

Malta, August 31st–September 19th 1809

## Malta

August 31st–September 19th 1809

Edited from B.L.Add.Mss. 56527

**Despite the diary, some mystery still surrounds what happens to Byron and Hobhouse on Malta. Why does everyone except Spiridion Forresti urge them to go at once to Smyrna, or to Constantinople? What powers of persuasion does Forresti possess, that no-one else does? Is it simply that the two young men find his line of cosmopolitan sophistication more appealing than the British bluster of Sir Alexander Ball? Whatever the case, by the time they leave Malta, their fate is sealed, for, persuaded by Forresti, they are off to Tepellene, to see Ali Pacha.**

**Hobhouse's clinical summing-up of the charms of Constance Spencer Smith on 4 Sep is sadly characteristic.**

**Thursday August 31st 1809:** At sea. Malta in sight – a low land. Lord Byron gets a fine map of Greece out of Mr Galt. The entrance of the eastern harbour of Malta very grand, and surpassing every conception of that place ... anchored at two p.m. Dined on board without the captain, who carried a letter from Sir Richard Bickerton<sup>1</sup> to Sir Alexander Ball<sup>2</sup> and dined with him. Went on shore in the evening.<sup>3</sup> Up many steps<sup>4</sup> to get into the heart of the town: very clean with streets broad enough. Came again on board, received report from the Captain – slept on board –

<sup>1</sup>: Sir Richard Bickerton, C-in-C Home Fleet. See entry for 27 Feb 1812.

<sup>2</sup>: Rear-Admiral Sir Alexander J. Ball (1757-1809) friend of Nelson and Governor of Malta. He died a month after B. and H. left. From May 1804 to October 1805 he had had Samuel Taylor Coleridge as his secretary.

<sup>3</sup>: H. does not say that the reason why they stayed on board was that B. was expecting a naval salute on disembarking, and was angered at not getting one. See Galt's words at *HVSV* 26. B. gets a compensatory salute at Smyrna on 3 Apr 1810, and another at Constantinople on 14 July 1810.

<sup>4</sup>: Valetta's numerous flights of stairs must have been exhausting for B. See *A Farewell to Malta* (CPW I 338-40) lines 5-6: *Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs! / (How surely he who mounts you swears!)*

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**Friday September 1st 1809:** Got up at nine, breakfasted on board. Went on shore with Mr Shee, delivered a letter to Colonel Dickens;<sup>5</sup> saw the church of St John.<sup>6</sup> Went round the altar – a man praying on the steps – returned on board – found a formal lordship letter from Sir Alexander Ball, inviting “To partake of a family” (*dinner* left out) at half-past three. At three, took leave of the *Townshend* and Shee. Went to the Palace. Shown in to Sir Alexander Ball – took places. Asked where we lodged – advised to go on Sunday with convoy to Smyrna (*Wizard* Brig, Captain Ferris).<sup>7</sup> Went in carriage along a good road, stopping at General Oakes’<sup>8</sup> country seat in the way to deliver a letter, to St Antonio, the Governor’s country seat, to dine with him. Dined at four p.m. with him and my Lady Ball (rather stiff). Dinner all in one course, with lectures on temperance and commendation of our abstinence – the house very large – in galleries with paintings – one of Corregio’s<sup>9</sup> – antelopes in a small enclosure very tame – garden large with broad stone walks, but still good – perpetual recommendation to go instantly to Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> Heard that Billy Vaux,<sup>11</sup> *mon cher ami*, was gone to Constantinople and Athens<sup>12</sup> with young Ball,<sup>13</sup> who did not mount regimentals, but was a genius and painted an outline of Etna, the brimstone being filled up by one eminent painter (as Lord Byron said).

Returned in a *calesa* of Sir Alexander Ball’s to town, a neat carriage with two seats, two wheels, one mule, and the man running by the side. Still thinking to go immediately to Constantinople, and not knowing where we were to sleep ... at seven called and delivered letter to Mr Chabot,<sup>14</sup> merchant, who was at dinner with a party – most hospitably received, and

<sup>5</sup>: Unidentified. For a reference to his wife, see entry for 26 Mar 1810.

<sup>6</sup>: Here they would have seen Caravaggio’s *The Decapitation of St. John the Baptist*, his largest work and the only one he signed. See *Don Juan XIII* 72, 2, and BLJ VIII 240.

<sup>7</sup>: Ferris otherwise unidentified.

<sup>8</sup>: Major-General Hildebrand Oakes (1754-1822) Commander of the English forces at Malta.

<sup>9</sup>: Italian painter (1494-1534): B. never refers to his work.

<sup>10</sup>: The anxiety of everyone to have them off the island soon is striking: compare entry for 6 Sep 1809.

<sup>11</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>12</sup>: The diary volume numbered B.L.Add.Mss. 47231 ends at this point.

<sup>13</sup>: Sir Alexander’s son; otherwise unidentified.

<sup>14</sup>: Otherwise unidentified.

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accommodated with beds in his house. Coming under the port to the country house, Sir Alexander Ball told us that Buonaparte, being complimented by the Knights<sup>15</sup> on being in possession of Malta, said, “Yes, it is lucky there was someone within to open the gates to us.” Met a schoolfellow, a fag of mine, Mr Le Mesurer,<sup>16</sup> at Mr Chabot’s, who told us *everything went wrong in Sicily*.<sup>17</sup>

**Saturday September 2nd 1809:** Got up at eight. Breakfasted with the family – debated about going to Smyrna, and found, after determining upon buying sheep, eggs, and a dozen fowls,<sup>18</sup> that the four English saddles were left in the *Townshend* – called on Ball and told our case. He wished us good morning, but Mr Larry his secretary told us he had got Dr Moncrieff’s house for us, No 3 Strada di Forni<sup>19</sup> – took us to the public library – very good. Lord Byron bought an Arabic Grammar for a dollar. Introduced to and took a lesson of an Arabic master<sup>20</sup> – went to bathe in a well- constructed bath in Mr Chabot’s *calesa*. Came back – dined with General Oakes at his *casa di campagna* – grand dispute about Billy Pitt with his *aide-de-camp*, a rude fellow who grinned. Carried off by the General to town for fear of battle<sup>21</sup> – saw his apartments in the palace. Went to the Opera – small – bad house – boxes let twelve dollars per month but half price always paid by entrances – tolerable Italian opera – *Il Falso Philossofo*,<sup>22</sup> with a good orchestra – though ill-paid, but the dancing so-so. *Gli Amanti Burlatti*<sup>23</sup> in the bad style

<sup>15</sup>: The Knights of Malta. Charles V gave them Malta; Napoleon took it from them.

<sup>16</sup>: Otherwise unidentified.

<sup>17</sup>: Sicily was ruled by Ferdinand III, who had been dethroned in Naples in 1806 (there he had been Ferdinand IV). His extravagant court and vicious police-system made him detested. England kept Agosta and Messina, as bases from which to attack the mainland.

<sup>18</sup>: For provisions on the *Wizard* brigantine, going to Smyrna.

<sup>19</sup>: Now called Old Bakery Street. Coleridge had stayed with Dr. Moncrieff there five years previously when he was secretary to Sir Alexander Ball.

<sup>20</sup>: A sign that, though they may be planning to go to Constantinople, it is not the limit of their aspirations. Peter Vassallo suggests that the lessons were with Abbate Giacchino Navarro, Librarian at the Valletta Public Library.

<sup>21</sup>: The aide-de-camp who defends Pitt against their Whig jibes is Captain C. Cary, with whom B. nearly has a duel.

<sup>22</sup>: Should be *Il Falso Filosofo. The False Philosopher*. Opera by Carlo Maggi (1630-99); my thanks to Chris Little here.

<sup>23</sup>: *The Laughing Lovers*; unidentified.

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of Lisbon. Eat for the first time at General Oakes' – beccaficas,<sup>24</sup> a fat bit of a bird, smaller than larks, and a curious fish, found in a shell like a mussel enclosed in a rock. Prompter at the opera with coat on, and two large rings on his fingers. Found a capital lodgings at Dr Moncrieff's, and a very civil letter from Colonel Dickens – wrote this from August 31st.

**Sunday September 3rd 1809:** Up late. Went to bathe, dined at home, Strada di Formi No 3 ... went in the evening to Mr Chabot's – met a Mr Forresti,<sup>25</sup> son of a "famous" Forresti, who mentioned anecdotes of Bounaparte, discovering an assassin by his agitation, and the "snuff-box story".<sup>26</sup> Mr Launder,<sup>27</sup> a partner of Chabot's, also an intelligent man, knew Berthier,<sup>28</sup> saw him demand the loan of the Hamburgers who talked of the Danes. He said he would overrun Holstein with five hundred French grenadiers. Bounaparte made the King of Bavaria<sup>29</sup> and the Viceroy of Italy<sup>30</sup> wait standing behind his chair, as an eyewitness told Mr Forresti. Capri, after an immense expense, given to the care of foreigners, and taken. A staircase cut in the rock of Scilla which cost £3,000 (ladders would have done as well) blown up by the French. Sir William Drummond's<sup>31</sup> strange behaviour at the court of Sicily. Young Wellesley Pole bullied the Divan and got Wallachia, etc. for the Russians, who got him appointed Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople where he had to do everything, as Arbuthnot did nothing.<sup>32</sup> Sir George Rumbold<sup>33</sup> disguised himself as a sergeant and tried to seduce

<sup>24</sup>: See *Beppo* 43, 1.

<sup>25</sup>: "Forrestie" (Ms.) His name was George Forresti; his "famous" father was Spiridion Forresti (177??-1822), at that time exiled English Resident on Corfu; he himself succeeded William Martin Leake (see entry for Oct 6 1809) as English Resident at Ioannina (Adair II 322-4); see B.'s letter to his father (BLJ II 262-3).

<sup>26</sup>: B. to his mother, November 12th 1809: "Bonaparte sent him [Ali Pacha] a snuffbox with his picture[;] he said the snuffbox was very well, but the picture he could excuse, as he neither liked *it* nor the *original*" (BLJ I 228).

<sup>27</sup>: Unidentified; see BB 36.

<sup>28</sup>: The brother of Alexandre Berthier (1753-1815) Napoleon's Chief of Staff.

<sup>29</sup>: King Maximilian I of Bavaria, Napoleon's ally and father-in-law to

<sup>30</sup>: Napoleon's stepson, Eugene de Beauharnais.

<sup>31</sup>: See entry for 12 Aug 1809.

<sup>32</sup>: For these events, at Constantinople in January 1807, see entries for 17 July 1810 and 29 Dec 1815.

<sup>33</sup>: Sir George Rumbold (1764-1807) had been English Resident in Hamburg; there he had been arrested under orders from Fouché, Napoleon's Chief of Police; though

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Danish soldiers at Altona.<sup>34</sup> Spencer Smith<sup>35</sup> certainly guilty ... This evening a scirocco wind, wetting coats.

**Monday September 4th 1809:** Up at ten. Took a lesson of Arabic. Colonel Dickens called. Walked to his house – went to bathe – dined at home, took a walk round the town by myself – naked children in the streets. Went to the Theatre and saw a play of Kotzebue's<sup>36</sup> performed without an after-piece<sup>37</sup> – pit very full. Play very dull, but the people like it better than the operas. Joined by Mr Forresti – turned out of a box (all boxes rented here and days<sup>38</sup> kept). Introduced by Mr Forresti to *la célèbre* Mrs Spencer-Smith<sup>39</sup> and the son of the Spanish ambassador at London.<sup>40</sup> Not knowing this latter, we talked lightly of the Spaniards. Mrs Spencer Smith a tall pretty woman, with fat arms, well made.<sup>41</sup> Saw the church of St John<sup>42</sup> this day and the coffin and box containing the body and "*praeordia*" of Count Beaujolois<sup>43</sup> which in better times is to be sent to France!! The wife of Egalité<sup>44</sup> lives at Minorca pensioned by Napoleon – Angelica Catalani<sup>45</sup> certainly a whore – Mr Forresti knew her in Milan in that trade.

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for conspiracy, not indecency.

<sup>34</sup>: Altona is a suburb of Hamburg.

<sup>35</sup>: The husband of Constance Spencer Smith; wherein his guilt lay is also unclear (H. may be referring to his wife).

<sup>36</sup>: August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue (1761-1819) German dramatist; forever famous as the author of *Lovers' Vows* in *Mansfield Park*.

<sup>37</sup>: With no comedy as the second half of the bill, so that the audience did not get their full money's worth.

<sup>38</sup>: This word could be "keys".

<sup>39</sup>: Constance Spencer Smith was the daughter of the Austrian ambassador to Constantinople, and sister-in-law to Sir William Sidney Smith, victor of the siege of Acre in 1799. Her husband was the English Minister in Stuttgart, and she was friendly with the Bourbon court at Naples. Perhaps because of this last, she had been arrested at Venice by the Napoleonic secret police, but rescued dramatically by a man called Count Salvo. For B.'s account of his affair with her, see BLJ II 198-9; she is the "Florence" of *Childe Harold* II Stanzas 30-3.

<sup>40</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>41</sup>: Compare the clinical H.'s dismissal of Madame Recamier on 29 May 1815.

<sup>42</sup>: See entry for 1 Sep 1809; also BLJ II 8.

<sup>43</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>44</sup>: Father of the future French king Louis Philippe.

<sup>45</sup>: Angelica Catalani, greatest soprano of her generation: see entry for 28 June 1811.

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**Tuesday September 5th 1809:** Still a severe scirocco; pain on the eye. Up at ten. Lesson in Arabic. Mr Spiridion Forresti called and showed us how to go to La Pietà to bathe in a boat – dined at home. Mr Spiridion Forresti took us to the theatre in the evening. Mr Forresti is a ward of Mr North's.<sup>46</sup> When a boy, "Mr Gibbon" took a pleasure in hearing him read Greek<sup>47</sup> ... He told us that Lord Elgin had defaced many fine columns at Athens to get at the reliquies,<sup>48</sup> which the French never did ... Mr Wright, author of *Ionica*,<sup>49</sup> never once left Corfu for two years, and knew no Greek, giving up all his time to his wife, and having a fine library which he never opened<sup>50</sup> ... No tours are correct. Witness Major Taylor's account of Mr Forresti's father.<sup>51</sup>

**Wednesday September 6th 1809:** Up ten. Lesson in Arabic. Bathe at La Pietà. Dinner (being the weekly public day) at Sir Alexander Ball's – large party. Pressed to go in a cutter next day to Constantinople.<sup>52</sup> Old Maltese came in the evening to walk in the gardens where there was a band. Captain Sharpe,<sup>53</sup> my "swallow" friend, told me the English were not liked except by the more opulent Maltese, who had houses to let to them, they having raised the price of provisions &c. considerably. Lord Forbes<sup>54</sup> told me things were

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<sup>46</sup>: Frederick North (1766-1821) made Lord Guilford in 1817. A philhellene and Greek Orthodox convert, he founded an Ionian University on Corfu, and was much mocked for his habit of wearing ancient Greek costume on important occasions. On 31 Mar 1817 B. wrote of him to H. as "... that despicable lipping old Ox & Charlatan ... Of all the perambulating humbuggers that aged nondescript is the principal" (BLJ V 199).

<sup>47</sup>: I am unable to trace any link between Forresti and Gibbon; it may be that it was *Gibbon* who enjoyed hearing *North* reading Greek.

<sup>48</sup>: See *The Curse of Minerva*, 99-122. For Elgin, see entry for 20 Dec 1809 *et. seq.*

<sup>49</sup>: Waller Rodwell Wright (????-1826) Consul-General for the Ionian Islands 1800-4, and author of *Horæ Ionicae*, supposedly a subtext for *CHP*. See *EBSR* 867-80.

<sup>50</sup>: Wright's library had in fact been rifled and scattered by the French in 1804.

<sup>51</sup>: The reference is to *Travels from England to India in the Year 1789* by Major John Taylor (????-1808) I 115-23, in which it is told how Forresti's father, when Assistant to the English Consul at Zante, boarded a ship called *The Grand Duchess of Tuscany* and saved her and her £80,000 cargo, by single-handedly shooting and overpowering the pirate who had captured her. For another reference to Taylor's book see entry for 17 Feb 1810. For B.'s sale of it, see *CMP* 242.

<sup>52</sup>: Further evidence that the authorities wanted them off Malta: see entry for 1 Sep 1809.

<sup>53</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>54</sup>: Unidentified.

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going on very badly in Sicily. Went to the play, where there was a speaking Punchinello<sup>55</sup> – and a most beastly scene of a young girl putting a pestle into her hand near the waistband of his breeches. Mr Forresti came home with us. Sir Alexander Ball talks Maltese. Dreadful scirocco<sup>56</sup> brought on a violent cold on me directly.

**Thursday September 7th 1809:** Got up very ill with the wind. Short lesson in Arabic. Went to St Julian's<sup>57</sup> & dined with Colonel Dickens at his seat, about four miles from Valetta. These country houses, except the General's and Admiral's, not very good, nor so cool as town. Theatre in the evening – *Gli Amanti Burlatti*.<sup>58</sup>

**Friday September 8th 1809:** Very ill with the wind. Dined out at five at Mr Chabot's: found change of wind immediately. No lesson in Arabic. Lord Byron made a bet of twenty guineas with a Mr Wherry that he got into the female slave market at Constantinople.<sup>59</sup> Went in the evening to a music party, at St Floriana.<sup>60</sup> The General played on the flute!! Performers from the theatre there, who supped in another room. The parson of the garrison, a Mr Miller,<sup>61</sup> butted by the aids &c!!

**Saturday September 9th 1809:** Lesson in Arabic. Called on pretty Mrs Commissioner Fraser<sup>62</sup> and Mrs Spencer Smith. Dined with General Oakes, who told me he was next to Nelson when he lost his eye.<sup>63</sup> They were in a battery, the General sitting and Nelson standing, and just as General Oakes

<sup>55</sup>: A Harlequin show.

<sup>56</sup>: See B., *Stanzas* (written 11 Oct 1809): "Full swiftly blew the fierce Siroc / When last I pressed the lip" (the lines are addressed to "Florence", or Constance Spencer Smith).

<sup>57</sup>: The Maltese town (my thanks to Chris Little here).

<sup>58</sup>: Which he had seen already; see entry for 2 Sep 1809.

<sup>59</sup>: B. lost his bet: see entry for 6 Apr 1810. Mr Wherry was the English Consul at Smyrna. He was their host there in March and April 1810.

<sup>60</sup>: A southern suburb of Valetta.

<sup>61</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>62</sup>: See *A Farewell to Malta*, lines 33-44, and BB 86. Susan Fraser was a friend of Constance Spencer Smith, and author of a poem called *Camilla de Florian*. B. seems to have admired her.

<sup>63</sup>: At the siege of Calvi on Corsica in July 1794. It was at this battle that B.'s cousin, William John Byron, was killed, vacating the Rochdale baronetcy for B.

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begged him to expose himself no longer, a shot took the battery and sent some stones into his face. He mentions that the Sicilians wished the English to take possession of their island, but that now, they having worked no reform and done nothing, are so hated that the people would join the French. The Sicilians, he said, formerly despised the Maltese; now when a Malta boat coasts their shore they run to the beach and receive small loaves of bread, which are flung from the boats. Went to Mrs Fraser's – unpleasant evening – *rixæ femininæ*,<sup>64</sup> Mrs Spencer Smith being there – pleasant weather –

**Sunday September 10th 1809:** At home – lesson in Arabic – dinner with Duke Humphrey on Bolognas.<sup>65</sup> Play in the evening. Dance, "*Statua Mobile*."<sup>66</sup>

**Monday September 11th 1809:** Went with Mr Forresti to Civita Vecchia<sup>67</sup> – saw St Paul's cave.<sup>68</sup> Assured by the priest who showed it, that St Paul had lived there three months, that since his times vipers had not been venomous in Malta, and that the stone of the cave was a preservative, and had been tried in England against viper's venom. Saw the catacombs – very spacious and tolerably perfect – bats chasing in clusters to the cave. To the Boschette,<sup>69</sup> large convent. Large neat palace, gardens of pomegranates, orange and lemon, and grotto with a fine fountain of clear water where the cits of Valetta take cold dinners. Observed ye cotton plant in abundance – delightful shower of rain, the second since leaving England. Informed by Forresti that Lord Valentia<sup>70</sup> had caught the shitten pox in Egypt, as he heard

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<sup>64</sup>: "Women's quarrels", perhaps indicating rivalry between Mrs Fraser and Constance Spencer Smith.

<sup>65</sup>: To "dine with Duke Humphrey" was to go without a meal altogether. See *The Blues*, II 145. "on Bolognas" unclear in this context.

<sup>66</sup>: H. translates this two days later as *Moving Statue*: a version of the Pygmalion legend may be guessed. See entry for 10 July 1809 for a previous performance in Lisbon.

<sup>67</sup>: Mdina, the old capital, in the middle of the island.

<sup>68</sup>: See Acts 28, 1-6.

<sup>69</sup>: The Boschetto gardens, anglicised Buskett; laid out by the Knights of Malta.

<sup>70</sup>: George, Viscount Valentia, whose *Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt in the Years 1802-6* had been reviewed in the *Quarterly Review* for August 1809 (pp. 88-126). See *EBSR* 1025 (early editions): *Let vain Valentia*

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from his surgeon – also that there are 95,000 inhabitants of Malta – 15,000 visitants ... dined at home – lesson in Arabic. Went to the play with Mr Forresti – Lord Byron gallanting at Mrs Fraser's.

**Tuesday September 12th 1809:** Lesson in Arabic – the bath – dinner at home – play – dance – *Moving Statues*. Recollect Madame – thin dress.

**Wednesday September 13th 1809:** Lesson in Arabic, then bathe. Dinner at home. Mr Forresti, in the evening, mentioned<sup>71</sup> some curious passages from the wars of the Suliotes written in Modern Greek.<sup>72</sup> Three hundred women flung themselves over a cliff.<sup>73</sup> The son of the chief Suliote being taken before the son of Ali Pacha<sup>74</sup> in Ioannina, the young Pacha addressed him with, “Well, we have got you and we will now burn you alive” – “I know it,” replied the prisoner, “and when my father catches you he will serve you in the same manner.” Mr Frederick North<sup>75</sup> established a school at Previsa. The play a German comedy.<sup>76</sup> Most dreadful man in chains clanking for half an hour – people fond of this. Pictures like those of Barthelmi fair,<sup>77</sup> representing the most horrid scene in the play, are stuck near the play bills in the street ...

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*rival luckless Carr* ... He was the brother of Frances Wedderburn Webster, and famously gay.

<sup>71</sup>: BLJ II 262n suggests that at this conversation Forresti *encouraged Byron and Hobhouse to visit Ali Pacha*. He seems to be moving in his prey.

<sup>72</sup>: Book unidentified. William Martin Leake possessed the Latin manuscript of a *History of Souli* (see *Revival* 19).

<sup>73</sup>: On Ali's expulsion of the Suliots from Suli in 1803, sixty women and children threw themselves over a precipice at Zalongo; early in the following year, 130 women, again with their children, threw themselves into the river Achelous near Vurgareli.

<sup>74</sup>: Veli Pacha, son of Ali Pacha, in whose name he ruled the Morea. B. meets him in July 1810. The twelve-year-old son of the chief Suliote was Photo Tzavellas, and this interview happened after his father had abandoned him to Ali Pacha in 1792: but eventually he entered Ali's service.

<sup>75</sup>: Lord Guilford; see entry for 5 Sep 1809.

<sup>76</sup>: Perhaps another one – or even the same one – by Kotzebue; see entry for 4 Sep 1809.

<sup>77</sup>: See entry for 3 Sep 1812.

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**Thursday September 14th 1809:** Last lesson in Arabic.<sup>78</sup> Called on Colonel Dickens, Mr Laing,<sup>79</sup> Mr Stranè,<sup>80</sup> and made preparations for sailing in the corvette for Previsa.<sup>81</sup> Wrote this from Tuesday. At the play ... dinner with Dickens ... evening Mr Francis.<sup>82</sup>

**Friday September 15th 1809:** Found we were to go in the *Spider*.<sup>83</sup> called on Sir Alexander Ball<sup>84</sup> – advised to take provision in the *Spider*, commanded by Lieutenant Oliver.<sup>85</sup> Haggling about this point<sup>86</sup> – send a note – no answer. Dine at home. in the evening [ ] home.

**Saturday September 16th 1809:**<sup>87</sup> Wind contrary – kept at home with a cut in foot left, got in bathing. In the evening Forresti brought “Constantine”, an Albanian, in his dress – “a savage fellow” – “αγαπα την γλοσσαν την Ελληνι την”.<sup>88</sup> Modern Greek ...

**Sunday September 17th 1809:** Wind still contrary – at home all day with bad foot. Theatre in the evening –

**Monday September 18th 1809:** Dinner at Mr Fraser’s in the evening. Lord Byron tells me at eleven that he is going to fight a Captain C.C.Cary,<sup>89</sup> having through a friend accepted the challenge for next morning at six. The

<sup>78</sup>: They make no use of their minimal Arabic, for they visit no Arab countries.

<sup>79</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>80</sup>: “Strani” (Ms.) . The English Consul at Patras; see BLJ I 232.

<sup>81</sup>: Their decision to go to Albania has been taken without having been recorded.

<sup>82</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>83</sup>: That is, to Previsa, and not to Constantinople. On this day B. writes to his mother, “I ... embark tomorrow for Patras from whence I proceed to Yanina where Ali Pacha holds his court, so I shall soon be amongst the Mussulmen ...” (BLJ I 224)

<sup>84</sup>: *Journey* (I 52) reveals that Ball provided them with a letter of introduction to Captain Leake, the English Resident at Ioannina.

<sup>85</sup>: Otherwise unidentified.

<sup>86</sup>: And yet they had been prepared to provision themselves for travelling in the *Wizard*; see entry for 2 Sep 1809.

<sup>87</sup>: Constance Spencer Smith to B., September 1810: “In case your thoughts are still what they were on the 16th of September, then set out for Malta at the very first opportunity ...” (TLB, 12-13).

<sup>88</sup>: Greek untranslated.

<sup>89</sup>: All assume this quarrel to be over Mrs Spencer Smith; though see entry for 2 Sep 1809. For B.’s challenge, see BLJ II 224-5.

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bomb gate. At twelve Major Waddle<sup>90</sup> called – matters explained, all but as to Lord Byron's informant's<sup>91</sup> house attacked by thieves. Sir Alexander Ball's lamps.<sup>92</sup>

**Tuesday September 19th 1809:** Got up nine. The *Spider* and convoy under weigh very early, firing guns. Detained by Captain Cary, insisting to know Lord Byron's informants – after three messages by Major Waddle to myself, agreed to be satisfied, as Lord Byron had promised secrecy – after having sent a long letter, disclaiming every intent to insult Lord Byron. Got on board at two. Mr Strani, consul at Patrass, and a young Constantinopolitan there, passengers ...

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<sup>90</sup>: Unidentified.

<sup>91</sup>: It is hard to reconcile the demand for “informants” with a proposed duel over a lady. B.'s letter to Henry Drury is ambiguous about the connection between the affair and the challenge: “At Malta I fell in love with a married woman and challenged an aid de camp of Genl. Oakes (a rude fellow who grinned at something, I never rightly knew what) but he explained and apologised, and the lady embarked for Cadiz, & so I escaped murder and adultery” (BLJ I 239).

<sup>92</sup>: Could be “lamps”.