

**Jonathon Shears and Alan Rawes, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Lord Byron*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. 727. £161. ISBN 9780198808800.**

*The Oxford Handbook of Lord Byron* is a long-awaited addition to the Oxford Handbook series and to Byron studies, and it will not disappoint its readers. The nearly 800-page volume (including introductory material) contains 45 essays and is divided into five parts.

In Part I, 15 essays cover the major works, most of the lesser-known works, and some that are not really known. Shobhana Bhattacharji examines the poet's first two collections: *Fugitive Pieces* and *Poems Original and Translated*. Stephen Minta looks to the Mediterranean in a study of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I and II. Anna Camilleri explores how the orientalism of the Eastern Mediterranean subtly addresses issues of gender in the 'Turkish Tales'. Jonathon Shears examines Byron's lyric poetry, with a fine introduction establishing key contexts. Bernard Beatty pairs 'Chillon' and *Mazeppa*, then looking to 'Tasso' and 'Dante'. Philip Shaw traces 'Byron's fascination with exile and sublimity to poems written in response to the downfall of Napoleon and to the breakdown of his domestic relations'. Lilla Maria Crisafulli reads *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV and *Beppo* as two of Byron's most 'Italianate' poems. Arnold Anthony Schmidt turns to Byron's three major plays: *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Sardanapalus*.

Drummond Bone examines the first four cantos of *Don Juan*. Subsequently, Diego Saglia argues that Cantos V-VIII 'form a close-knit narrative sequence'. Next, Gary Dyer examines the idea of transition in Cantos IX-XII. Jane Stabler then looks at the Norman abbey cantos through the lens of George Orwell. Mirka Horová examines *Manfred*, *Cain*, and *Heaven and Earth* through the interplay between metaphysical rebellion and strife between the characters and their supernatural counterparts. Matthew Ward looks at several of Byron's final works through the lens of 'Byron's Poetic Endings'. Anthony Howe turns his attention towards 'Byron's Letters'.

Part II begins with John Beckett's 'Byron the Aristocrat'. Moving through Byron's life, Roderick Beaton charts the geographical locations that helped place the poet at home. Next, Jeffery Vail looks at Byron's sexual activity and addresses some psychological manifestations. Andrew M Stauffer disentangles the real Byron from the myth created through his poetry.

Part III concerns literary and cultural contexts. Jonathan Sachs elucidates Byron's knowledge and understanding of classical poetics. Nicholas Gayle presents the mock-epic 'as a way of misbehaving, of turning things upside down'. Peter W. Graham 'centre[s] mainly on how Byron valued and responded to [...] the novel'. Simon Bainbridge examines Byron's cunning satirical attitude in 'Byron and the Lake Poets'. Jeffrey N. Cox scrutinises Byron's relationship with his contemporaries in 'The Satanic School'. Michael Simpson holds that 'The terms 'Byron' and 'Theatre' unite as an essential ingredient of his poetic style. Alan Rawes identifies the Italian writers who help shape Byron's major works and the Byronic Hero. Mary O'Connell then addresses 'Byron and Regency Print Culture'.

Part IV focuses on burgeoning nationalistic romanticisms and literatures throughout Europe and across the Atlantic Ocean. Maria Schoina investigates 'the ways in which the reviewers of mainstream British periodicals influenced the course of Byron's poetic career'. Jonathan Gross seeks to catalogue every biography of Byron written in English. Clara Tuite interrogates how Byron's poetry employed the 'fashion' of Orientalism. Next, Sarah Wooton examines Victorian attitudes to Byron and Byronism.

Piya Pal-Lapinski traces Byron's influence on nineteenth-century classical music and opera. Next, Christine Kenyon-Jones presents Byron as 'by far the most heavily illustrated poet of his day'. Mark Sandy traces Byron's influences on: Yeats, Auden, Woolf, and Faulkner. Carla

Pomarè's chapter 'Byron and the Critics in the New Millennium' revisits negative criticisms of Byron. Joanna Taylor tunes into what is understood as 'Byronic' in the 'social media age'. Paul M. Curtis looks to 'Editing Byron and Digital Futures'.

Part V is entitled 'Reading Byron Now'. In 'Byron and Nationalism', Martin Procházka explores the differences in European nationalism. Jonathon Shears situates ideas that Byron's body occupied parts of his mind and that his mind 'was central to understanding his body'. Hermoine de Almeida demonstrates how Byron scholars can push the boundaries of textual analysis. Will Bowers explores cosmopolitan voices in Byron's notes to his poems. Next, Ghislaine McDayter discusses Byron's sexuality. Tom Mole's chapter 'examine[s] why accounts of Byron's celebrity emerged when they did'. Carl Thompson reads Byron as a 'traveler-poet'.

Jerome McGann contributes a final chapter, also functioning as the collection's afterword. McGann dispels the ultimate rumor levied against Byron through Wordsworth.

This handbook is a joy to read. It would be suitable for postgraduate students and scholars alike. It is clearly a labor of love, and readers can feel the passion and excitement for the subject matter. I will recommend this handbook to colleagues and students for years to come.

*Peter Francev*  
*Victor Valley College*