.L.Add.Mss. 47234 f.4).

53: sooty devil of Othello's: see *Othello*, I ii 70:

*If she ...
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou ...*

54: *Just like a Coffin*: an image hard to explain in precise erotic terms unless we understand an in-joke. **Hobhouse's diary**, Saturday October 11 1817: ... *he [Claridge, an old acquaintance of Hobhouse] is a lawyer and shoppy – he told me a curious lech – a man in the temple keeps a coffin and sends for the girls in the town – those who fit the coffin he honors with his embraces – those too long or too short he dismisses – Byron tells me the story of the husband at the Queen of Hungary [see below, Commentary to Stanza 74] is false – (B.L.Add.Mss. 47234 f.29). clapt in a Canoe: implies gonorrhoea in a gondola.*

55: *none can make out what you say or do*: see B., letter to Kinnaird, October 26 1819 (BLJ IV 232): *As to "Don Juan" – confess – confess – you dog – and be candid – ... Could any man have written it who had not tooled ... in a Gondola?*

56: *double-entendre* throughout.

21.

But to my story. – 'Twas some years ago –
 It may be thirty, forty, more or less –
 The Carnival was at its height, and so
 Were all kinds of Buffoonery and dress;
 A Certain Lady went to see the show – 165
 Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
 And so we'll call her Laura,⁵⁷ if you please,
 Because it slips into my verse with ease. –

22.

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
 Which certain people call a “*certain Age*” –⁵⁸ 170
 Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
 Because I never heard, nor could engage
 A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
 To name, define by speech, or write on page,
 The period meant precisely by that word, 175
 Which surely is exceedingly absurd. –

57: *Laura*: B.'s use of the name (*it slips into my verse with ease*) instantly brings an entire tradition of poetry into question, and reinforces the implications of the passage on Giorgione at ll.88-112 above. *Laura* was the name of the woman to whom Petrarch (1304-74) wrote his love sonnets, starting a cult of idealised love which lasted for centuries, influencing almost every poet of the Renaissance and many beyond. Petrarch's *Laura* would not survive long in the new, deflationary world of ottava rima; it is not absolutely clear that Shakespeare's *Desdemona* or *Juliet* would (*to this day from Venice to Verona / Such matters may be probably the same*). See *Don Juan* III st.8, where the same point is made more trenchantly. (For *Juliet*, see *Don Juan* II 1519.). The account of *Juan's* adolescent reading (I 753-4) satirises Petrarchanism as the poetry of those for whom poetry is an escape from mundanity rather than a way of embracing it. B. wants *Merope* – the lost seventh *Pleiad* – elevated, rather than shamed, for the way she responded to the mortal, corrupt *Sisyphus* (see above, st.14 – a paradoxically Petrarchan section). The path to ideal love must involve transacting with the flesh (*carnis* – see above, l.42n) rather than trying to bid it “farewell.” See *Don Juan* I, st.116; also V, 7-8.

58: ... a “*certain Age*”: B. has another try at defining the meaning of this phrase at *Don Juan* VI st.69. Ugo Foscolo, in the April 1819 *Quarterly Review* (pp.504-5) suggests that st.22 is a version of Niccolò Forteguerri's mock-chivalric *Il Ricciardetto*, (1738) IV 2; but the tone there is much more conventional:

*Quando si giunge ad una certa età
 Ch'io non voglio descriversi qual è,
 Bisogna stare allora a quel ch'un ha,
 Nè d'altri amanti cerca più la fè:
 Perchè, Donne mie care, la Beltà
 Ha l'ali al capo alle spalle, ed a'piè;
 La vola sì che non si scorge più,
 E che la vide no può dir: Qui fù.*

[When a certain age is arrived at – which, I don't wish to say – it's necessary to remain there, and not to try the faith of any further lovers: because, my dear ladies, *Beauty* flies away unnoticed with head, shoulder and foot; and whoever sees her can no longer say, “Once she was here.”]

23.

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
 Of Time, and Time returned the compliment,
 And treated her genteelly, so that, 'drest,
 She looked extremely well where'er she went; 180
 A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
 And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
 Indeed, she shone all Smiles, and seemed to flatter
 Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her. –

24.

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient, 185
 Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule
 To view their little slips with eyes more lenient,
 Whereas if single ladies play the fool
 (Unless within the period intervenient
 A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool) 190
 I don't know how they ever can get over it,
 Except they manage never to discover it.

25.

Her Husband sailed upon the Adriatic,
 And made some voyages too in other seas,⁵⁹
 And when he lay in Quarantine for Pratique⁶⁰ 195
 (A forty days precaution 'gainst disease)
 His wife would mount at times her highest Attic,
 For thence she could discern the ship with ease;
 He was a Merchant trading to Aleppo,
 His name Giuseppe – called more briefly, Beppo. §⁶¹ 200

§: Beppo is the Joe of the Italian Joseph. –⁶²

59: *Her Husband ... made some voyages too in other seas*: compare Lambro in *Don Juan* – see II 992-1017 and III st.16.

60: *Pratique*: permission to start trade upon emerging from quarantine (*pratique* – intercourse). The passage distantly implies Beppo's infidelity.

61: *Aleppo*: see *Othello*, V ii 355-9:

*And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turbanned Turk
 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him – thus. (Stabs himself.)*

The echo does not seem altogether fortuitous, given Beppo's jealousy, exotic adventures and story-telling talents; and that he should all the time be called Joe adds to B.'s point. See also *Macbeth*, I iii 7: *Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o'th'Tiger ...*

62 Byron's note: the banal name contrasts with those of such previous Byronic heroes as Conrad (*The Corsair*) Lara, and Selim (*The Bride of Abydos*); though *Harold* might seem sufficiently mundane. BLJ VI 177 (letter to Alexander Scott, July 7 1819) reveals that "Beppi" was the nickname of Giuseppe Rangone, cavalier servente to B.'s friend the Countess Benzoni.

26.

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
 Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure,
 Though coloured, as it were, within a tanyard –
 He was a person both of sense and Vigour –
 A better Seaman never yet did man yard,⁶³ 205
 And *She*, although her manners shewed no rigour,
 Was deemed a woman of the strictest principle,
 So much as to be thought almost invincible.

27.

But several years elapsed since they had met;
 Some people thought the ship was lost, and some 210
 That he had somehow blundered into debt,
 And did not like the thoughts of steering home,
 And there were several offered any bet,
 Or that he would, or that he would not come,
 For Most Men (till by losing rendered sager) 215
 Will back their own opinions by a wager.

28.⁶⁴

'Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
 As partings often are, or ought to be,
 And their presentiment was quite prophetic
 That they should never more each other see, 220
 (A sort of morbid feeling half poetic
 Which I have known occur in two or three)
 When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee
 He left this Adriatic Ariadne. –⁶⁵

63: *yard*: slang for penis.

64: unusual in that the concluding couplet rhymes with lines two, four, and six.

65: *this Adriatic Ariadne*: Ariadne helped Theseus escape from the Cretan labyrinth (see *Don Juan II* st.155) in recompense for which he married her, only to abandon her on the island of Naxos. However, in one development of the legend she was then courted and wooed on the celestial rebound by the god Bacchus (*Without whom Venus will not long attack us – Don Juan II* 1351-2) who gave her a coronet of seven stars – not, unfortunately, the Pleiades. This erotic triangulation is reflected clearly, though via travesty, in *Beppo*. The reference may echo Climene and Lindoro, the protagonists of Casti's *Il Ritorno Inaspettato*, one of the *Novelle Galanti*:

*E Climene in lasciar non mica seo,
 Siccome fe' con Arianna in Nasso
 Più gran birbon che grand'eroè Teseo,
 Che il core avea più duro assai d'un sasso. (XXX, 1-4)*

[*He did not leave Climene as Theseus, more stoney-hearted brute than hero, left Ariadne on Naxos.*] Except that B.'s hero does show a hard heart.

29.

And Laura waited long, and wept a little, 225
 And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
 She almost lost all appetite for victual,⁶⁶
 And could not sleep with ease alone at night;
 She deemed the window-frames and shutters brittle,
 Against a daring House-breaker, or Sprite, 230
 And so She thought it prudent to connect her
 With a Vice-husband,⁶⁷ chiefly to protect her.

30.

She chose (and what is there they will not chuse?
 If only you will but oppose their choice)
 'Till Beppo should return from his long cruise, 235
 And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,⁶⁸
 A Man some women like and yet abuse –
 A Coxcomb was he by the public voice –
 A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
 And (in his pleasures) of great liberality. – 240

31.

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
 Music, and dancing, fiddling, French, and Tuscan –
 The last not easy, be it known to you,
 For few Italians speak the right Etruscan;⁶⁹
 He was a Critic upon Operas too, 245
 And knew all niceties of the sock and buskin;⁷⁰
 And no Venetian Audience could endure a
 Song, Scene, or Air, when he cried “Seccatura!”⁷¹

66: *She almost lost all appetite for victual*: stress “almost”. In *Il Ritorno Inaspettato*, Climene allows her neighbour Silvia to feed her, despite her grief:

... un par di fette
 A lei recava, o un po' di zuppa buona
 Per darle forza e sostenerla in vita
 Dal pianto e dall'inedia illanguidita. (XXIX, 5-8)

[*She received ham and soup from her to give her strength in her misery.*]

67: *Vice-husband*: obvious word-play. The phrase *Vice-husband* occurs in *Tom Jones*, Book XI Chapter 11, where Fielding uses it to describe the noble Irish protector of Mrs Fitzpatrick, who has enabled her to run away from her boorish husband.

68: *'Till Beppo should return from his long cruise, / And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice*: they recall the faithful Penelope awaiting Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. In *Beppo*, as in *Don Juan*, B. plays at mock-epic. Penelope will never admit the possibility of infidelity to her absent husband; Laura embraces her gallant from sheer practical necessity.

69: *Tuscan ... Etruscan*: pure Italian speech as opposed to the distinct Venetian dialect.

70: *sock and buskin*: footwear of Greek comic and tragic actors, and thus understanding of drama. The Count is an impressive cultural dilettante, to oppose Beppo's more commercial, seafaring status.

71: “*Seccatura!*”: “Boring!” B. describes it at BLJ V 125 as ... *a devilish good word*.

His “Bravo” was decisive – for that sound
 Hushed “Academie”⁷³ sighed in silent awe; 250
 The fiddlers trembled as he looked around,
 For fear of some false note’s detected flaw;
 The “Prima Donna’s” tuneful heart would bound,
 Dreading the deep damnation of his “Bah!”⁷⁴ –
 Soprano, Basso, even the Contra-Alto,⁷⁵ 255
 Wished him five fathom under the Rialto.⁷⁶ –

72: The description of the Count recalls Christopher Anstey’s *The New Bath Guide* (1766, often reprinted) Letter X. For B. on the *Guide*, see *Don Juan*, Canto V, note to st.147: or BLJ VI, 234 and 253:

*What sends PETER TEWKSBURY every Night
 To the Play with such infinite Joy and Delight?
 Why, Peter’s a Critic, with true Attic Salt,
 Can damn the Performers, can hiss, and find Fault,
 And tell when we ought to express Approbation,
 By thumping and clapping and Vociferation;
 So he gains our Attention, and all must admire
 Young Tewksbury’s Judgment, his Spirit and Fire.
 But JACK DILETTANTE despises the Play’rs,
 To Concerts and musical Parties repairs;
 With Benefit-Tickets his Pockets he fills,
 Like a Mountebank Doctor distributes his Bills;
 And thus his Importance and Interest shows,
 By conferring his Favours where-ever he goes:
 He’s extremely polite to both me and my Cousin,
 For he often desires us to take off a Dozen;
 He has Taste, without Doubt, and a delicate Ear,
 No vile Oratorios ever could bear;
 But talks of the Op’ras and his Signiora,
 Cries Bravo, Benissimo, Bravo, Encora!*

73: “Academie”: orchestras.

74: deep damnation of his “Bah!”: see *Macbeth* I vii 20.

75: even the *Contra-Alto*: one contralto whom B. and Hobhouse heard in Venice (“at an academia”, on Thursday September 8 1817) was Giuseppina Grassini, “intimate friend” of Wellington (B.L.Add.Mss.47234 24r.)

76: five fathom: see *The Tempest* I ii 396, and *Romeo and Juliet* I iv 85 ... the *Rialto*: one of Venice’s islands, or, the bridge connecting it with the next island. A social and commercial gathering-point. See *The Merchant of Venice*, e.g. I iii 34 and 102.

33.

He patronised the Improvisatori,⁷⁷
 Nay, could himself extemporize some stanzas;
 Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
 Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as 260
 Italians can be – though in this their Glory
 Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
 In short, he was a perfect Cavaliero,
 And to his very Valet seemed a Hero.⁷⁸ –

34.

Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous, 265
 So that no sort of female could complain –
 Although they're now and then a little clamorous
 He never put the pretty souls in pain;
 His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
 Wax to receive, and Marble to retain; 270
 He was a lover of the good old School,
 Who still become more constant as they cool.⁷⁹

77: *Improvisatori*: improvising poets. At BLJ V 119 B., describing Sgricci, an authentic improvisatore, refers to the skill as “not an amusing though a curious effort of human powers”. At BLJ V 119 he records Sgricci as receiving a cry of *Seccatura!* (see above, 248). There is a note by Hobhouse on improvisatori for *Childe Harold* IV 54 l.7. **Hobhouse’s diary**, Saturday December 20 1817: *in evening went to S. Lucia and heard Sgricci again, he was still in yellow slippers, his flux was as great as before, but there was a very thin house – his tragedy was his 43d. extempory it was the Earl of Essex x x whom he called Odvardo he pretended to know nothing of the story and had it told to him by a gentleman in the stage box, this Rizzo said was a sham – however he talked of Elizabeth making war on France and did seem most extraordinarily ignorant, his tragedy had lasted nearly two hours when we came away at twelve o’clock, he had talked out many of his then audience ...* (B.L.Add.M.S. 47234 f.40).

78: *And ... Hero*: “*Il n’y a point de héros pour son valet de chambre*” (*No man is a hero to his valet*) – a French semi-proverb attributed to *Maréchal Nicholas Catinat (1637-1712)*. In his **diary** entry for *March 15 1814*, **Hobhouse** comments: *There are however some who are not heroes except to their valet de chambre* (Berg Volume 2, p.61; Broughton Holograph Diaries, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations).

79: *... a lover of the good old School, / Who still become more constant as they cool*: B. may be thinking of Colonel Fitzgerald, whom he met in Milan in 1816: *Six-and-twenty years ago, Col. [Fitzgerald], then an ensign, being in Italy, fell in love with the Marchesa [Castiglione], and she with him. The lady must be, at least, twenty years his senior. The war broke out; he returned to England, to serve – not his country, for that’s Ireland – but England, which is a different thing; and she – heaven knows what she did. In the year 1814, the first annunciation of the Definitive Treaty of Peace (and tyranny) was developed to the astonished Milanese by the arrival of Col. [Fitzgerald], who, flinging himself full length at the feet of Mad. [Castiglione], murmured forth, in half-forgotten Irish Italian, eternal vows of indelible constancy. The lady screamed, and exclaimed, “Who are you?” The Colonel cried, “What? don’t you know me? I am so and so,” &c., &c.; &c.; till, at length, the Marchesa, mounting from reminiscence to reminiscence through the lovers of the intermediate twenty-five years, arrived at last at the recollection of her povero sub-lieutenant. She then said, “Was there ever such virtue?” (that was her very word) and, being now a widow, gave him apartments in her palace, reinstated him in all the rights of wrong, and held him up to the admiring world as a miracle of incontinent fidelity, and the unshaken Abdiel of absence* (BLJ V 147).

35.

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
 A female head, however sage and steady –
 With scarce a hope that Beppo should return, 275
 In law he was almost as good as dead, he
 Nor sent, nor wrote, nor showed the least concern;
 And she had waited several years already,
 And, really, if a Man won't let us know
 That he's alive, he's dead, or should be so. – 280

36.

Besides, within the Alps to every woman,
 (Although, *God* knows! it is a grievous sin)
 'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
 I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
 But "Cavalier Serventes" are quite common, 285
 And no One notices nor cares a pin,
 And we may call this (not to say the worst)
 A *Second* Marriage which corrupts the *First*. –

37.

The Word was formerly a "Cicisbeo",
 But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent; 290
 The Spaniards call the person a "*Cortejo*",⁸⁰ §
 For the same Mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
 In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,⁸¹
 And may perhaps at last be o'er the Sea sent;
 But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses 295
 Or What becomes of damage, and divorces?

§: "Cortejo" is pronounced "Corte~~h~~o" with an aspirate according to the Arabesque guttural – it means – what there is as yet no precise name for in England – though the practice is as common as in any tramontane country whatever. – – – –

38.

However, I still think, with all due deference
 To the fair *single* part of the Creation,
 That married ladies should preserve the preference
 In *tête-à-tête*, or general conversation – 300
 And this I say without peculiar reference
 To England, France, or any other nation –
 Because they know the world, and are at ease,
 And being natural, naturally please. –

80 Byron's note: *Cortejo* ... *Cicisbeo*: variations on *Cavalier Servente* (see above, l.136n). A phrase in the fragmentary novel *Bramblebear and Lady Penelope* shows B. to have been familiar with the words since 1813 at least: *you gentlemen Servitors, Cortejos, and Cicisbei* ... (CMP 47).

81: *Po* ... *Teio*: Italian and Spanish rivers.

39.

'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming, 305
 But shy, and awkward, at first coming out,
 So much alarmed, that she is quite alarming,
 All Giggle, Blush – half Pertness, and half Pout,
 And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's harm in
 What you, she, it, or they, may be about; 310
 The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter,
 Besides, they always smell of Bread and Butter.

40.

But “Cavalier Servente” is the phrase
 Used in politest circles to express
 This supernumary slave who stays 315
 Close to the lady as a part of dress –
 Her word the only law which he obeys –
 His is no Sinecure, as you may guess;⁸²
 Coach, Servants, Gondola, he goes to call,
 And carries fan and tippet,⁸³ gloves, and shawl. 320

82: *His is no Sinecure*: in April 1819 B. himself became Cavalier Servente to Teresa Guiccioli; see BLJ VII 28: *I am drilling very hard to learn how to double a Shawl, and should succeed to admiration – if I did not always double it the wrong side out – and then I sometimes confuse and bring away two – so as to put all the Serventi out – besides keeping their Servite in the cold ... Hobhouse's diary, Wednesday August 6 1817: Madame Zagati [Marianna Segati, B.'s mistress] tells me that Cavalieri Serventi are often provided for in the marriage contract, with nobles, and that the higher class may change these cavaliers [as] often as they like – whilst those of her sets can not have more than one except after a reasonable lapse – Lewis told that Torlonia's daughter when she married had her cavalier mentioned in the contract which was to be her's “come se fosse nata nobile” [“as if she was of noble birth”] Madame Zegati added that the Cavaliers were often taken immediately after marriage so that no man can be sure even of his wife's first born (B.L.Add.M.S. 47234 f.9).*

83: *tippet*: a short cape.

41.

With all its sinful doings, I must say⁸⁴
 That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
 Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
 And Vines (not nailed to walls) from tree to tree
 Festooned,⁸⁵ much like the back Scene of a play, 325
 Or Melodrame, which people flock to see
 When the first Act is ended by a dance
 In Vineyards copied from the South of France.

42.

I like on Autumn Evenings to ride out
 Without being forced to bid my Groom be sure 330
 My Cloak is round his middle strapped about,
 Because the Skies are not the most secure;
 I know too that if stopped upon my route
 Where the Green Alleys windingly allure,⁸⁶
 Reeling with Grapes red Waggons choak the way – 335
 In England 'twould be Dung, Dust, or a Dray.⁸⁷

84: For all these sinful doings (all previous edns.) ... in the letter to Murray of March 9 1818 (BLJ VI 22) which also includes sts.28, 38, and 39. The line as fair-copied and first printed is itself amended from the original rough draft's *With all these sinful doings* ...; so B. is reverting to his first thought, which implies his own complicity in the sinful doings. See Robert Southey, letter to Landor, February 20 1820: *A fashion of poetry has been imported which has had a great run, and is in a fair way of being worn out. It is of Italian growth, – an adaptation of the manner of Pulci, Berni, and Ariosto in his sportive mood. Frere began it. What he produced was too good in itself and too inoffensive to become popular; for it attacked nothing and nobody; and it had the fault of his Italian models, that the transition from what is serious to what is burlesque was capricious. Lord Byron immediately followed; first with his Beppo, which implied the profligacy of the writer, and lastly, with his Don Juan, which is a foul blot on the literature of his country, an act of high treason on English poetry. The manner has a host of imitators. The use of Hudibrastic rhymes (the only thing in which it differs from the Italian) makes it very easy.* (*Life and Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Cuthbert Southey, V 21.)

85: Vines (not nailed to walls) from tree to tree / Festooned: The image was a favourite amongst English travel writers in Italy. Arthur Young's *Travels* (1792, p.23) has ... *with vines, trained in festoons, from tree to tree*; Joseph Forsyth's *Remarks* (1813, p.377) has *How beautiful are vines when married as here, and trained round the field from tree to tree in double and intersecting festoons!*

86: Where the Green Alleys windingly allure: compare *Don Juan* IX, final stanza:

... I feel my brain turn round,
 And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
 Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
 To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

Hobhouse's diary provides a useful gloss on *Green Alleys*: ... *walk in the vinehung fields as usual for a singular purpose ... we have flashes of lightning every night – dine and ride with Byron. Return over the other side of the river from Dolo which is a pretty wild green lane comparatively with the other dusty road – see two women mother & daughter who call themselves English to the people here – but I can only make out that they speak Greek ... and so on* (B.L.Add.Mss. 47234 f.17r: entry for August 20 1817).

87: Dray: sideless cart for heavy loads.

43.

I also like to dine on Becaficas,⁸⁸
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise tomorrow,
Nor through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken Man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow, 340
But with all Heaven to himself; that Day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing Candle-light which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky Cauldron⁸⁹ simmers.

44.

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin, 345
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as though it should be writ on Satin
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,⁹⁰
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
That not a single accent seems uncouth – 350
Like our harsh Northern whistling grunting Guttural,⁹¹
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter All.

45.

I like the women too (Forgive my folly!)
From the rich peasant-cheek of ruddy Bronze,
And large black eyes, that flash on you a volley 355
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high Dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid Glance –
Heart on her lips, and Soul within her eyes,
Soft as her Clime, and Sunny as her Skies. 360

88: *Becaficas*: a beccafico is a small bird much esteemed as a delicacy.

89: *reeking London's smoky Cauldron*: compare *Macbeth* IV i; also *TVoJ* 438-40.

90: *the sweet South*: compare *Twelfth Night* I i 5 (some editions).

91: *our harsh Northern whistling, grunting Guttural*: opens a series of statements on North European (i.e. British) uncouthness and provincialism which B. carries into *Don Juan*; see I st.64, and B.'s comment on Hobhouse's *Settentrionale* notions at I 1721, marginal altercation.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
 Italian Beauty! didst thou not inspire
 Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies §§
 With all we know of heaven, or can desire
 In what he hath bequeathed us? In what Guise,
 Though flashing from the fervour of the Lyre,
 Would *Words* describe thy past and present Glow,
 While yet Canova⁹³ can create below?

365

§ (In talking thus, the writer, more especially
 Of women, would be understood to say
 He speaks as a Spectator, not officially,
 And always, Reader! in a modest way;
 Perhaps too in no very great degree shall he
 Appear to have offended in this lay,
 Since, as all know, without the Sex, our Sonnets
 Would seem unfinished, like their untrimmed bonnets.)

(signed) *Printer's Devil*. –

§§: Note: For the received accounts of the cause of Raphael's death see his Lives.⁹⁴

92: is written vertically in the fair copy, over sts.45 and 47. The "Printer's Devil" Stanza was written at the end of the fair copy, with instructions as to where it should go. It seems to have been the last one written at the end of the first stage of composition, and is placed vertically on the blank fourth side of the last rough draft manuscript sheet (a printer's devil was a general-purpose errand-boy in a printing-house). B. seems to think st.45 an insufficient makeweight to its surroundings, and adds this, as a generalised hymn of praise to the Italian ladies with whom he is by now so thoroughly acquainted; a fact to which the Printer's Devil stanza facetiously draws attention, lest B. appear to believe after all in the primacy of ideal Beauty (see above, l.98 and n).

93: *Canova*: Antonio Canova (1757-1822) Italian sculptor much admired by B. and most others. See letter to Murray, BLJ V 133: *The Helen of Canova – (a bust which is in the house of Madame the Countess d'Albrizzi whom I know) is without exception to my mind the most perfectly beautiful of human conceptions – and far beyond my ideas of human execution –*

*In this beloved marble view
 Above the works & thoughts of Man –
 What Nature could – but would not do –
 And Beauty and Canova can!
 Beyond Imagination's power –
 Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
 With immortality her dower –
 Behold the Helen of the heart!*

94 Byron's note: ... see his Lives: Giorgio Vasari claimed in his *Lives of the Artists* that Raphael died after excessive love-making; but malaria is now accepted as the cause.

47.

“England! with all thy faults I love thee still!”⁹⁵
 I said at Calais,⁹⁶ and have not forgot it; 370
 I like to speak and lucubrate⁹⁷ my fill,
 I like the Government (but that is not it)
 I like the freedom of the press and quill,⁹⁸
 I like the Habeas Corpus (when we’ve got it)⁹⁹
 I like a Parliamentary debate,¹⁰⁰ 375
 Particularly when ’tis not too late;

48.

I like the taxes, when they’re not too many,
 I like a sea-coal fire, when not too dear,
 I like a beef-steak too, as well as any,
 Have no objection to a Pot of Beer,
 I like the weather – when it is not rainy – 380
 That is, I like two months of every Year;
 And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!¹⁰¹
 Which means that I like all, and every thing. –

49.

Our standing Army, and disbanded Seamen, 385

95: “*England! with all thy faults I love thee still*”: In the rough draft, l.370 goes, *So Cowper says ...* But B. is unhappy about quoting Cowper and makes the words at l.369 his own, not Cowper’s, in the fair copy. The line echoes not only Cowper, but Charles Churchill, *The Farewell*, l.27: *Be England what she will / With all her faults she is my country still*. A fuller quotation from Cowper may help us understand the change (B. had said in an 1813 letter to his fiancée – BLJ III 179 – see also CMP 147 – that Cowper was *no poet*):

*England, with all thy faults, I love thee still
 My country! and while yet a nook is left
 Where English minds and manners may be found,
 Shall be constrain’d to love thee. Though thy clime
 Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deform’d
 With dripping rains, or wither’d by a frost,
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France
 With all her vines; nor for Ausonias groves
 Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bow’rs.*

(*The Task*, II 206-15.)

Either B.’s or Cowper’s line was quoted in 1834 by a Bolton muslin-weaver when testifying before the Commons Poor Law Committee. See E.P.Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.334.

96: *I said at Calais*: a recollection of B.’s leaving England for the last time in 1816; before sailing, he measured out his length on the Dover grave of the poet Charles Churchill (see previous note).

97: *lucubrate*: to work laboriously into the night over a literary work.

98: *the freedom of the press and quill*: though England’s censorship laws were lighter than some on the continent, B.’s established publisher, John Murray, found *TVoJ* too much of a risk, and the radical who did publish it, John Hunt, was prosecuted and fined £100.

99: *Habeas Corpus (when we’ve got it)*: the law making arbitrary imprisonment impossible (see *TVoJ*, l.568) was suspended at intervals during the Napoleonic wars and the agitation afterwards.

100: *a Parliamentary debate*: as a peer B. spoke three times in the House of Lords, starting with his celebrated maiden speech against the death penalty for Luddism (see this website); though he rapidly became disillusioned with parliamentary affairs.

101: *God save the Regent – Church – and King!* compare *TVoJ*, *passim*; what is here a brief ironical gesture is there expanded into an elaborate masterpiece of subversion.

Poor's rate, Reform, my Own, the Nation's debt,
 Our little Riots just to show we're free men,
 Our trifling Bankruptcies in the Gazette,
 Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women;
 All these I can forgive, and those forget; 390
 And greatly venerate our recent glories,
 And wish they were not owing to the Tories.¹⁰²

50.

But to my tale of Laura; for I find
 Digression is a sin¹⁰³ that by degrees
 Becomes exceeding tedious to my Mind, 395
 And therefore may the reader too displease –
 The gentle reader – who may wax unkind,
 And caring little for the Author's ease,
 Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
 And hapless situation for a Bard.¹⁰⁴ 400

51.¹⁰⁵

Oh! that I had the art of easy writing
 What should be easy reading! could I scale
 Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
 Those pretty poems never known to fail!
 How quickly would I print (the world delighting) 405
 A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale,
 And sell you, mixed with Western Sentimentalism,
 Some samples of the *finest Orientalism*. §

§: The "*finest Orientalism*": a new phrase for a very common sort of poetry. For its meaning, consult Mercutio, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2 Scene 4: "The *What?*" Mercutio: "The pox of such antick, lispings, affecting fantasticoes – these new turners of accent – "By Jesu, a very good blade – a very tall man – a very fine whore."

52.

But I am but a nameless sort of person

102: *And greatly venerate our recent glories, / And wish they were not owing to the Tories:* see *TVoJ*, sts.1-7.

103: *Digression is a sin:* compare *Don Juan* I 51-2.

104: *a hard / And hapless situation for a Bard:* compare *Don Juan* IV 36-7.

105: Byron's note: facetious references to the popularity of B.'s earlier Turkish Tales, which he now despised (see *BLJ* V 192) and from which Beppo represents a radical break and a considered comical critique. *Assyrian* (406) refers to Henry Gally Knight's *Ilderim, A Syrian Tale*, published two years previously to *Beppo*. See B. to Murray, *BLJ* V 185: *You say that "Margaret of Anjou" & "Ilderim" do not keep pace with your other saleables – I should have thought the Assyrian tale very succeedable. Or:*

*I read the "Christabel,"
 Very well:
 I read the "Missionary";
 Pretty – very:
 I tired at "Ilderim";
 Ahem! (BLJ V 187)*

The *Romeo* reference (see II iv 27 *et. seq.*) parallels B.'s Romantic verse with Tybalt's supposedly fantastical fencing jargon.

(A broken Dandy¹⁰⁶ lately on my travels) 410
And take for Rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon¹⁰⁷ unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for Critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose, 415
But Verse is more in fashion – so here goes!

53.

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as Arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too, 420
Those jealous whiffs which never any change meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of Squabble,
From Sinners of high Station to the Rabble. –

54.

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair, 425
As happy as unlawful Love could make them;
The Gentleman was fond, the Lady fair,
Their chains so slight 'twas not worth while to break them;
The World beheld them with indulgent air;
The Pious only wished "The Devil take them!" – 430
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old Sinners to be young Ones' baits.

106: *A broken Dandy*: the Dandies were an identifiable social and historical group, of whom Brummel was the most celebrated. By 1817 their days had gone; see BLJ IX 22, and below, 474n. James R. Fisher (*Here the Story Ends – Byron's Beppo*, 1993 *Byron Journal*, pp.61-70) suggests a pun on "Dante", arguing that B., late in the poem's composition, was aiming at the perfect medieval number of one hundred stanzas.

107: *Walker's Lexicon*: a rhyming dictionary, standard *vade mecum* (see *Don Juan* I, 201, 2-3) of poets.

55.

But they were young;¹⁰⁸ Oh! what without our Youth
 Would Love be! What would Youth be without love?
 Youth lends its joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth, 435
 Heart, Soul, and all that seems as from above;
 But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth –
 One of few things Experience don't improve,
 Which is perhaps the reason why old fellows
 Are always such preposterously jealous. 440

56.

It was the Carnival, as I have said
 Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
 Laura the usual preparations made,
 Which you do, when your mind's made up to go
 To-night to M^{rs}. Boehm's Masquerade,¹⁰⁹ 445
 Spectator or Partaker in the Show;
 The only difference known between the cases
 Is *here*, we have six weeks of "varnished faces."¹¹⁰

108: B.'s surprising assertion that Laura, the married woman, and the highly sophisticated Count, are *young*, as opposed to *silly ... old people* (deleted 1.438 in the rough draft) is *rapidly forgotten* – fortunately, as Beppo is indeed, when he returns, *preposterously jealous* (440). Peter Vassallo, in *Byron The Italian Literary Influence* (pp.57-9) argues that B. is here borrowing directly, and with only glancing relevance, from the uncharacteristically innocent thirty-fifth Stanza of Casti's *Il Rosignuolo*. This novella is itself a versification of the tale (about the girl and her "nightingale") in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Day Five, Story Four):

*Che vale senza amor la giovinezza,
 Che vale senza giovinezza amore?
 Gioventù con amor gioja e dolcezza
 Spirito vigor diletto infonde in core;
 Ma se insipida langue e amor non prezza
 Fatuo foco divien, che passa e muore.
 E se amor non si accende in giovin petto,
 E sol di scherno e di dispregio oggetto.*

[What's youth worth without love? What's love worth without youth? Youth brings joy and sweetness with love, and vigour to the heart; but if it languishes, it fades away, and becomes the object of scorn and ridicule.]

109: *M^{rs} Boehm's Masquerade*: The kind of event which B. had himself frequented when in London. Mrs. Boehm was a "distinguished lady of the haut ton" who had in June 1817 held "A Grand Masquerade" at her house in St James' Square London; The Dukes of Gloucester and Wellington were there in plain dress, and the Duke and Duchess of Grafton wore dominoes. Among the other guests was B.'s old flame Caroline Lamb, with whom Wellington subsequently had an affair, as he did with B.'s other acquaintance, Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. At BLJ IV 135-6 B. describes a scene at a masked ball in July 1814, given at Burlington House in Wellington's honour, at which the now unwanted Caroline Lamb passed by him repeatedly, *masked & dominoed and displaying her green pantaloons every now & then*.

110: *six weeks*: the Venetian carnival started in late December, and continued to Ash Wednesday in February. ... "varnished faces": see *The Merchant of Venice* II v 32:

Shylock: *What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
 Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum,
 And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
 Clamber not you up the casements then,
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces ...*

57.

Laura, when dressed, was (as I sang before)
 A pretty woman as was ever seen, 450
 Fresh as the Angel o'er a New Inn door,
 Or Frontispiece of a new Magazine,
 With all the Fashions which the last Month wore
 Coloured, and silver paper leaved between
 That and the title-page, for fear the Press 455
 Should soil with parts of Speech the parts of dress.

58.

They went to the Ridotto;¹¹¹ 'tis a hall
 Where People dance, and sup, and dance again –
 Its proper name perhaps were a masqued Ball –
 But that's of no importance to my Strain; 460
 'Tis (on a smaller Scale) like our Vauxhall,
 Excepting that it can't be spoiled by Rain;
 The Company is "mixed" (the phrase I quote is
 As much as saying they're below your Notice.) –

59.

For a "mixt Company" implies that, Save 465
 Yourself and friends and half a hundred more
 Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
 The rest are but a vulgar Set – the Bore
 Of Public places, where they basely brave
 The fashionable stare of twenty Score 470
 Of well-bred persons called "*The World*"¹¹² – but I,
 Although I know them, really don't know why. –

Compare B.'s use of Jacques, from *As You Like It*, in the Epigraph. B. was sufficient of a Shakespeare student to know how useful these two killjoys were as symbols for what he was writing against. See also the Epigraph to Cantos VI, VII and VIII of *Don Juan* – which implicates Malvolio as well – and that to *TVoJ*.

111: *Ridotto*: a Venetian place of musical entertainment, gambling social meeting, normally attached to a theatre. Unlike London's *Vauxhall* (1.461) it was covered.

112: "*the World*": see *Don Juan* XI, 45, 1-6:

*In the Great World, – which being interpreted
 Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,
 And about two thousand people bred
 By no means to be very wise or witty,
 But to sit up while others lie in bed,
 And look down on the universe with pity ...*

60.

This is the Case in England, at least was
 During the Dynasty of Dandies,¹¹³ now
 Perchance succeeded by some other class 475
 Of Imitated Imitators;¹¹⁴ how soon! how
 Irreperably soon decline, Alas!
 The Demagogues of fashion; all below
 Is frail; how easily The World is lost
 By Love, or War, and, now and then, by Frost. 480

61.

Crushed was Napoleon by the Northen Thor,¹¹⁵
 Who knocked his army down with icy hammer,
 Stopped by the *Elements* – like a Whaler, or
 A blundering Novice in his new French Grammar;¹¹⁶
 Good cause had he to doubt the chance of War, 485
 And as for Fortune – but *I* dare not d—n her,
 Because, were I to ponder to Infinity,
 The More I should believe in her Divinity.

113: *the dynasty of Dandies:* see above, 410n. In 1821 B. wrote, “I liked the Dandies – they were always very civil to me – though in general they disliked literary people ... I had a tinge of Dandyism in my minority – and probably retained enough of it – to conciliate the great ones – at four & twenty. (BLJ IX 22). Later in the same journal he recorded the following Dandy anecdote: A beau (dandies were not then christened) came into the P[rince] of W[ales] and exclaimed – ‘Waiter bring me a glass of Madeira Negus with a Jelly - and rub my plate with a Chalotte’ This in a very soft tone of voice. – – A Lieutenant of the Navy who sate in the next box immediately roared out the following rough parody – – “Waiter – bring me a glass of d—d stiff Grog – and rub my a—e with a brick-bat.” (BLJ IX 29) See also *Don Juan*, XI, 78, 1.

114: Of imitated imitators: – how (all previous edns.) *Of Imitated Imitators:* *Beppo* is itself an imitation of an imitation – Frere’s *Whistlecraft* imitating Italian ottava rima; Frere is thus an Imitated Imitator. See Hobhouse’s diary, Thursday October 9 1817: ... *came home and wrote poetry in the <the> Childe’s style – it is difficult but not inimitable – Byron has imitated Frere’s imitation in a description of Venice and done it well.* (B.L.Add.M.S. 47234 f.28): this is the first reference to *Beppo*: Hobhouse does not mention it again in his Venice diary). There is an amusing echo here of York’s critical words at *Richard II*, II i 19-23:

... *Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound
 The open ear of youth doth always listen;
 Report of fashions in proud Italy,
 Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
 Limp after in base imitation.*

115: *Crushed was Napoleon by the Northen Thor:* refers to Napoleon’s disastrous Russian campaign of 1812, in which he was finally defeated by “Général Hiver”. Compare also the depiction of Charles XII at Johnson’s *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, 191-222.

116: *Stopped by the Elements:* a Byronic in-joke. In his 1821 journal he recorded When Brummell [Beau Brummell, the leading Dandy] was obliged ... to retire to France - he knew no French & having obtained a Grammar for the purposes of Study – our friend Scrope Davies was asked what progress Brummell had made in French – to which he responded – “that B[rummell] had been stopped like Buonaparte in Russia by the Elements” – I have put this pun into “Beppo” ... (BLJ IX 21-2).

62.¹¹⁷

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet;
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage; 490
I cannot say that she's done much for me yet,
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage –
We've not yet closed accounts – and we shall see yet
How much she'll make amends for past miscarriage;
Meantime the Goddess I'll no more importune, 495
Unless to thank her when she's made my fortune.

63.

To turn – and to return, the Devil take it!
This Story slips forever through my fingers,
Because, just as the Stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be, and so it rather lingers; 500
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public Singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another – when I'm next at leisure.

64.

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place 505
To which I mean to go myself tomorrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I'm rather hippish,¹¹⁸ and may borrow
Some spirits guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my Sorrow 510
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make or find
Something shall leave it half an hour behind.) –

65.

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd –
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips –
To some she whispers, others, speaks aloud – 515
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips –
Complains of warmth, and, this complaint avowed,
Her lover brings the Lemonade she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being drest so ill. – 520

117: though the tone here is light, the meaning is profoundly authentic. B. believed above all in a malicious Nemesis – the word is more apt to his conception than *Fortune*.

118: *hippish*: low-spirited.

66.

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third – where did She buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and Suburban,
A Sixth's white Silk has got a yellow taint, 525
A Seventh's thin Muslin surely will be *her* bane,
And Lo! an Eighth appears! "I'll see no more!"
For fear, like Banquo's kings,¹¹⁹ they reach a score.

67.

Mean time, while she was thus at others gazing, 530
Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the Men's half-whispered mode of praising,
And, till 'twas done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That at her time of Life so many were
Admirers still, but Men are so debased – 535
Those brazen Creatures always suit their taste.

68.

For my part now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty Women – but I won't discuss
A thing which is a Scandal to the land;
I only don't see why it should be thus, 540
And if I were but in a gown and band –
Just to entitle me to make a fuss –
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly¹²⁰
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

119: *Banquo's kings*: see *Macbeth* IV i 112-4. Compare *Don Juan* I 13, X 141-2, or XI 427.

120: *Wilberforce and Romilly*: William Wilberforce (1759-1833) and Sir Samuel Romilly (1757-1818): evangelical reformers respectively of the slave trade and the law. For Wilberforce, see *Don Juan* IV 915; for Romilly, see *Don Juan* I 116-20. Both are for B. archetypes of the canting do-gooder. He disliked Romilly for the seeming treachery he displayed during the separation: accepting B.'s retainer, he then, owing to a slip-up, accepted Annabella's too, and ended up neutral; although B. didn't see it that way: see BLJ V 34-5. For an excellent anti-Wilberforce story see BLJ IV 327; and at BLJ VI 97 B. writes to Hobhouse, *Wilberforce – the canting Ludro! – that son of a bitch must be beaten or one shall have the Abbey of Westminster turned into a Conventicle*. Romilly killed himself upon the death of his wife in 1818; see BLJ VI 80-1 for B.'s astonishingly vindictive reaction.

69.

While Laura thus was seen, and seeing, smiling, 545
 Talking she knew not why, and cared not what,
 So that her female friends with envy broiling
 Beheld her airs, and triumph, and all that,
 And well drest Males still kept before her filing,
 And passing bowed and mingled with her chat, 550
 More than the rest, One person seemed to stare¹²¹
 With pertinacity that's rather rare.

70.

He was a Turk the colour of Mahogany,
 And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
 Because the Turks so much admire Philoguny,¹²² 555
 Although their Usage of their wives is sad;
 'Tis said they use no better than a dog¹²³ any
 Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad;¹²⁴
 They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit'em,¹²⁵
 Four wives by law, and Concubines "ad libitum."¹²⁶ – 560

121: *One person seemed to stare*: the relationship between this character and the surrounding scene of revel may usefully be compared with similar events at *Don Juan III* sts.26-35 *et. seq.*, when Lambro stalks towards the party being given by Haidee to celebrate the end of the mourning period following his supposed death. B.'s interest in the theme of the "Spectre at the Feast" – familiar from the stories of Belshazzar and Macbeth – is also explored in the 1806 poem *Oscar of Alva* (CPW I 54) and, especially, in the abandoned 1812 fragment *Il Diavolo Inamorato* (CPW III 13) – the latter having a Venetian setting strikingly similar to that of *Beppo*.

122: *Philoguny*: properly spelled *philogyny*; the study of women.

123: *no better than a dog*: to Moslems, a dog is an unclean beast.

124: *whom they purchase like a pad*: "PAD: The highway, or a robber thereon: also a bed" – *Lexicon Balatronicum, or Dictionary of Buckish Slang* (1811).

125: the *Quarterly Review* put the same thought much more prosaically in an article on The Barbary States, Volume XV April 1816 p.182: *According to the Mussulman ritual, every man may take to himself four legitimate wives, and as many concubines as he has the inclination, or the means to keep.* The article comments favourably on *A Narrative of Ten Years' Residence in Tripoli*, which B. used as a source for *Don Juan III*. See also below, 612n. Not all experts on the Levant agreed, however. Here is Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (see *Don Juan*, V, 24), writing to her sister, Lady Mar, on April 1 1717: *'Tis true their Law permits them 4 Wives, but there is no Instance of a Man of Quality that makes use of this Liberty, or of a Woman of Rank that would suffer it. When a Husband happens to be inconstant (as these things will happen) he keeps his mistress in a House apart and visits her as privately as he can, just as 'tis with you.* (*Letters*, ed. Halsband, I 329). B., who knew the Montagu letters well, is thus probably being, via Laura's naivety, ironical at the expense of the established anti-Islamic wisdom of his day.

126: *Concubines "ad libitum"*: as many as they wish (Latin – literally "at one's pleasure" – used in music to indicate an option).

71.

They lock them up, and Veil and guard them daily;
 They scarcely can behold their male relations,
 So that their moments do not pass so gaily
 As is supposed the case with Northern nations;¹²⁷
 Confinement too must make them look quite palely, 565
 And as the Turks abhor long conversations
 Their days are either past in doing nothing,
 Or bathing, nursing, making love, and cloathing.

72.

They cannot read – and so don't lisp in Criticism,
 Nor write – and so they don't affect the Muse, 570
 Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
 Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews –
 In Harams Learning soon would make a pretty Schism!
 But luckily these Beauties are no "Blues"¹²⁸ –
 No bustling *Botherby*¹²⁹ have they to show 'em 575
 "That Charming passage in the last new Poem!"

127: *Northern nations*: continues the theme from above, l.351 – here B. implies Anglo-Saxon voyeurism. For harems, and a touch of voyeurism, see *Don Juan* V-VI, *passim*.

128: "Blues": female intellectuals; see *Don Juan* IV 857.

129: no bustling Botherbys (all previous edns.) ... no bustling Botherby: refers to William Sotheby, the forgotten poet who bears roughly the relationship to *Beppo* that Wordsworth and Southey do to *Don Juan* and *TVoJ*; apart from his dullness, he fails, through being nothing other than a poet, to convince as one. See below, st.75; also BLJ VI 33, and 35-6. The main target of these stanzas is not, however, Sotheby; B. is satirising the ladies – see *Don Juan* I 175-6 – who make possible what success he enjoys; in the later *Don Juan* passage he seems, even though in irony, fonder of them than he does here. Robert Southey wrote upon reading the poem, *Poor Sotheby! those stanzas in Beppo will half kill him*. (Bodleian M.S. Eng. Letters d. 47. 86). Sotheby (1757-1833) had made his name by translations of Wieland's *Oberon* in 1798 (from which B. may have borrowed in *The Corsair*); and of Virgil's *Georgics* in 1800. B. met him in 1815, when his tragedy *Ivan* was accepted, but then rejected, at Drury Lane (see letters to Sotheby, BLJ IV 311 and 313; also V 30); the relationship was cordial. Then, in July 1817, B. was sent anonymously a copy of an Italian edition of his poems, with a note containing some *gratuitously impertinent remarks*, in a hand which he identified as Sotheby's. The letter to Murray in which he relates this (BLJ V 252-3) concludes with the exclamation *Sunburn me! if I don't stick a pin through this old Blue-bottle*. – Sotheby subsequently denied sending the package; but B. did not care – see BLJ V 35-6. In *English Bards* (815-18) B. had praised Sotheby, along with Gifford and Hector Macneil, as one of those poets who *Feel as they write, and write but as they feel*. This section of *Beppo* returns, in its different style, to the subject matter of *English Bards*; the about-face signals both new standards of rigour and new depths of personalised contempt. Scott and Moore had, conversely, been ridiculed in *English Bards*; only towards Rogers is B.'s attitude consistent. For further thoughts about Sotheby see BLJ IX 29. In the second part of *The Blues* (1821) where "Botherby" is portrayed at a Bluestocking event, B.'s tone has mellowed.

73.

No *solemn Antique* Gentleman of rhyme,
 Who, having angled all his life for Fame,
 And getting but a nibble at a time,
 Still fussily keeps fishing on; the Same 580
 Small “Triton of the Minnows,”¹³⁰ the Sublime
 Of Mediocrity,¹³¹ the furious tame,
 The Echo’s Echo, Usher of the School
 Of female Wits, boy bards, in short a fool.

74.

A Stalking Oracle of awful phrase, 585
 The approving “*Good!*” (by no means GOOD in law)
 Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
 The Bluest of Bluebottles¹³² you e’er saw,
 Teazing with blame, excruciating with praise,¹³³
 Gorging the slightest slice of Flattery raw,¹³⁴ 590
 Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
 And Sweating Plays so middling, Bad were Better. –

130: “Triton of the Minnows”: see Coriolanus III i 89.

131: *the Sublime / Of Mediocrity ... The Echo’s Echo*: see the descriptions of Sir Fretful Plagiary in Act I of Sheridan’s *The Critic* – one of B.’s favourite plays.

132: *The Bluest of Bluebottles*: at once a domestic pest, a Tory, a policeman, and a would-be seducer of intellectual women.

133: *Teazing with blame, excruciating with praise*: compare Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 201-2.

134: **Gorging the little fame to get all raw (all previous edns.)**. Murray never printed the amended (and disgusting) line, despite the following (BLJ VI 26): ... *When you can reprint “Beppo” – instead of line “Gorging the little Fame to get all raw” insert – Gorging the slightest slice of Flattery raw, - because – we have the word “Fame” in the preceding Stanza – (also as a rhyme too) – perhaps the line is now a little weakened – because “all raw” expresses the Cormorant Cameleon’s avidity for air – or inflation of his vicious vanity – but – ask Mr Gifford – & Mr Hobhouse – & as they think so let it be – for though repetition is only the “soul of Ballad singing” & best avoided in describing the Harlequin jacket of a Mountebank - yet anything is better than weakening an expression – or a thought. – Concern for Sotheby’s ego was probably as strong a consideration as concern for B.’s repetitions. This edition is the first one to use the line as amended.*

75.

One hates an Author that's *all Author*;¹³⁵ fellows
 In foolscap Uniforms¹³⁶ turned up with Ink; 595
 So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
 One don't know what to say to them, or think,¹³⁷
 Unless to puff them with a pair of Bellows;¹³⁸
 Of Coxcombry's worst Coxcombs, even the Pink
 Are preferable to these Shreds of Paper,
 These unquenched Snuffings of the Midnight taper. – 600

76.

Of these same we see several, and of others,
 Men of the World who know the World like Men,
 Scott, Rogers, Moore,¹³⁹ and all the better brothers
 Who think of something else besides the pen; 605
 But for the Children of the "Mighty Mother's",¹⁴⁰ –
 The Would-be Wits and can't-be Gentlemen¹⁴¹ –
 I leave them to their daily "Tea is ready,"¹⁴²
 Smug Coterie, and Literary Lady.¹⁴³ – –

135: The point of the expanded attack on Sotheby, and part of the artistic point of *Beppo*, has by now become clearer: it is B.'s way of advertising his own new poetic voice, and of criticising English letters as a whole. Poetry has neutered itself by ceasing either to serve or to reflect the world, and by reflecting and serving itself instead. The author who does nothing else is a self-disqualifier. What Sotheby is to *Beppo*, it goes without saying, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge will be to *Don Juan*; B. widens the target area as his confidence increases.

136: *foolscap Uniforms*: compare *Don Juan*, IV, 109, 2: a passage close to this in spirit.

137: *One don't know what to say to them, or think*: again reminds one of Sir Fretful Plagiary in *The Critic*, who similarly baffles civilised discourse.

138: *puff them with a pair of Bellows*: see Mr Puff in *The Critic*, Act I; could also be a reference to the Reverend William Beloe, editor of *The British Critic*.

139: *Men of the World*: for Scott, Rogers and Moore, see *Don Juan* Dedication, 7, 8; also I sts. 205-6.

140: *Children of the "Mighty Mother's"*: see Pope, 1743 *Dunciad*, Book I, i; the *Mother* is the Goddess Dulness.

141: *Would-be Wits, and can't-be-Gentlemen*: possible references to the pretentious characters Sir Politick Would-Be in Jonson's *Volpone* and M. Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

142: *"Tea is ready"*: compare *Don Juan* IV, 108, 8.

143: *Smug Coterie, and Literary Lady*: compare *Don Juan* IV, 109, 7-8.

77.

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
 Have none of these instructive, pleasant people, 610
 And *One* would seem to them a new Invention,
 Unknown as bells¹⁴⁴ within a Turkish Steeple;
 I think 'twould almost be worth while to pension
 (Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
 A Missionary Author¹⁴⁵ – just to preach 615
 Our Christian usage of the parts of Speech.

78.

No Chemistry for them unfolds her Gases,
 No Metaphysics are let loose in lectures,¹⁴⁶
 No Circulating Library amasses
 Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures¹⁴⁷ 620
 Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
 No Exhibition glares with annual pictures;
 They stare not on the Stars from out their Attics,¹⁴⁸
 Nor deal (thank God for that!) in Mathematics.¹⁴⁹

144: *bells*: CPW points out a triple pun – *bells*, *belles*, and *Bell*, the nickname of Annabella, Lady Byron. See *The Bride of Abydos*, B.'s note to I, 232: *Clapping of hands calls the servants. The Turks hate a superfluous expenditure of voice, and they have no bells*. B. might be thought a keen student of Islam, even though in an 1813 letter to Murray (BLJ III 190-1) he asks whether Mahomet is buried in Mecca or Medina. But he would have found the Islamic prohibition against bells referred to in the *Narrative of Ten Years' Residence in Tripoli*, by the sister-in-law of Richard Tully, the British Consul at Tripoli from 1783 to 1793. He was to use the book as the source of much description in Canto III of *Don Juan*: *The people are summoned [to prayer] by a most uncouth noise made by this guard, who carries with him a tin vessel or box, with pieces of loose iron in it. These discordant sounds are substituted for those of bells, which are unknown here, not being allowed by the religion of the Moors* (p.16). See also *Don Juan* V 393: *Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine*.

145: *A Missionary Author*: conceivably a reference to Robert Southey, who expressed firm views on the proselytism of the Empire, and whose Eastern epics may have been conceived in part as an arm of Anglican evangelism.

146: *lectures*: perhaps a reference to the philosophy lectures of Coleridge (referred to in the rough draft) or of Sir James Mackintosh.

147: *Religious novels, moral tales – and strictures*: compare *Don Juan* I 121-5 (for moral novelists and Wilberforce, see *Don Juan* IV 959, n; for “Strictures” on B., see BLJ III 60).

148: *from out their Attics*: contrast above, ll.197-8.

149: *Nor deal (thank God for that!) in Mathematics*: refers, again, to Lady Byron; see *Don Juan* I 89. For Mussulwomen's education, see *Don Juan* VI st.44.

79.

Why I thank God for that is no great matter; 625
 I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
 And as perhaps they would not highly flatter,
 I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;¹⁵⁰
 I fear I have a little turn for Satire,
 And yet, methinks, the older that one grows 630
 Inclines us more to laugh than scold,¹⁵¹ though Laughter
 Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

80.

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!¹⁵²
 Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
 In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,¹⁵³ 635
 Abominable Man no more allays
 His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
 I love you both, and both shall have my praise:
 Oh, for old Saturn's reign of Sugar-candy!
 Meantime I drink to your return in Brandy. 640

81.

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
 Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
 Which seems to say, "Madam I do you honour,
 "And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay;"
 Could Staring win a woman, this had won her, 645
 But Laura could not thus be led astray;
 She had stood fire too long, and well, to boggle
 Even at this Stranger's most outlandish Ogle. –

150: *my life (to come) in prose*: refers punningly to the prosaic fact of damnation (see *TVoJ* st.15) and to B.'s prose Memoirs, burnt by his friends after his death.

151: *Inclines us more to laugh than scold*: compare *Don Juan* IV, 4, 1-2: *And if I laugh at any mortal thing, / 'Tis that I may not weep ...*

152: *Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!*: a self-quotation from a letter to Moore of December 1816 (BLJ V 149) where the qualities are associated with loyal clergymen (B. refers to his friend Francis Hodgson) who ignore the revolutionary implications of Luddism. St.80, with its mock-regret for vanished Edens, is perhaps a dark extension of the couplet to st.79, laughter rather than scolding (or scorn, as the rough draft had it) being, as a reaction to folly, a symptom of fallen times. Beppo's approach towards Laura, a thing easily forgotten by those not reading at speed, is postponed still more gratuitously by the addition, an effect towards which B. was probably aiming. See next note for a context. The stanza arrived too late for the first three editions.

82.

The Morning now was on the point of breaking,
 A turn of time at which I would advise 650
 Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
 In any other kind of Exercise,¹⁵⁴
 To make their preparations for forsaking
 The Ball-room ere the Sun begins to rise,
 Because when once the Lamps and Candles fail 655
 His blushes make them look a little pale.

83.

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
 And staid them over for some silly reason;
 And then I looked (I hope it was no crime)
 To see what lady best stood out the season – 660
 And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
 Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
 I never saw but One¹⁵⁵ (the Stars withdrawn)
 Whose bloom could, after dancing, dare the Dawn!

84.

The Name of this Aurora I'll not mention,¹⁵⁶ 665
 Although I might, for She was nought to me,
 More than that patent Work of God's Invention,
 A charming woman whom we like to see;
 But writing names would merit reprehension,
 Yet if you like to find out this fair *She*, 670
 At the next London, or Parisian ball,
 You still may mark her cheek, outblossoming All. –

154: *any other kind of Exercise*: indecent.

155: *but One*: often identified as Mrs Anne Wilmot – see *She Walks in Beauty*, and BLJ III 214, where B. says in a journal, comparing her favourably with other Blues, *she, at least, is a swan, and might frequent a purer stream*. However, Donald Reiman, quoting research in the archive of Bernard Quaritch Ltd., suggests that she is Lady William Russell, a friend of Annabella, whom B. is praising in order to tease his wife. The reference is thus more personal than normally supposed. See Reiman, review of CPW IV and V, in *Keats-Shelley Review*, Autumn 1988, pp.91-2.

156: *The Name of this Aurora I'll not mention*: compare the description of Haidee, at *Don Juan* II 1129-33:

*And down the Cliff the Island Virgin came,
 And near the Cave her quick light footsteps drew,
 While the Sun smiled on her with his first flame,
 And young Aurora kissed her lips with dew,
 Taking her for a Sister; just the same
 Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
 Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
 Had all the advantage of not being air.*

Like Haidee, Mrs Wilmot – or Lady William Russell – is apparently exempt from normal female limitation. Aurora also anticipates the other uncharacteristically ideal ottava rima heroine, Aurora Raby.

85.

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball, 675
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those cursed Gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*. 680

86.

In this they're like our Coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same – the Crowd, and pulling, hauling –
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws¹⁵⁷ –
They make a never-intermitted bawling;
At home our Bow Street Gem'men¹⁵⁸ keep the laws, 685
And here a Sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing. –

87.

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,¹⁵⁹ 690
Discussing all the dances gone and past,
The Dancers, and their dresses too, beside,
Some little Scandals eke: but all aghast
(As to their palace stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer, 695
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her!

157: *blasphemies enough to break their jaws*: compare *TVoJ*, 468-70.

158: *Bow street Gem'men*: the Bow Street Runners, precursors of the Metropolitan Police, had been founded twelve years previously in 1805.

159: *tide*: although there is no tide at Venice.

“Sir!” said the Count with brow exceeding grave,
 “Your unexpected presence here will make
 “It necessary for myself to crave
 “Its import – but perhaps ’tis a mistake; 700
 “I hope it is so, and at once to wave
 “All Compliment – I hope so, for *your* sake;
 “You understand my meaning, or you *shall*” –
 “Sir” (quoth the Turk) “’tis no mistake at all,

89.

“That Lady is *my Wife!*”¹⁶¹ Much Wonder paints 705
 The Lady’s changing cheek, as well it might,
 But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
 Italian females don’t do so outright;
 They only call a little on their Saints,
 And then come to themselves, almost, or quite, 710
 Which saves much hartshorn,¹⁶² salts, and sprinkling faces,
 And cutting stays, as usual in such cases. –

160: Beppo’s return brings at last into focus the immediate narrative source of the poem, an anecdote told B. by the husband of his Venetian mistress Marianna Segati (see above, 354n, and BLJ V 267). B. was on excellent terms with Pietro Segati – another major factor influencing the poem’s moral tone. **Hobhouse’s diary**, Friday August 29 1817: *Notes [to Childe Harold IV] dine ride moonlight walk with Byron – Zagati at dinner, told us two singular stories ... A Turk arrived at the Regina di Ungheria inn at Venice and lodged there – he asked to speak to the mistress of the inn a buxom lady of 40, in keeping with certain children & who had lost her husband many years before at sea – after some preliminaries my hostess went to the Turk who immediately shut the door, & began questioning her about her family & her late husband. She told her loss – when the Turk asked if her husband had any particular mark about him she said – yes he had a scar on his shoulder – “Something like this?” said the Turk pulling down his robe – “I am your husband – I have been to Turkey – I have made a large fortune and I make you three offers, either to quit your amoroso and come with me, or to stay with your amoroso or to accept a pension and live alone.” – The lady has not yet given an answer, but Madame Zagati, said “I’m sure I would not leave my amoroso for any husband” – looking at Byron. This is too gross even for me.- (B.L.Add.M.S. 47234 f.18). Hobhouse’s settentrionale notions of moral correctness were deeply offended by the gross laxity displayed by all parties, in both narrative and real life. B. put the tale to good use: but now see note below to 784.*

161: “*That Lady is my Wife!*”: contrast Homer, *Odyssey* Books XIII-XXIII.

162: *hartshorn*: ammonia derived from deer antlers; contrast *The Waltz*, 145-6.

She said – what could she say? why, not a word:
 But the Count courteously invited in
 The Stranger, much appeased by what he heard; 715
 “Such things perhaps we’d best discuss within” –
 Said he – “don’t let us make ourselves absurd
 “In public by a Scene – nor raise a din,
 “For then the chief and only satisfaction
 “Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.” 720

91.

They entered, and for Coffee called; it came,
 A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
 Although the way they make it’s not the same;¹⁶⁴
 Now Laura much recovered, or less loth
 To speak, cries “Beppo! what’s your Pagan name?”¹⁶⁵ 725
 “Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!
 “And how came you to be away so long?
 “Are you not sensible ’twas very wrong?

163: The scene offers another opportunity to compare B. with Casti’s *Novelle Galanti*, and to show the finer comic touch of the English poet. When, at the corresponding moment in Casti’s *Il Cavalier Servente*, the husband finds the lovers *in flagrante*, he expresses surprise:

*Con quella brutta diavola, gli disse,
 Voi senz’obbligo fa si fatte cose!
 E sacramento alcun non vel prescrisse!*

[“You are doing such a thing with this devilish female brute,” he said, “without being obliged to! No sacrament prescribes this as your job!”] In *Il Ritorno Inaspettato*, he starts making love to the wife while she sleeps:

*... Si scosse
 Ella a tal voce, e stette ancor dubbiosa,
 Se Lindoro o Rosmin l’incubo fosse;
 Ma del vero accorgendosi ancor più,
 Come sei tu? sciamà, Lindor, sei tu?*

*E chi vuoi tu ch’io sia se non son io?
 Lindoro smarrito alquanto allor riprese ...
 ... Ma dell’error s’avvide, e disse: o mio
 Caro Lindor, e quale a me ti rese
 Destin felice, e in quel momento appunto,
 Che in sogno mi pareo che tu eri giunto?*

[She woke on hearing his voice, and started up bewildered, uncertain whether the incubus was Lindoro or Rosmin [her lover]; but, realising the truth, cried, “Lindoro, how is it that it’s you?” “And who did you think I might be if not me?” ... seeing her mistake, she said, “Oh my dear Lindoro, how happy is the fate which has brought you back to me just at the moment when I was dreaming of your homecoming!”]

164: *the way they make it’s not the same:* see *Don Juan III*, 63, 3 - 8.

165: “Beppo! what’s your Pagan name?” etc.: this speech should be compared for content, intention, context and effect with those of Donna Julia to Don Alfonso at *Don Juan I* sts.145-57 and of Haidee to Lambro at *Don Juan IV* sts.38 and 42. It is perhaps a sign of the relative shallowness of *Beppo* that of the three heroines only Laura emerges unequivocally triumphant.

92.

“And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?¹⁶⁶
 “With any other women did you wive?¹⁶⁷ 730
 “Is’t true they use their fingers for a fork?¹⁶⁸
 “Well, that’s the prettiest Shawl – as I’m alive!
 “You’ll give it me? – they say you eat no pork –
 “And how so many years did you contrive
 “To – bless me! did I ever? No – I never¹⁶⁹ 735
 “Saw a Man grown so Yellow! How’s your Liver?”

93.

“Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not¹⁷⁰ –
 “It shall be shaved before you’re a day older –
 “Why do you wear it? – Oh! – I had forgot,
 “Pray don’t you think the weather here is colder? 740
 “How do I look? You shan’t stir from this spot
 “In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
 “Should find you out, and make the story known –
 “How short your hair is – Lord! how Grey it’s grown!”

166: “*And are you really, truly, now a Turk?*”: she perhaps inquires whether or not he has been circumcised, a necessary ritual for the whole-hearted renegado. *Really, truly* occurs at *TVoJ* line 640, where it also refers to a person’s identity, namely that of Junius, whom the narrator suspects to have been *Nobody at all*.

167: “*With any other women did you wive?*”: compare *Don Juan I*, 175, 8: *when he / Suspects with One, do you reproach / accuse with three*.

168: *Is’t true they use their fingers for a fork?*: indecent, in the context of the rhyming.

169: *did I ever? No, I never*: in the proof of *Don Juan I*, 131, 7-8, at the couplet ... *And which in ravage the more loathsome evil is, / Their real lues, our pseudo-syphilis*, Hobhouse writes as marginal comment *oh did I ever no I never!!*. B. also uses the phrase in letters to Hobhouse of March 31 1817 (BLJ V 198) and March 3 1820 (BLJ VII 49) coupling it in the former, in a discussion about Charles Maturin’s success, with a Fretful Plagiary line from *The Critic*: *For my part I say nothing – but this I will say – Did I ever – No, I never – &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.* The origin of the in-joke is not clear.

170: “*Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not*”: compare Petruchio’s words to Kate at *The Taming of the Shrew V ii* 121-2: *Kate, that cap of your becomes you not: / Off with that bauble, throw it underfoot*.

94.

What answer Beppo made to these demands 745
 Is more than I know! He was cast away
 About where Troy stood once, and Nothing stands,¹⁷¹
 Became a Slave of course, and for his pay
 Had bread and bastinados,¹⁷² till some bands
 Of pirates¹⁷³ landing in a neighbouring bay, 750
 He joined the rogues and prospered, and became
 A Renegado¹⁷⁴ of indifferent fame.

95.

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
 Keen the desire to see his home again,
 He thought himself in duty bound to do so, 755
 And not be always thieving on the Main;¹⁷⁵
 Lonely he felt at times as Robin Crusoe,
 And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
 Bound for Corfu;¹⁷⁶ she was a fine polacca,¹⁷⁷
 Manned with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco. 760

171: *where Troy stood once, and Nothing stands*: compare *Don Juan* IV sts.76-8: the irony is not only at the expense of Homer but against all attempts at making the brutal into the heroic. **Hobhouse's diary**: On Monday, April 30 1810, while at the site of Troy, Hobhouse and B. met a man whom B. may currently be remembering. Hobhouse records in his diary: *Up 7 & went with Mr Mitchell, 1st lieutenant and Mr Ekenhead & Mr Williams with guns round the South side of the marsh to the Springs of Scamander – 5 hours nearly dined there under a walnut tree with water cresses from brook addressed by a Turk shabbily dressed in Italian & surprised to hear him say “Scis linguam latinam” he spoke a few sentences elegantly enough in this tongue. I asked him where he had learned it – “At home”. – “Never been to a college?” – “Vidi etiam academiam sed non frequentavi” - he was the steward (a slave) of some Pasha & lived in a cottage with a pretty garden attached to it on the cold & warm spring (it was not warm to day of the Scamander – at leaving he said, “Visne videre postum?” He must have been a French renegade. He had been in Alexandria. When asked where he had learned his Italian - “In mundo” was his reply. Another well dressed Turk addressed [him] familiarly by the name of Selim – he was half naked but did not beg ... (B.L. Add. Mss. 56529)*

172: *bastinados*: punishment in which the soles of the feet are beaten.

173: The replacement of *Corsairs* with *pirates* (in the rough draft) is evidence of a very self-conscious self-monitoring on B.'s part. To make Beppo such an obvious imitation of Conrad would make the whole joke too easily decipherable. See M.K. Joseph: (*Beppo*) *is like one of the Turkish Tales turned inside-out; Beppo's life as slave, renegade and pirate, which would have made the experience of an early Byronic hero, is relegated to the distant background ... (Byron the Poet, p.135); see also next note.*

174: *Renegado*: one who changes religion, or political or nationalist allegiance, from policy. See *Don Juan* IV, 116, 5. Beppo's history recalls those of Conrad and Alp in *The Corsair* and *The Siege of Corinth*, B.'s oriental tales of 1814 and 1816. Alp, for instance,

*In happier mood, and earlier time,
 While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
 ... glittered through the Carnival;
 And tuned the softest serenade
 That e'er on Adria's waters played
 At midnight to Italian maid. (Siege, 142-8.)*

However, where in the earlier poems the emphasis is on love, adventure and gloom, such things are in *Beppo* taken banally “as read”. See Byron's note to 408 above. In *The Island* (1823) B. was to return to the renegado theme, with his sympathetic depiction of Torquil, the imagined Bounty mutineer.

175: *thieving on the Main*: compare Lambro at, for instance, *Don Juan* III sts.16-18.

176: *come from Spain, / Bound for Corfu*: roughly the course which Juan's open boat takes in Canto II.

177: *polacca*: three-masted merchant ship.

96.

Himself, and Much (Heaven knows how gotten) Cash
 He then embarked, with risk of life and limb,
 And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;
He said that *Providence* protected him,
 For my part, I say nothing¹⁷⁸ – lest we clash 765
 In our opinions – well – the Ship was trim,
 Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
 Except three days of Calm when off Cape Bonn.¹⁷⁹

97.

They reached the Island, he transferred his lading,
 And self, and live-stock, to another bottom, 770
 And passed for a true Turkey-Merchant trading
 With goods of various names – but I've forgot 'em;
 However, he got off by this evading,
 Or else the People would perhaps have shot him,
 And thus at Venice landed to reclaim 775
 His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

98.

His wife received, the Patriarch re-baptized him,
 (He made the Church a present by the way)
 He then threw off the Garments which disguised him
 And borrowed the Count's small-clothes¹⁸⁰ for a day; 780
 His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
 Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
 With dinners – where he oft became the Laugh of them –
 For stories – but *I* don't believe the half of them.¹⁸¹

178: *For my part, I say nothing*: B. here quotes two of his Augustan idols simultaneously. Here is Mrs Slipslop in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, Book II Chapter 3, protesting her innocence to Parson Adams: ... *for my part I say nothing, but that it is wondersome how some people can carry all things with a grave face*. This leads on to a line of Sir Fretful Plagiary in Sheridan's *The Critic*, I i: *I say nothing – I take away from no man's merit – am hurt at no man's good fortune – I say nothing - but this I will say – through all my knowledge of life, I have observed – that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!* The line implies the speaker's paranoid insincerity. See *Don Juan* I 409-10, also note to l.735 above. Plagiary was one of B.'s favourite alter-egos in correspondence. See BLJ I 241, III 94, IV 78 and 313, and V 198.

179: *Cape Bonn*: the northernmost point of Tunisia; in Arabic, *Ras Addem*.

180: *smallclothes*: underclothes; see l.26 above. The analogy would be with Othello borrowing Cassio's underpants, or Odysseus asking the suitors for the loan of a pair of socks.

181: ... **but I (all previous edns.)** *For stories – but I don't believe the half of them*: compare Iago: Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and for telling her fantastical lies (II i 219-21). The line might also parallel Beppo with Sindbad the Sailor in *The 1,001 Nights*, who entertains guests with non-stop and incredible stories.

Whate'er his Youth had suffered,¹⁸² his old Age 785
 With wealth and talking made him some amends;
 Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
 I've heard the Count and He were always friends;
 My pen is at the bottom of a page,¹⁸³
 Which being finished, here the story ends; 790
 'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done,
 But Stories somehow lengthen when begun. –

182: *Whate'er his Youth had suffered*: compare *Othello*, I iii 157:

*I did consent,
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffered.*

The references, whether covert, conscious or otherwise, are well placed; the rough draft indicates that B. deliberately re-wrote to incorporate Othello's line. **Hobhouse's diary**, *Saturday October 11th 1817*: ... *he is a lawyer and shoppy – he told me a curious litch – a man in the temple keeps a coffin and sends for the girls in the town – those who fit the coffin – he honors with his embraces – those too long or too short he dismisses – Byron tells me the story of the husband at the Queen of Hungary* [source for the whole tale – see above, stanzas 88-9n] *is false*. (B.L.Add.M.S. 47234 f.29).

183: *My pen is at the bottom of a page*: literally at the bottom of a page in the case of the rough draft; there is comedy in B.'s determination – against the odds – that it shall be in the fair copy, too. The line is also a play on words: *My penis at the bottom of a page*.

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First edition 500 copies. Copyright 500 gs to Byron.

Additional stanzas to the first, second and third editions of Beppo. (1818) (single sheet). These were first added to the fourth edition; the fifth edition was the first to bear Byron's name [MSS: draft: New York Morgan; fair copy: New York Pforzheimer; fragment (see BLJ VI 26) JMA.]

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