

ITALIAN AND AUSTRIAN POLICE REPORTS ON BYRON



Klemens Fürst von Metternich (1773–1859). Rheinischem Uradel entstammend, wirkte er im österreichischen Staatsdienst: seit 1809 als Außenminister, 1821–1848 als Staatskanzler.

Pius VII

Leo XII

Metternich

Almost from his arrival in Italy in 1816, Byron was under secret police surveillance as a potential disturber of the legitimate status quo. There is no disguising the comedy of some of the police reports printed here: it seems that they really did believe that the Romantic Movement took its inspiration from *Roma Antica*, and was thus republican in tendency. However, the fact that the tools of the establishment were stupid does not detract from the cruelty of what the establishment did. Byron could not himself be persecuted, for he was an English milord: instead those around him were persecuted, with a view to moving him on. Double agents were common (see the last paragraph of no. 4).

This became a serious problem when, in Ravenna, he joined the Carbonari and became their *capo*. The hostility of the Papal authorities, shown despite his friendship with the church and hierarchy, manifested itself there in street-corner harassment of his servants and even attempts to overturn his carriage.¹ When, in reponse to the extradition of the Gambas from Ravenna in 1821, he left that city for Pisa, the bullying did not stop. I believe that the affair of Sergeant-Major Masi, who was pitchforked by one of Byron's servants on March 24th 1822, was a set-up to "prove" that Byron represented a danger to the public peace. It resulted, as we all know, in the arrest, forcible shaving and imprisonment of his favourite gondolier, Tita Falcieri. The Gambas had to leave for Lucca (see no. 39) and then for Genoa, where, finally, Byron left them for Greece in 1823.

Of course, Byron *did* represent a threat to the political establishment of Italy: he wanted the Austrians and the Bourbons out, and the country free. However, the spies have great difficulty conveying anything useful to their masters, and often one sees a spy who, having to prove that he's earning his keep, invents small, idiotic tidbits of "useful information", which are in turn forwarded by the local police boss, with due solemnity, to HQ in Rome.

1: See Casadio, Andrea. *Two new letters from Ravenna*, Byron Journal, 2001 90-7.

The reports below are edited from the following:

Brunner: Karl Brunner, *Byron und die österreichische Polizei*, Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, 148 (1925): 32, pp. 28-41.

Guiccioli: Alessandro Guiccioli, *I Guiccioli (1796-1848) Memorie di una Famiglia Patrizia*, a cura di Annibale Alberti, (Bologna 1934).

KSHR: Keats-Shelley House, Rome; papers of Harry Nelson Gay and Iris Origo.

LJ: *The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals*, ed. R.E.Prothero (John Murray 1900), Vol. IV, Appendix 4, pp. 54-64.

Origo: Iris Origo, *The Last Attachment*, Jonathan Cape & John Murray, 1949 / Helen Marx Books, 2000.

Rodocanachi: E. Rodocanachi, *Notes Secrètes de la Police Autrichienne de Venise sur Byron ...* (Institut de France, Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, January - June 1918.)

I have seen none of the original documents. Those in the Keats-Shelley House, Rome, are all copies. There may be many more in the various state archives at Vienna, Rome, Florence, Ferrara, Ravenna, Milan, Lucca, Pisa, and elsewhere. The absence of any documents from Venice is notable.

I am grateful to Shona Allen and Frank Erik Pointner for their help in translating the German items, and to Fran Waterhouse for her help with the Italian sections.

1) Report from Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the Director-General of Police at Rome.

Eccza Rma

Bologna 21 Ag.^{to} 1819. –

Persona di mia relazione di recente provenuto da Milano, ed ora dimorante in Firenze m'avverte d'alcune notizie di qualche interesse, che alquanto ci riguardano, e che mi pongono nella necessità di farne parte all'E.V.R. onde mi suggerisca il contegno che dovrò tenere in tale emergenza.

Abbiamo una nuova segreta adunanza, che annunciasi col nome di Società Romantica. Io non posso rassegnare all'E.V.A. minutamente i diversi Articoli che professano i membri di questa unione della quale fan parte benanche le Donne. Gli dirò soltanto in succinto lo scopo di questa moralissima istituzione. Essa insinua ed abilita i suoi seguaci a non punto assegetarsi a qualunque siasi principio di ragione o di morale: ma soltanto di reguire i dettami di natura. In pochissimi Anni così vivendo ridurremmo la Società ad una orda d'Animali. Egli è certo che con questo canone progredendo chi mai potrebbe prevedere che costoro non giungessero a sostenere di poter debitamente privar qualche' uno di vita se loro il natural istituto gliel suggerisce?

Scorgerà l'E.V.R. colla savia sua avvedutezza, che tali principj potrebbero avere una stretta e contigua relazione con quegli emanati dagl'Illuminati Individui che sotto il velo delle Scienze minavano non ha guai nella Germania alla pubblica tranquillità.

E se per buona sorte la nostra Italia non ha risentita attualmente niuna consentanea scosa, da quel turbine che ora agota il Governo Prussiano, e l'Alemagna intera, non saprei però garantirne il gradito proseguimento se bene di mira non si prenderanno coloro i quali tentano di prepagare questo romanticismo le cui mire sebbene a primo aspetto appariscono di niun tristo fine non è perciò, che non lascino travederme una certa tale predisposizione.

A Milano intanto vi è il centro e principal sede di questa Società alla quale sono annoverati già varij Signori di quello Capitale. Vi figura molto il celebre Avv.^{to} Pellegrino Rossi forse a V.E.R. ben conosciuto. Questo Rossi si carteggia col notissimo Lord Byron il quale a seconda di quel che mi si avverte da Firenze dovrà erigere una simile riunione in Bologna. Quel ch'è fatto si è ch'egli ha locato un Appartamento per un Anno in questo Palazzo Merandoni che stà per suo conto ammobigliandosi di tutto punto. Milord giunse son già 4 giorni, ed andò ad alloggiare nell'Albergo del Pellegrino ov'è tuttavia e dove rimarrà forse a mio credere sintantocchè la Casa Merandoni non sia pronta. Varie Signore cominciano a frequentarlo, la prima delle quai è stata la M[arche]sa Guiccioli.

Si attende benanche per lo stesso agetto Lady Morgan siccome mi vien avvertito da Firenze, ed il conosciuto Lord Kinnaird quello precisamente che tirò il colpo di Pistola al Duca di Weligton, [sic] forse per ubbidire a ciò che gli prescrisse la propria capricciosa natura sua.

È cosa in verità rimarcabile che ne l'Austria ne il Toscano Governo siansi per niente ne avveduti ne adombrati di tale Segreti Società sempre per loro stesse pericolose.

Non celo a V.E.R. che questa novità mi produce rincrescimento ed imbarazzo insieme. Byron è un Letterato; il suo Letterario merito richiamerà in Società i scientifici più valorosi di Bologna. Questa classe non è quella che ama il Governo; Vegga ella dunque quanto mi si rende malagevole il far penetrar nelle mura di Milord la mia indispensabile vigilanza. Sia certa V.E. che io non istarò cheto; ma cella non mi defraudi ne men mi ritardi gli utilissimi suoi consigli, che per me indicano la monna la più sicura ed utile che possa mai regliere.

Translation: 1819, 21st August (No 12). / Milan, at the present time, is the centre and principal seat of this Society [the supposed *Società Roma Antica*] to which have been already admitted various

gentlemen of that capital. The celebrated Pellegrino Rossi,² perhaps well known to your Excellency, is a prominent member. This Rossi is in correspondence with the well-known Lord Byron, who, according to information which you have already received from me at Florence, is endeavouring to establish a similar society at Bologna. What he has done is, to hire a suite of rooms for a year in the Merendoni Palace, which are being furnished by him throughout. My Lord arrived four days ago, and went to stay at Pellegrino's Hotel, where he still is, and where he will remain, I expect, until the Casa Merendoni is ready. Many ladies already begin to visit him, the first of whom is the Marchesa Guiccioli.

As I am advised from Florence, Lady *Morgan*³ is visited with the same object, and also the well-known Lord *Kinnaird*, who fired a pistol at the Duke of Wellington,⁴ obeying, I suppose, the impulse of his capricious nature.

It is indeed remarkable that neither the Austrian nor the Tuscan Governments have ever (to their own peril) foreseen or suspected in any way the existence of such secret societies.

I do not conceal from your Excellency that this news both perplexes and embarrasses me. *Byron* is a man of letters, and his literary merit will attract to him the most distinguished men of learning in Bologna. This class of men has no love for the Government. Your Excellency sees, therefore, how difficult it becomes for me to exercise the necessary supervision over my Lord's private affairs. Your Excellency may be certain that I shall not remain inactive; but you will neither refuse, nor even delay, to give me your most kind advice, which will point out to me the safest and most useful course for me to adopt.

I must take this opportunity of assuring you of the esteem and respect with which I invariably, etc., etc.

(Source: Archivio Stato di Roma; KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A; tr. LJ IV 454-5, Origo 104 / 97. Origo identifies the writer not as Colonna Sciarra, but as Giuseppe Valtancoli of Montepulciano, an ex-freemason who had the trust of both the Romagna liberals and of the Austrians.)

2: Count Pellegrino Rossi (1787-1848) Italian statesman and economist, was in 1816 exiled from Italy, where he had been secretary to Joachim Murat, and occupied a chair in law at Geneva University. In 1818 he was responsible for translating *The Giaour* – the first translation of a Byron poem into Italian. It was published in Paris in 1817 and in Milan in 1818, with an introduction by Lodovico di Breme. Rossi was assassinated by a pro-Papal mob when French ambassador to Rome.

3: Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (1780-1859), Irish novelist. B. had perhaps been influenced by her novel *Ida of Athens*. It was dangerous for Italian liberals to have been named in her survey *Italy* (1821).

4: Douglas Kinnaird's elder brother never fired a pistol at Wellington. But he was a Bonapartist sympathiser, and had been implicated in *Marinet's affair* in 1818 (see *Don Juan* IX 2, 1-2) which involved one such possible assassination attempt.

2) Report to Colonna Sciarra, the Director of the Police at Bologna.⁵

Your Excellency, – The Countess Guiccioli, and not Vissoli, is said to be the *innamorata* of Lord Byron. She is the wife of our Cavaliere Guiccioli of Ravenna,⁶ and lives in the Contrada Gallieri, number 567, adjoining the Palazzo Meredoni. I have been assured that an old servant of this lady has been ordered by her to get certain articles of furniture, and that he has bought some from various second-hand shops, and particularly from *Agostino Montanari*, who lives at Carrobio. It seems that these purchases have been made with the knowledge of Lord Byron, and that the furniture has been moved to an apartment on the ground floor of the above-mentioned house, number 567. It would seem, moreover, that the aforesaid Lord has paid for these articles. [...] It appears that Lord Byron intends to go the day after tomorrow to his new house, which has already been prepared for him. So a house-porter states; also Professor Cardinali,⁷ who has certain relations with this nobleman, from whom, as I understand, Cardinali expects to receive a considerable sum in reward for the dedication made, or about to be made, to him of one of his works. [...] After dinner today, Lord Byron sent a messenger to demand a passport for a servant of his, saying that he had to send him to Venice with a very pressing letter. The official in charge of the passport department told him that it would be necessary to bring his request before your Excellency, this being laid down by police regulations. It is to be noted that Lord Byron has not yet deposited his passport, nor demanded his permit to remain.

I have the honour to sign myself, etc., etc.

For the Sub-directory of Police, 22nd August, 1819, in the evening.

(Source: LJ IV 455.)

5: B. was in Bologna from August 9th to September 12th 1819.

6: Alessandro Guiccioli, Teresa's husband, was disliked by the Papal authorities because he had, in Napoleonic times, bought up huge swathes of church land. However, this did not prevent his cuckold from coming under establishment suspicion as well.

7: Francesco Cardinali; otherwise unidentified. A Clemente Cardinali published several books at about this time.

3) Report from Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the Director-General of Police at Rome (probably enclosing No. 4).

1819, 28th August (No. 16).

As a fitting continuation of the report which I had the honour to send to Your Excellency with regard to the well-known *Lord Byron*, I ought to tell you that, during this last week, there have been great changes in his projects.

The day after the last post, the noble Lord sent me to provide a passport for a certain native of Trieste, whom he wished to send at once to Venice as courier. It was 8 o'clock in the evening. We had a little interchange of messages, for I was unwilling to furnish the Triestine with a passport without the guarantee of two people of substance. He maintained that the guarantee of an English Peer like himself was enough. After various letters, which did not succeed any better than the messages, the Noble Lord was at last persuaded that the courier could not start without the guarantee of two substantial men personally known to me. The proper guarantees having been given, the man set out. Two days afterwards the domicile, which had been prepared in Casa Meredoni, was changed. My Lord has gone to live in the Casa Guiccioli. Yesterday evening I discovered that he is going to leave for Venice in a few days.

I have not failed to make use of indirect means of obtaining information concerning him; but nothing of consequence has come to my knowledge. This morning, for instance, the paper which I have the honour of enclosing to Your Excellency was given to me by a special agent of mine, employed upon business altogether different to that of Lord Byron. The document further confirms me in the opinion which I had formed from the information received from Florence about this Englishman.

If the Guiccioli remain after the departure of my Lord, I intend to intercept their letters, and, in case of any news, I shall make a point of informing Your Excellency of everything, etc., etc.

(Source: Bologna State Archives; KSHR Gay Papers Box 36a; tr. LJ IV 456.)

4) Report to Signor Pietro Bravosi, Agent of Police.

This morning, while walking with Professor Francesco Cardinali, who, as Your Excellency knows, is a friend of mine, we began to discuss the position of the *employés* of the late Government,⁸ who are still without employment. On this point he said to me: *“Keep up your courage,* for, at the most, you will only have to wait two years, since there must be a change of Government,” adding that he had heard this from persons of great weight.

Having asked him whether such a change were credible, he answered that Lord Byron was one of those who had told him.

Then I asked him what nation, in such conditions, ought to hold predominant power, suggesting that, if the change took place, the influence of the French nation must necessarily prevail. He replied that the influence ought to be more stable than the French nation had been in the past, and declined to explain himself further.

I flatter myself that in a little time I could get more information, since I am considered to be one of their party, and often go to the booksellers’ shop of Masi brothers, as I was advised by Your Excellency to frequent places where he and many others of the same opinions are in the habit of meeting.

But I would ask you, for the present, not to make any open use of these conversations, and to treat them only as hints, for if anything of the matter became publicly known, I should be suspected, and to a certain extent compromised, and then I should no longer be of use to you as a confidential agent.

I have the pleasure to salute you, etc., etc.

Bologna, 26th August, 1819.

(Source: LJ IV 456-7.)

8: That is, the government of Eugene de Beauharnais, Napoleon’s stepson.

5) From the Director-General of Police at Rome to Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna.

Rome, Director-General of Police,
Assistant Department (No. 4484).

YOUR EXCELLENCY, – I agree in the opinion of Your Excellency that the departure of Lord Byron is a good opportunity for inspecting the correspondence of Count Guiccioli, with whom he has been on the most intimate terms.

I am anxious to know if the servant sent as a courier by Lord Byron has been for a long time with him, or if he has been recently engaged; in this second case I should be glad to know his antecedents.

I sign myself with great esteem, etc., etc.

4th July (*sic*), 1819.

(Source: LJ IV 457.)

6) From Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the Director-General of Police at Rome.

1819, 8th September (No.22)

I shall at once obtain the required information about the Triestine sent by Lord Byron, according to your honoured command of folio No.4484.

This week the erratic Lord has again changed his plans. Instead of leaving for Venice, he has sent for his illegitimate infant daughter,⁹ whom he maintained there, and now he talks of going with the Guiccioli to Ravenna. This change in his domestic arrangements has been made, although, during the last week, he had moved into the Casa Guiccioli, as I had the honour to inform Your Excellency. But no sooner had the child come, than he returned to Pellegrino's Hotel, where he merely sleeps and dines. The rest of the day he spends with the Guiccioli. I continue to keep him under the strictest surveillance. At the present time, no one but Count Ranconi of Ferrara¹⁰ visits him, and he comes at 3 o'clock every morning (*alle 3 ogni mattina*).

With most respectful esteem and obedience, etc., etc.

(Source: LJ IV 457.)

9: Allegra is by now two-and-a-half years old.

10: Ranconi otherwise unidentified.

7) Report to Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna.

Sub-Direction of Police (No. 7044).

YOUR EXCELLENCY, – Following the instructions given me to discover if the Triestine courier of Lord Byron will be in Bologna before the arrival of his master, I have been assured that this distinguished nobleman had formerly a Venetian in his service as courier, whom he dismissed some days ago, and that he then took as courier the aforesaid Triestine, who formerly served him as a groom. This man is a son of the Jew Finzi of Trieste,¹¹ and they will both come to Bologna on the arrival of their master, and not before.

I have received Your Excellency's esteemed letter, dated yesterday, No. 8951, and I have the honour to sign myself with profound respect, etc., etc.

(Source: LJ IV 458.)

11: Finzi unidentified.

8) Report from Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the Director-General of Police at Rome.

1819, 15th September (No. 27).

In discharge of the duty imposed upon me by your respected folio No. 4484, concerning the information with regard to the Triestine courier in the service of, and despatched by, Lord Byron, I have the honour to assure you that this person was formerly in my Lord's service as groom, and that he arrived in Bologna at the same time as his master. His *padrone* is a Triestine Jew named Finzi.

In connection with this matter, I must announce to you that, to my greatest astonishment, Lord Byron left Bologna on the 12th for Venice, in company with the Marchesa Guiccioli.

Three days before, the Marquis, her husband, left for Ravenna. I have not failed to ask the Director of the Post to send me all letters coming from Venice addressed to Count Ranconi, who with unfailing regularity used to visit my Lord at 3 o'clock every afternoon (*alle 3 pomeridiana in ogni di*).

Full of profound obedience and humble, respectful esteem, etc., etc.

(Source: LJ IV 458.)

9) From the Director-General of Police at Rome to Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna.

Rome, Direction-General of Police,
Assistant Department (No. 4504).

(Most private.)

YOUR EXCELLENCY, – In my opinion the only mode of obtaining particular knowledge respecting the associates of the new Secret Society entitled *Roma Antica*,¹² is to secure the aid of some individual who has the reputation of being a man of learning, and to induce him to enter this Society, taking advantage of the first vacancy that may present itself.

Following those lines which have given Your Excellency the knowledge of the existence of this Society, you could, with your usual sagacity, discover this man of learning, and the mode of introducing him to the members of the Society, amongst whom no other type of person could so fitly carry out the suggested plan.

I sign myself, with great esteem, etc., etc.

15th July, 1819.

(Source: LJ IV 458-9.)

12: The police chief has heard that B. is a “Romantico” and assumes that this is the title of a secret society.

10) From the Director-General of Police at Rome to Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police, Bologna.

Rome, Direction-General of Police,
Assistant Department (No. 4530).

No. of answer, 27.

(Private.)

Subject: Measures for watching Count Ranconi in connection with Lord Byron.

The inspection of the postal correspondence of Count Ranconi with Lord Byron will be very opportune for the purpose of discovering if they are occupied in political matters; but it will be still more advantageous to have this latter person watched in his present abode in Venice, and thus to gain information concerning his attitude towards political questions in that place.

If the Director of Police, who is interested in carrying the matter out, approves of this proposal, I will await the result here, ready to co-operate with him in any urgency for the promotion of the well-being of both Governments.¹³ And in the mean time I sign myself, with marked esteem, etc., etc.

25th July, 1819.

(Source: LJ IV 459.)

13: That is, those of Rome and of Tuscany.

11) Copy of a private note from Cardinal Consalvi,¹⁴ Secretary of State to Pius VII, contained in a letter from Minister Corsini to the President of the Buon Governo.

This Imperial and Royal Government herewith transmits to your Excellency the enclosed report, sent to this department by the Austrian Legation in Rome.

Although the Government itself is convinced that the chief points mentioned in the report are unfortunately not applicable to Tuscany, it will nevertheless be obliged if your Excellency will undertake to exercise the most unremitting and careful vigilance, etc., etc.

The Governor of Rome, in his capacity of Director-General of Police, has sent the following:

(Consalvi's note, dated 1st September 1819): A private report, made by a person of authority, which has reached him from Bologna, informs him that notice has been sent from Florence to the person indicated, of a new secret Society, in which even women take part, under the name of *Società Romantica*; that this Society is formed for the purpose of educating its readers in the belief that man is subject to no religious or moral principle, but ought only to obey his natural instincts; that the centre and principal seat of this Society is in Milan; that in this Society are enrolled many gentlemen of that capital, and among them the celebrated advocate, Pellegrino Rossi; that Rossi corresponds with the well-known Lord Byron, and that, in order to found a branch of this Society at Bologna, Rossi wished to induce Lord Byron to visit Bologna; that Lord Byron has, in fact, come to Bologna, where he has rented the Palazzo Merendani (?) for a year, and meanwhile is lodging at the Hotel Pellegrino until, as is understood, the decoration and furnishing of the Casa Merendani has been completed; that numbers of ladies begin to visit Lord Byron, and amongst others the Marchesa Guiccioli; that, as he hears from Florence, Lady Morgan is expected in Bologna for the same object, and also Lord Kinnaird, who shot at the Duke of Wellington; and that, finally, neither the Austrian Government nor that of Tuscany have ever been informed of the existence of such a Society.

(Source: LJ IV 461.)

14: Cardinal Consalvi (he'd only taken minor orders) was the Pope's Secretary of State, and the lover of Elizabeth Foster, the Duchess of Devonshire, friend and confidante of her predecessor, the celebrated Georgiana. B. had rented his Piccadilly Terrace apartment from her, and not paid for it. In July 1821, when things get really bad, B. writes the Duchess a letter asking (without mentioning Consalvi) if she can get the Gambas off the hook (BLJ VIII 154-5 and 161). She is unable to (LJ V 238-9). Whether Consalvi was dumb enough to believe what his spies told him about the *Romantici*, we may doubt.

12) From an unnamed Tuscan spy, from Forlì, 10th September 1819.

E lungo tempo che si parla dei Romantici, e si sa bene che Byron e Kinnaird lo sono, perchè il primo scrisse e scrive tuttora delle poesie in questo nuovo genere, e compose certi regolamenti intitolati: “*Statuti della gioiosa truppa.*” Il secondo lasciò tempo fa a Faenza un manoscritto che può sapersi da Gennati che cosa contegna, ma che io non gli ho mai dimandato, per non averci intima relazione. Byron poi sta in campagna con una signora, giovine moglie di quel Guiccioli (1) che ora è in Bologna, ma egli non si domestica con alcuno. Vi dirò che in passato il Cardinale di Ravenna invitò una brillantissima conversazione per corteggiare il nobile Lord, alla quale però il Cardinale stesso non intervenne per non servire, disse, di zimbello alle signore radunate.

(1) Il conte Guiccioli di Ravenna, il più ricco possidente della Romagna, uomo cupo, intrigante, fierissimo, generoso, che si credè colpevole dell’assassino del Manzoni. (Nota della Spia)

(Source: KSHR, Gay Papers Box 36A.)

Translation: The Romantici have been talked about for some time, and it is well known that Byron and Kinnaird belong to the Society, for the former has written, and continues to write, poetry of this new school, and has composed certain rules, entitled *Statutes of the Joyous Company*.¹⁵ The latter left behind him, some time ago at Faenza, a manuscript, and it would be possible to discover its contents from Gennati, but I have never asked him, not being on intimate terms with him. Byron is staying in the country with a lady, the young wife of that Guiccioli * who is now in Bologna, but he does not make his permanent abode with anyone. I must tell you that some time ago the Cardinal of Ravenna gave a most brilliant conversazione in honour of the noble Lord, at which, however, the Cardinal himself did not appear, lest he should act, said he, as a decoy to the assembled ladies ... (tr. LJ IV 462.)

[* Note by the spy: Count Guiccioli of Ravenna, the richest proprietor in the Romagna, a crafty, intriguing man, very proud and of high birth, is believed to be guilty of the assassination of Manzoni.¹⁶]

15: *Statutes of the Joyous Company* otherwise unidentified.

16: Domenico Manzoni was a banker of Forlì whom Guiccioli was indeed suspected of having murdered.

13) From Count Karl von Inzaghi, Governor of Venice, to Count Sedlnitzky, Head of Police in Vienna, 18th September 1819.

Hochgeborener Graf!

In der Anlage hat mir das hierortige Central Censur Amt eine von dem hiesigen Mauthause demselben zugekommene Broschüre betitelt: 'L'Italia. Canto IV del Pellegrinaggio di Childe Harold, scritto da Lord Byron, tradotto da Michele Leoni, Italia 1819' samt dem diesfälligen Censurbogen vorgelegt, in welchem der Antrag gemacht wird, daß der Verkauf dieses Werkes höchstens nur erga Schedam zu gestatten wäre.

Ich ermangle nicht, dasselbe Eurer Excellenz weiser Prüfung zu unterziehen, und bin der unmaßgeblichen Meinung, daß – da der Inhalt dieses Werkes gegen die gegenwärtigen Regierungen Italiens gerichtet ist – solches von dem Verkaufe gänzlich auszuschließen wäre.

Genehmigen Eure Excellenz den wiederholten Ausdruck der ausgezeichneten Hochachtung, womit ich die Ehre habe zu verharren,

Eurer Excellenz gehorsamster Diener,
Inzaghi (e.h.)

(Source: Brunner 29.)

Translation: Honourable Count! / The central censorship office here has presented me with one of the pamphlets the local toll house has been sent. It is called 'Italy. Canto IV of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, written by Lord Byron, translated by Michele Leoni, Italy 1819'¹⁷ and was presented together with the due censorship papers in which the application was made that this work should only be sold *erga schedam* at best. I shall not fail to allow Your Excellency to subject this text to prudent examination himself and am of the humble opinion that – since the content of the work is directed against the present Italian government – such a thing should be completely banned. Please accept, Your Excellency, the repeated expression of deep respect with which I have the honour to remain Your Excellency's obedient servant, Inzaghi (honoris causa).” - tr. Shona Allan.]

17: *CHP IV* had been published in London on April 28th 1818. It is in implication a major statement of aspiration for free Italian statehood. Michele Leoni was a friend of Ugo Foscolo and of Silvio Pellico, and had translated its Spenserian stanzas into blank verse, re-titling it *Italia. Canto IV. / del pellegrinaggio / di Childe Harold*. See BLJ VII 97. The book was banned, and no copies of it are known to exist.

14) From the unnamed spy, dated 19th September 1819.

Notizie sopra lord Byron. – Questo signore si trova attualmente in Bologna in compagnia della moglie del Conte Guiccioli. Egli hà seco un giovane Segretario peritissimo in molte lingue, e che scrive ugualmente bene l’Inglese, il Francese, l’Italiano, [e] il Tedesco. Egli non esce mai di casa, e scrive sempre. Sorvegliato ostaticamente, si è potuto sapere che per lo più s’occupa in varie Ciffre. Frattanto non si conosce l’esito di queste scritture, perchè infallibilmente non sono messe alla posta. Convien credere che di tali dispacci sieno incaricati i Viaggiatori Inglesi, dei quali molti si rassengnano al Lord. Pochissime lettere sono alla Posta, e questo non contengono che interessi particolari.

Da Forlì si scrive che il detto Lord si è contento di formarsi una sola relazione di persona di condizione di ogni Città: a Bologna ha Ercolani, A Ferrara Graziadei, A Faenza Gennati, A Forlì Orselli, A Cesena Roverella. Questi assolutamente non parlano, e fanno credere che tale relazione sia letteraria. Dopo molti raziocinii, e combinazioni di fatti, si è dato luogo a credere, che molti opuscoli, libelli, e scritti d’allarme, venuti alla luce, sieno della Fabrica di lord Byron. Anche in questi giorni ò comparso con profusione l’accluso Indirizzo pubblicato in più copie, tutte di scrittura differente, e incognita, abilità che si attribuisco al Segretario del Nobile Lord. [] Il carattere che non è ignoto nè a me, nè a voi, ne indica la provenienza, e mi conferma nelle dette idee.

Translation: Notices concerning Lord Byron. This gentleman is at present in Bologna, in company with the wife of Count Guiccioli. He has with him a young secretary very expert in different languages, who corresponds in English, French, Italian and German with equal facility.¹⁸ He never leaves the house, but is always writing. By most careful supervision it has been discovered that his time is chiefly occupied in writing in various cyphers. But it is not known in what way these writing are despatched, for they are certainly not sent to the post. There is reason to believe that English travellers, many of whom have introductions to my Lord, are charged with these despatches. Very few letters pass through the post, and these contain only matters of private interest.

From Forlì I hear that the said Lord is anxious to form a Society among persons of position in each city. At Bologna he has the Ercolani; at Ferrara, the Graziadei; at Faenza, the Gennati; at Forlì, the Orselli; at Cesena, Roverella.¹⁹ Such names as these certainly do not suggest that the character of the Society is merely literary. After much consideration and piecing together of facts, I have come to the conclusion that many works, pamphlets, and dangerous writings which are in circulation have issued from the workshop of Lord Byron. Even within the last few days the enclosed²⁰ has appeared in a profusion of copies, each in a different and unknown handwriting – a multiplication of copies which is attributed to the dexterity of the secretary of the noble Lord. I send a copy. The character of the work, which is not unknown either to me or to you, shows its source, and confirms me in the views I have expressed.

(Source: KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A; tr. LJ IV 462.)

18: B. had no such secretary.

19: The names, which are probably not imaginary, all suggest groups with revolutionary potential.

20: The “enclosed” unidentified.

15) From the unnamed spy, dated 29th September 1819. Words in square brackets a Police Chief's interpolations.

Una prova autentica di quanto è già stato da me narrato a V.S. Illma. rapporto alla Società Romantica, ritrovo nelle lettere pervenutemi ieri. Un mio corrispondente di Bologna, incaricato da me di conoscere le diramazioni della medesima, ne chiese informazioni a una dei capi della Massoneria Italiana residente in Milano. Trascivo letteralmente la replica che ne hà ottenuto.

“Conosco i Romantici. Costoro compongono una Sètta, che hà per scopo di rovinare la nostra letteratura, la nostra politica, la nostra Patria. Lord Byron ne è certamente un campione e t'inganni pensando, ch'egli si occupi solamente a fare li corni a Guiccioli. Egli è libidinoso e immorale all'eccesso, ma presto si scorda nell'oggetto idolatrato, e lo sacrifica al disprezzo. Non è per altro così isconstante in politica, nella quale egli è Inglese in tutta l'estensione del termine. Egli è energumeno per rovesciare tutto ciò che non gli appartiene, per paralizzare ogni tendenza che spiegassere le Società Nostre per la patria indipendenza, [sic!] per avvolgerci in ruine e sangue, [sic! sic!] per distribuire infini dei Stati deserti ed ancor fumanti ai suoi avidi e demoralizzati cospiratori. [Oh che fandonie!]

Il corrispondente nell'inviarmi questo squarcio di lettera mi rammenta due versi inseriti da Michele Leoni, di Parma, nella sua traduzione dall'Inglese dall'opera di Lord Byron sull'Italia, che sono i seguenti:

“E con voi la dottrina che si asconde
“Sotto il velame de' novelli carmi.”

Specialmente m'invita a leggere e ponderare il Canto IV di quest'Opera intitolato: *Il viaggio di Childe Harold*.

Translation: I find an undoubted confirmation of the matter of my previous report on the Società Romantica in letters which reached me yesterday. One of my correspondents in Bologna, charged by me to discover the branches of the said Society, sought information from one of the heads of the Italian Masonic Lodge in Milan. I transcribe literally the reply that I have obtained.

'I know the Romantici. They form a band that aims at the destruction of our literature, our politics, our country. Lord Byron is certainly its champion, and you deceive yourself if you believe that he is occupied only in making a cuckold of Guiccioli. He is libidinous and immoral to excess; but he soon tires of the object of his worship, and offers it as a sacrifice on the altar of his contemptuous pride. But, at the same time, in politics he is not so inconstant. Here he is an Englishman in the fullest meaning of the term. He is like a madman in his desire to ruin everything that does not belong to him, to paralyze every tendency that our Societies display towards national independence, [sic!] to involve us in ruin and bloodshed, [sic! sic!] in order that at last the deserted and still-smouldering States may be divided amongst his greedy and demoralized conspirators. [Oh what nonsense!]

My correspondent, in sending me this scrap of a letter, reminds me of two verses inserted by Michele Leoni of Parma, in his translation from the English of Lord Byron's work on Italy. The lines run thus –

“And with you the teaching that is hidden
Under the veil of the new songs.”²¹

He especially invites me to read and reflect upon Canto IV, of the work, entitled *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

21: See *CHP IV*, B.'s prose preface.

(Source: Archives of the Buon Governo, KSHR Gay Papers 36A: translated at LJ IV 462-3 and Origo 106 / 100.)

16) From Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the Director-General of Police at Rome.

1819, 29th September (No. 35).

I will do all Your Excellency prescribes in your most esteemed folio marked 4530, writing at once to the Director of Police at Venice to keep a watch upon the behaviour and surroundings of Lord Byron.

In connection with this, I ought to inform you that, according to the tenour of the information I gave to Your Excellency in my despatch marked 12, Lady Morgan has finally come here with her husband. I have not failed to keep an eye on their movements and conduct. Up to the present I cannot say more than that both show themselves to be most determined constitutionalists and reformers. They read one evening at a meeting the address that the *Cortes of Spain* made to Ferdinand VII, when, after his liberation from France, he arrived at the frontiers of his kingdom; the address is full of suggestion. Such is my duty in this emergency, and full of profound esteem, etc., etc.

(Source: LJ IV 459-60.)

17) Papal Police to Austrian Police, October 2nd 1819:

On the twelfth of this month a peer of England, a certain Byron, will depart from Ravenna.²² He has a name as a poet in his native country, and he is suspected of being linked to the secret society *Roma Antica*; at least his style of writing has been described to me as belonging to the “*Romantic school*”, which I presume means “Carbonaro”.²³ 2nd October 1819.

(Source: Teresa Guiccioli, *Vie de Lord Byron en Italie*, 384.)

22: There is an error over the date here, for B. was in Venice, not Ravenna, on October 12th 1819.

23: The Carbonari, or Charcoal-burners, were indeed a quasi-masonic secret society based at Ravenna and elsewhere. They achieved nothing. It is unlikely that B. was associated with them yet.

18) From Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the General Directory of Police at Venice.

Alla Direzione generale di Polizia in Venezia

Ieri del giorno 12 scorso mese parti da questa Città alla volta di Venezia il nobile Inglese Lord *Byron*. Codest'uomo appartiene alla *società segreta* intitolata *Romantica*. E'egli non mediamente versato nelle belle lettere, ed ha fama di buon Poeta nella sua Patria. Le opinioni libertine predominano oltremodo nel sua anima sicchè passa, ed in Inghilterra, ed in molte città d'Italia, ov'egli è conosciuto per uno de' più entusiasti protettori delle adunanze di riforma di *Manchester* e di *Salford*. I suoi messi di fortuna lo rendono opportunamente atto a secondare le proprie inclinazioni.

Tutte le esposte circostanze furono sufficienti a determinare questa Direzione di Polizia volgere un occhio vigile su codesto individuo, tanto più pericoloso, in quanto che col mezzo delle scienze e con quello più abbondante dell'oro richiama in sua casa la classe delle persone colle.

E'perciò, che saputori dal mio Governo l'attuale dimora di *Lord Byron* in sodesta città, e il probabile suo ritorno in Bologna fra qualche mese, m'impone di rivolgermi riservatamente a V.S.Illmo interessandola a famigliarlo indessamente durante tale permanenza per quindi favorimene delle informazioni, allorgrandor si rimuovera da Venezia.

Nulla e lusinga di conseguire questo cortese favore da V.S.Illmo io mi offro pronto a contiaccamliamele in qualunque altra simile futura circostanza. Prendo quest' occasione ecc. ecc.

(Source: Bologna State Archives; KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A; tr. LJ IV 460; Rodocanachi 386-7.)

Translation: 1819, 2nd October (No. 37). / On the 12th ultimo the English nobleman, Lord Byron, left this city for Venice.²⁴ This person is a member of the *Secret Society* entitled *Romantici*. He is not unknown as a man of letters, and in his own country has the reputation of being a fine poet. Liberal opinions so entirely govern his mind that he passes, both in England and in many Italian cities where he is known, as one of the enthusiastic supporters of the reform party of *Manchester* and *Salford*.²⁵ His large fortune gives him exceptional opportunities of carrying out his inclinations.

All the above circumstances were sufficient to determine this Directory of Police to keep a careful eye on this gentleman, who is especially dangerous because his abilities and abundant wealth enable him to assemble at his house persons of the most cultured class.

Therefore, my Government, having noted the actual residence of *Lord Byron* in your city, and his probable return to Bologna within the next few months, requires me to make a private application to Your Excellency, asking you to take steps to have him constantly watched during his stay, and to favour me with information until he removes from Venice.

In the assurance of obtaining this favour from Your Excellency, I hold myself ready to do the same in return for you in any other similar circumstances in the future.

I take this opportunity, etc., etc.

24: B. actually left for Venice on September 12th.

25: Sciarra has heard about the Peterloo Massacre (August 16th 1819), and assumes Manchester and Salford to be hotbeds of English revolutionary activity.

19) From the unnamed spy.

Bologna, 4th October, 1819.

The constant watch kept by the police upon Lord Byron has led to two discoveries. The first is that his Lordship wears at his watch-chain a triangular (or rather pyramidal) seal, on the faces of which are engraved three small stars; on the seal are cut the letters F. S. Y. This is the new sign which was adopted some months ago by the Guelph Society when they gave up the use of a ring with four faces. There can be no doubt that Lord Byron has by means of intrigues obtained admission into Societies whose objects seem foreign to his own purposes.²⁶

The other is derived from a letter in the handwriting of his secretary, which has been stopped at the post. It is directed to Alexis Gartner,²⁷ at Milan. It appears from this letter that news has reached Bologna of the approaching establishment of the Jesuits in that city, and the secretary sends Gartner, in order to satisfy his friend's curiosity, a copy of an extract from a curious and very rare work of Captain George Smith, on *Jesuitical Masonry*.²⁸

(Source: KSHR, Gay Papers; tr. LJ IV 463-4.)

26: The spy is trying to prove that B. has joined the Freemasons.

27: Gartner unidentified.

28: *Jesuitical Masonry* otherwise not known.

20) From Carlo Lancetti, Head of the fourth (passport) police division at Venice, to Colonna Sciarra.

Venice, 5th October 1819

The moral and political principles of the noble English lord Byron are well-known to the General Directory; his conduct has not escaped police vigilance, but, in so far as one can tell, he has shown himself as reserved in expressing his political opinions as he has shown himself licentious in his private life; he has not hidden his liking for pleasure and the fair sex. Incessantly about the composition of some literary or poetic work, he is known often to have let fall in it some unpatriotic expressions, but as he writes in English and as his doctrines are enveloped in a romantic idiom, they have not come through to us and have given no occasion to us to communicate with him about them. His last journey into Romagna had no aim other than gallantry, and he has up to now shown no desire to visit Lombardy. If at any time his intentions alter, I shall not fail to inform Your Excellency ...

(Source: Rodocanachi 387.)

21) From Sednitzky to Inzaghi, 5th October 1819.

Indem ich die Beilagen der verehrlichen Zuschrift vom 18. v. M., 3639, Ew. Exc. mit dem verbindlichen Danke zurückstelle, genehmige ich vollkommen Hochdero gegründten Antrag, daß die mir gefälligst mitgeteilte anstößige Broschüre 'L'Italia, Canto IV del Pellegrinaggio di Childe Harold, scritto da Lord Byron, tradotto da Michele Leoni, Italia 1819' mit dem unbedingten Verbote zu belegen ist.

(Source: Brunner 29.)

Translation: In returning the enclosures of Your Excellency's honourable communication, 3639, of the 18th of last month with grateful thanks, I am in complete agreement with your Excellency's well-founded application that an unconditional ban should be imposed upon the offensive pamphlet 'Italy, Canto IV of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, written by Lord Byron, translated by Michele Leoni, Italy 1819' you kindly informed me of. - tr. Shona Allan.]

22) From Sedlnitzky to “das k.k. Bücherrevisionist” in Vienna, 5th October 1819.

Die vom dem k.k. Venediger Landerpräsidium unter dem 18. v. M. zur Censur Entscheidung anher vorgelegte Broschüre ‘L’Italia, etc. (wie oben)’ ist wegen ihres gegen die österr. Regierung in Italien gerichteten Inhaltes mit dem unbedingten Verbote belegt worden.

Hievon wird das k.k. Bücherrevisionsamt zu seinem Amtsgebrauch in die Kenntnis gesetzt.

(Source: Brunner 29.)

Translation: An unconditional ban has been imposed on the pamphlet ‘Italy’ etc (see above), submitted by the imperial and royal Venetian regional headquarters for the purpose of a decision regarding censorship, because of its content which is against the Austrian government in Italy. The imperial and royal audit office will be informed of this so that it can carry out its duties. - tr. Shona Allan.]

23) From Colonna Sciarra, the Director of Police at Bologna, to the General Directory of Police at Venice.

Rome, Direction-General of Police,
Assistant Department (No. 4530).

Number of answer, 35.

In re espionage over Lady Morgan and her husband.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, – The nature of the political views, which Your Excellency agrees with me have been expressed by the Morgans (husband and wife), who have recently arrived in this city, demands the most rigorous and careful supervision over them personally. I doubt not that Your Excellency will have already directed that this should be done, and therefore I await the expected results.

I sign myself, with marked esteem, etc., etc.

6th October, 1819.

(Source: LJ IV 460.)

24) From the unnamed spy above.

From Bologna, 11th October [1819]. Lord Byron left unexpectedly with Madame Guiccioli,²⁹ who is therefore said either to have been carried off by him, or sold to him by her husband. But it has since been discovered that she has gone by herself to Venice, while Lord Byron has set out for Northern Italy ...

(Source: LJ IV 464.)

29: B. and Teresa in fact left Bologna on September 12th.

25) From the Director-General of Police at Rome to Metternich, 20th October 1819.

Il conte Guiccioli di Ravenna conosciuto per uno dei più feroci perturbatori della pubblica tranquillità e strettamente legato con il detto Milord Byron ... ora trovasi ... a Venezia, anche il Byron è sospetto per cercar di formar una setta sotto l'apparenza delle scienze.

(Source: Brunner 30.)

Translation: Count Guiccioli of Ravenna, known as one of the most ferocious disturbers of public order,³⁰ and closely linked to the aforesaid Byron, ... is now ... at Venice, and Byron is suspected of wishing to form a political club, under the appearance of a scientific group.

30: In the 1790s, Alessandro Guiccioli had written in his diary, *Ormai non rimane ad un gentiluomo altra alternativa che di lasciarsi tagliar la testa dalla canaglia o di mettersene a capo. Preferisco il secondo partito.* (The only alternatives now left to a nobleman are either to have his head cut off by the rabble, or to put himself at their head. I prefer the second alternative.) Guiccioli 3, tr. Origo, 25–26 / 6.

26) From the unnamed spy, 1819:

Forli, 25th October. It is understood that Lord Byron is at present at the Borromeo Islands, in a pleasant rural retreat, enjoying the country house of his august friend, the Princess of Wales.³¹

(Source: LJ IV 464.)

31: B. had passed through the Borromeo Islands on his way to Milan three years before, in October 1816. He was never on close terms with the Princess of Wales (Queen Caroline).

27) Lancetti to Goetz, Governor of Venice, 19th or 25th November 1819.

Nelle ultime comunicazioni [24 above] fatte dall'I.I. Ambasciata di Roma nell'arresto di Gaetano Illuminati, delle quali piacque all'E.V. di rendermi consapevole, ho veduto che sta unita alla medesima una confidenziale riferita sopra il noto lord Byron ch'io mi credo in dovere di rettificare con la scorta delle particolari non infondate mie cognizioni.

In essa riferita si dice che il conte Guiccioli di Ravenna, ardente perturbatore della pubblica tranquillità, è strettamente legato al Byron che fu ultimamente a visitare a Venezia. Che il conte Guiccioli possa essere nel numero di queste teste esaltate che mirano segretamente all'italica indipendenza, ciò sembra che si possa credere, e per i principi manifestati in passato, e per la poca persuasione con cui è solito parlare dell'attuale politico sistema in Italia e dei vari suoi governi. Ma che egli si trovi al presente in intima relazione col Byron, ciò non pare sussistente. Eccone i motivi:

Byron conobbe un anno fa il Guiccioli nella conversazione serale della dama Benzon, nella circostanza che questi venne in Venezia all'oggetto di sottoporre la propria moglie, affetta di scorbuto, ad un'operazione chirurgica. Inclinato Byron, come è ben notarlo, alla galanteria, egli si è avvisato di corteggiare la moglie del Guiccioli, e, vedendosi da essa corrisposto, la seguì perfino in Romagna. Dopo qualche tempo di soggiorno colà, Byron rientrò in Venezia, e con esso, a stupore di tutti, vi giunse la moglie del Guiccioli, tutta sola, accompagnata soltanto da qualche domestico, con cui Byron si trattenne per vari giorni al casino sulle rive del Brenta.

Informato però il marito Guiccioli che la di lui moglie non era altrimenti qui venuta per ristabilirsi la sconcerata salute, come sembra abbia ella protestato, ma unicamente per darsi più agevolmente all'amorosa corrispondenza incontrata col Byron, egli venne espressamente da Ravenna il giorno 6 novembre cadente, per trar seco la traviata moglie, e con essa si restituì alla patria il giorno 10 cadente.

Byron, che attualmente si trova al suo palazzo in Venezia, per calmare in qualche modo i trasporti della signora Guiccioli, che non voleva lasciarlo, promise a lei di ritornare a vederla in Ravenna; ma infatti egli non ha ora altra intenzione che quella di restituirsì in Inghilterra, e per quanto si è potuto travedere, egli, esaltato dalle riforme politiche che si tentano d'introdurre alla sua patria, pare che abbia in animo di sostenere con tutto il vigore il partito dei radicali. La sua partenza viene però ritardata dall'indisposizione fisica sopraggiunta ad una figlia naturale che ha procreata in Svizzera ed alla sua governante.

La qualità e natura delle varie produzioni letterarie e politiche del Byron non lasciano dubbio che egli non sia uno de' maggiori fautori del *romanticismo*, nome con cui è ora conosciuta quella nuova forma di stile introdotta da alcuni spiriti novatori; ma questa setta sembra, almeno finora, che sia una cosa disgiunta dall'altra moderna società intitolata *Roma antica* che di recente si vuole eretta in Italia, ed a cui si attribuisce delle segrete antipolitiche tendenze, ecc.

Translation: Venice, 25th November 1819. / Among the notes from the illustrious Ambassador in Rome, relative to the arrest of Gaetano Illuminati, there is one touching Lord Byron which I feel duty compels me to correct. It is said that Count Guiccioli of Ravenna, the ardent disturber of public order, is intimately linked with Byron, whom he recently visited at Venice. / It is quite possible, from the principles he has shown in the past and from the way he now speaks about the different governments of Italy, that Count Guiccioli is one of those exalted ones who work secretly for Italian independence. But it is not conceivable that he has close links with Byron, and here is the reason. / Byron met Guiccioli a year ago, in the evening gatherings of Countess Benzoni; Guiccioli had come to Venice to allow his wife, who was suffering from scurvy, to undergo an operation. Byron's penchant for gallantry caused him to pay attention to Guiccioli's wife, and, his advances being reciprocated, he followed her in Romagna. Having stayed there for a time, Byron returned to Venice; and, to the amazement of everyone, Guiccioli's wife, alone and accompanied by some servant, rejoined him there; Byron passed some days with her there in

his house on the banks of the Brenta. Her husband, informed that she had in no way come to regain her health, as it seems she had pretended, but to give herself over to her love-affair with Byron, arrived at Venice from Ravenna on November the 6th to bring away his erring wife, and departed with her to his home on the 10th.³² Byron, who is now to be found in his Venetian palace promised, to calm down in some sort the passion of Madame Guiccioli, who did not want to leave him, that he would quickly rejoin her; although really his intention was to go back to England. Enthusiastic about the political reforms which were being put forward in his native land, it seems he was determined to support the radicals with all his power. His departure was delayed by the illness of a natural child whom he had fathered in Switzerland, and by her governess. / The quality of Byron's literary and political productions leave no doubt that he is one of the main creators of *Romanticism*, the name by which the new style is known, introduced by certain innovative spirits; but this group has nothing to do with the Society entitled *Roma Antica* which has developed in Italy, and to which secret unpatriotic vices are attributed.

(Source: Italian text from Guiccioli, 38-9; Rodocanachi 388-90.)

32: These dates are accurate.

28) From the unnamed spy.

Livorno, 8 dicembre

Nel mio viaggio da Firenze a Pisa, essendo in compagnia d'un Viaggiatore Inglese lo trovai informatissimo delle vedute di Lord Byron, e dei suoi Cooperatori, che non son pochi in Italia. Egli mi disse, che è di lui sistema cambiar soggiorno subito che hà compito qualche nuova sua produzione, per non dar sospetto ai Governi Italiani della prevenienza delle produzioni medesime. Nel suo soggiorno alle Isole Borromee si è fatto venire una quantità di esemplari di una sua detestabile opera intitolata *Don Juan*, che attacca la Religione, la Morale, e i Governi, e dopo averli spediti in varie città, si è ritirato in Venezia. L'Inglese che meco parlava, era versatissimo in ciò che riguarda le Italiane Istituzioni dei Carbonari, e dei Guelfi, il che mi dà luogo a riflettere che questi viaggiatori stranieri si occupano assai delle cose d'Italia. (Buon Governo, Archivio Segreto)

Translation: Leghorn, 8th December. / During my journey from Florence to Pisa, being in the company of an English traveller, I tried to obtain information from him as to the views of Lord Byron and of his fellow-workers, who are not a few in number in Italy. He told me that Lord Byron made a regular practice of changing his residence immediately he had finished any work, so that the Italian Governments might not suspect his intention of publishing any new production. During his stay at the Borromean Islands, for instance, he circulated a number of copies of one of his detestable works, entitled *Don Juan*³³ – a work which attacks religion, morals, and the Governments – and, as soon as he had distributed these copies, he retired to Venice. The Englishman who spoke to me was familiar with all the details of the Italian institutions of the Carbonari and of the Guelphs, and his thorough acquaintance with these bodies made me reflect that these foreign travellers seem to be very busy with the affairs of Italy.

(Source: Secret Archives of the Buon Governo, KSHR Gay Papers 36A; tr. LJ IV 464.)

33: The writer has swallowed the story of B.'s 1819 excursion to the Borromean Islands (see 26 above).

29) Conte Francesco Rangone to an unnamed correspondent; date not given.

He [Byron] is invisible till three p.m. At four he goes to see his Lady, and remains there till six. He rides for an hour, always in the great Cemetery. At eight he dines, at nine goes to his Amica and remains there till midnight. He studies until dawn. What he does until three remains a mystery. He eats and drinks little. But he does not much like conversation nor seeing what is worth seeing. He lets others talk and says little. He makes himself agreeable, but his expression clearly reflects the mood of his changeable humour.

(Source: Origo 107-8 / 101-2.)

30) From the State Archives of Ferrara, September 2nd 1820.

No. 153 P.S. / Rapporto politico straordinario, riguardante lo spirito pubblico.

Lo spirito politico di questa città, e provincia mantieni nella stato stesso, rappresentato nel prossimo passato straordinario rapporto; ed ora le viste politiche di questo dicastero fissano con particolare attenzione sul Distretto di Lugo, come quello, che per la circostanza della fiera formandosi il raduno di forestieri, provenienti da diverse parti apre un lungo campo alle politiche sue ispezioni.

Niuna positiva notizia è per anche pervenuta da Venezia in riguardo al S.^e Marchese Gio. Battista Canonici, colà detenuto, come si è riferito nel p^o p^o rapporto straordinario, il che aumenta l'inquietudine alla propria famiglia.

Dalla riservate, e diligenti indagini appositamente attivate dal sottoscritto, non perdendo anche di vista tutto ciò che può aver relazione colle limitrofe provincie dello Stato, onde valesse di ogni scoperta a vantaggio della pubblica tranquillità in ogni angolo del medesimo, si è potuto venire in cognizione, che nelle indicate provincie una sorda voce v'è serpeggiando, senza poterne per anche conoscere la vera origine, ma che gelosamente sottopone, come gli fu dato di conoscerla.

Pretendesi dunque, che in Ravenna sianvi dei mal'intenzionati, che appoggiati vengono da quel Lord Inglese, da qualche tempo colà stabilito in casa del Cavaliere Guiccioli, i quali, dicesi, abbiano delle segrete relazioni colla Romagna, e con Bologna: Che la fiera di Lugo formi per essi un segnale per una combinata rivolta, e che in tal epoca vogliasi in Ravenna tentare un colpo di mano sulle casse pubbliche e private, e che frà questi mal'intenzionati esser possino compresi dei militari di Linea, non escluso quel comandante di piazza, e suo aiutante maggiore. [*letter continues for three more pages*]

Ferrara, 2 settembre 1820, / Dalla Direzione Prov.^e di Polizia / Il Ten.^e Colon Direttore / P. C.^{te} Hondedei.

(Source: From Vatican Archives, KSHR, Gay Papers 36A.)

Translation: Postscript to No. 153, P.S. The public spirit of this town and the province remains in the same state described in the recent extraordinary report, and now the political sights of this ministry focus with particular attention on the District of Lugo, which, like the one which for holiday purposes is being filled with a gathering of foreigners coming from different parts, gives much scope for political inspection. / Furthermore, no positive information has arrived from Venice regarding Signor Marchese Gio. Battista Canonici,³⁴ who is detained there, as is referred to in the aforementioned extraordinary report, which increases concern for his own family. / From the careful and diligent investigations specially started, as mentioned already, not losing sight either of all that can have related to the neighbouring province of the state, where it is worth finding out about everything which is advantageous to the peace of mind of the public in every aspect of the same, it has come to our knowledge that in the indicated province, a muffled voice is spreading in a serpentine fashion, without our being able to trace its real origin, but which jealously submits as if we were expected to find out about it. / It is thus claimed, that there are in Ravenna some ill-disposed persons,³⁵ who are supported by Lord Byron, who is at this time settled in the house of the Cavaliere Guiccioli, who, it is said, have

34: Canonici unidentified.

35: There are ten communications from Ravenna to Rome between September 13th and November 11th 1820, relating to B.'s armed servants and the difficulty of dealing with the problem they pose. It's the fact that they bear arms, not that they wear his colours, which is the issue.

secret relations with Romagnola and with Bologna: that the Fair at Lugo³⁶ will be for them a signal for a combined revolt, and that there will at that time occur in Ravenna a take-over of the public places and private houses, and that it is possible that these ill-disposed persons include some soldiers from Linea, not excluding the commander of that place, and his second-in-command.

36: See *Don Juan*, IV, 88, 7-8.

31) From an unnamed correspondent at Ferrara, to Sedlnitzky, 8th October 1820.

Seit längerer Zeit lebt zu Ravenna der berühmte Lord Byron, dessen ultra liberalen Grundsätze ihn sogar aus England trieben; er macht einen ungeheuren Aufwand und erregt das allgemeine Aufsehen, nur die Regierung kümmert sich nicht um ihn.

(Source: Brunner 32.)

Translation: The famous Lord Byron has been living in Ravenna for a long time. His ultra-liberal principles even drove him out of England. He is extremely extravagant and is causing a great sensation, except that the government doesn't worry about him. - tr. Shona Allan.]

32) Rusconi to Cardinal Spina, date not given.

It is also suspected that the famous Lord Byron, who for some time has been living in that city, is an accomplice of this dangerous plot. I give this information to His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State, but no measure has been taken with regard to him.

(Source: Origo 223 / 240.)

33) By the Commissioner of Volterra.

It [*The Prophecy of Dante*]³⁷ is most decidedly not written in the spirit of our government, nor of any of the Italian governments. To me, indeed, it seems designed to augment popular agitation, which is already sufficiently aroused. Lord Byron makes Dante foresee democracy and independence, as the true *goods* of this country.

(Source: Origo 303 / 329-30.)

A thousand have said these things before Byron, but the present times make me consider them dangerous ... The translator³⁸ confesses that he found the poem difficult to digest, and adds that it was hard to divest certain images of their prosaic garb. “The style of the greater part of living English poets is, in truth, so turgid and extravagant as to deform their ideas, even when they are magniloquent or acute.” Why then take so much trouble to translate a bad poet? Probably because everything is good that serves a party purpose.

(Source: Origo 303 / 330.)

37: *The Prophecy of Dante* was published, with *Marino Faliero*, in April 1821

38: An anonymous translation of *The Prophecy of Dante* came out in Paris in 1821.

34) Sedlnitzky to the Emperor Franz,³⁹ December 25th 1820.

Zu Beil. 5: (diese fehlt) Engländer mit solch radicalen Grundsätzen, wie sie laut Nr.5 Lord Biron in Ravenna bethätigt und wie solche It. Nr. 10, 14, 15 (fehlen auch) von den Lord Kinaird und Hamilton bekannt sind, müssen als die gefährlichen Independenz- und Revolutionsapostel betrachtet werden, und sollten daher, ohne irgend eine Reklamation der Großbritannischen Regierung wegen Intoleranz gegen ihre Unterthanen zu besorgen durch gemeinsame Maßregeln aller Italienischer Gouvernements von der Halbinsel fernegehalten werden.

Da Lord Kinaird eben Ober Italien zu verlassen im Begriffe ist, so werde ich, falls Eure Majestät allerhöchst genehm halten, nicht nur ihm bei seinem etwaigen Wiedereintreffen, sondern auch allen seinen Landsleuten, von denen es bekannt ist, daß sie den revolutionären Brand in Italien zu schüren geneigt und bereit seien, die Duldung in Eure Majestät italienischen Staaten versagen lassen.

(Source: Brunner 32.)

Translation: Englishmen with radical principles such as those Lord Byron maintains, and such as those known to be held by the Lords Kin[n]aird and Hamilton,⁴⁰ are to be regarded as dangerous apostles of independence and revolution, and should, without fear of complaints from the English government on the grounds of intolerance toward her subjects, be kept off the peninsula by joint procedures of all the Italian governments. Since Lord Kin[n]aird is just about to leave northern Italy, I will, if it meets with Your Majesty's approval, forbid residence in your majesty's Italian states, not only to him in case of his return, but also to all his fellow countrymen of whom it is known to me that they are inclined and willing to fan the revolutionary fire in Italy." - tr. Frank Erik Pointner.

39: The Austrian Emperor Franz II (1768-1835).

40: George Hamilton Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860) old Harrovian; Prime Minister during the Crimean War see also *Childe Harold* II rejected Stanza 14, 2. Hardly a dangerous radical (as Lord Kinnaird might have seemed).

35) From the State Archives of Florence,⁴¹ 1821.

Pure non mai sono ignote le voci che sono corse in Italia in torno alle prevenzioni politiche di questo Signore Inglese, che unisce nascita, una certa fortuna pecunaria, celebrità letteraria, ed una gran determinazione a favorire le novità negli Stati, almeno secondo ciò che pretendo persone che asseriscono di conoscerlo.

(Source: KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A.)

Translation: The voices going around Italy about the political ideas of this English lord are, not, however, unknown: he unites birth, a certain monetary fortune, literary fame, and a great determination in favour of political innovation; at least, according to those who claim to know him well.

41: B. was only in Florence briefly, in March 1817.

36) From Zanatta, Primo Censore Direttore, to the President of the Buon Governo, 24th-25th August 1821.

Pervenne dalla Francia diretto al Signor Clare un esemplare dell'Opera Marino Faliero Doge of Venice an historical Tragedy in 5 actes With notes by lord Byron Paris 1821[.]

Avendo osservato, che il Censore Nardini Saviamente opinò, che a questo componimento venisse applicata la formula *Damnatur* per le cose contenute contro il Governo Austriaco, quel'Ufficio si fa premura di far conoscere a V.E. il libro stesso unendovi copia del relativo voto.

Ho l'onore di protestate all'E.V. ...

(Source: KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A.)

Translation: There has come from France, addressed to Lord Clare, a copy of the work Marino Faliero Doge of Venice, an Historical Tragedy in Five Acts, with notes, by Lord Byron, Paris 1821.⁴²

Having observed that it is the wise opinion of the Censor Nardini that the formula *Condemned* should be applied to this work, because of the things contained in it against the Austrian Government, this official thoughtfully conveys to Your Excellency the book itself, together with the judgement on it. I have the honour to be your Excellency's ...

42: *Marino Faliero*, depicting a rebellion against an Italian state by one of its own leading politicians, was published in April 1821. The Paris edition referred to here must be a Galignani.

37) From the State Archives of Milan, August 25th 1821.

No. 4047 pres. 24/25 agosto 1821

Ufficio di Censura Rimette un esemplare della tragedia di Lord Byron Marino Faliero doge di Venezia.

Al Sig. Direttore dalla Censura.

Consento che si applichi la formula *damnatur* alla tragedia di Lord Byron intitolata =Marino Faliero Doge of Venice.= Rimando il voto del Censore Nardini:

25 agosto 182

(Source: KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A.)

Translation: The Censor's Office encloses a copy of Lord Byron's tragedy Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice. / To the Director of the Censorship. / I agree that the formula *damnatur* ["to be condemned"] should be applied to the tragedy of Lord Byron entitled Marino Faliero Doge of Venice, according to the decision of the Censor Nardini.

38) Cavaliere Luigi Torelli, informer, writing in his diary after the Pisan Affray (March 24th 1822).

At last Lord Byron and his company of assassins have given us a taste of the temper they have already shown elsewhere,⁴³ as the Government has been expecting ever since their arrival in Pisa.

(Source: Origo 304 / 330.)

I am told that Lord Byron has mounted two pieces of field-artillery at the door of his room, and keeps a quantity of guns, pistols and daggers on the table. So that a hunchback carrier, who was sent from Maremma with a small wild boar and a letter to Byron, was so alarmed at this warlike show, that he threw down the boar, gave the letter to a servant, and fled from the Palazzo Lanfranchi⁴⁴ without even waiting to be paid.

(Source: Origo 305 / 331-2.)

43: Evidence of the way in which the Pisan Affray was presented by the authorities: in fact B.'s party took no initiatives in the business, apart from the one servant who dealt the near-fatal blow to Sergeant-Major Masi.

44: B.'s Palazzo on the Arno in Pisa, not far from where the Pisan Affray occurred.

39) Report from the President's Office, Lucca,⁴⁵ July 9th 1822.

Nel giorno di ieri giunge in Lucca il Conte Gamba di Ravenna, con un figlio, ed una figlia maritata al Conte Guiccioli ..., amica di Lord Baylon, ed in questa mattina si sonò a me presentati, addimandando il domicilio nel Ducato. Provengono dalla Toscana ove hanno dimorato per qualche tempo in unione a pred.o Baylon da dove sono stati allontanati per una rissa accaduta con grave ferimento nella persona di un tale Sargente Masi, di cui furono prevenuti autori i servi rispettivi, non senza grave sospetto d'intelligenza dei loro Padroni: cecchè [sic] sia stato del esito della causa non saprei indicarlo; solo è a mia notizia che il Governo Toscano gli ha allonanti non tanto a riguardo dei tti. Gamba che il prefato Sig. Baylon soggetto pericolosissimo sia per il naturale focoso, che per i talenti ed i mezzi: Esso pure va ad arrivare a momenti, mentre segue l'anzidetta Contessa Guiccioli.

Io non ho data alcuna positiva risposta alla dimanda di domicilio, senza intendere le intenzioni sovrane a loro riguardo, osservando rispettoamente che quando si volessero tollerare i tti. Gamba, l'istesso non si potrebbe praticare per Baylon in vista degli addetti motivi, di cui volendo ottenere l'allontanamento senza una misura diretta, converrebbe tenere l'istesso sistema, adottato dalla Toscana, coll'ordinare cioè alla prefata Sig.ra Contessa, di scegliere altro stato per sua dimora. Starò attendendo sull'emergente i veneratissimi ordini di V.R.M. in pendenza dei quali ho permesso ai prefati tti. di rimanere in Lucca.

Translation: Yesterday Count Gamba of Ravenna arrived in Lucca with a son,⁴⁶ and a daughter married to Count Guiccioli ... Lord Baylon's lady-friend, and this morning they called upon me to request domicile in the Duchy. They come from Tuscany where they have resided for some time in company with the aforementioned Lord Baylon,⁴⁷ from which country they have been expelled on account of a quarrel which took place resulting in the serious wounding of a certain Sergeant Masi, of which their respective servants have been accused of being the perpetrators, not without a grave suspicion of connivance on the part of their masters; what has been the outcome of the trial I am not able to state; but I do know that the Tuscan Government has expelled them not so much because of the Gambas as for the aforementioned Lord Baylon a most dangerous individual not only on account of his fiery nature but also on account of his talents and his resources. He is going to arrive shortly, as he follows the above-mentioned Countess Guiccioli.

I have not [wished] to give any positive reply to the request for domicile without [first] learning the sovereign will in the matter, but I would respectfully observe that in case it is desired to tolerate the Gambas, the same would not be possible in the case of Baylon for the reasons given; in case it is thought best to secure his expulsion without a direct measure, it would be advisable to follow the same course adopted by Tuscany, namely to order the above-mentioned Countess to choose another country for her residence. I shall await the most revered instruction of Your Royal Majesty in the case; [and] in the meantime I have permitted the above-mentioned persons to remain in Lucca.

(Source: Italian text and translation from KSHR Gay Papers Box 36A.)

45: Lucca was a small, supposedly independent state, north of Tuscany.

46: Ruggiero Gamba, his son Pietro (B.'s friend) and Teresa had all been expelled from Tuscany shortly after the Pisan Affray.

47: Natives of Tuscany do indeed pronounce "Byron", "Baylon."

40) Torelli's diary, October 1822

Continuava presso il Conte Gamba un flusso e reflusso di Romagnoli, e stavasi in attenzione di Lord Byron, Amante della *Contessa Guiccioli* figlia del Gamba. Si attendevano anche all'apertura de' nuovi studj molti scolari Piemontesi, a cui era stata interdetta l'universita di Torino. Il Presidente del Buon Governo di Firenze, essendo forse stato prevenuto delle possibili conseguenze pell'arrivo di *Byron* Protettore e centro di tutti questi fanatici stava sulle intese per la sua venuta, ed aveva scritto al Tribunali di Pisa accio' gli rendesse esatto conto di tutto cio che riguardava l'arrivo di costui.

(Source: KSHR, Gay Papers Box 36A.)

Translation: There continues to be, about Count Gamba, an influx and reflux of men from the Romagna, who were looking forward to the arrival of Lord Byron, lover of Countess Guiccioli, Gamba's daughter. [They include] many Piedmontese students, who have been banned from the university of Turin, [and who are] waiting for the start of new courses. The President of the Buon Governo in Florence, being advised in advance of the possible consequences of the arrival of Byron, protector and centre of all these fanatics, was alert for his arrival, and had written to the Tribunal at Pisa to give him all the relevant details.⁴⁸

48: Origo 302 / 328 has "The head of the Financial Department of Pisa to the Buon Governo, 1822: We are aware of certain rumours about the political attitude of this Englishman, who combines with high birth, literary celebrity, and a considerable fortune, a great determination to favour all political novelties ... in view of the opening of the University ... [lest Byron should become] the Protector and Centre of all those young fanatics ... the most careful and secret instructions should be sent for the supervision of the aforesaid foreigner."