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Guide to the

Five manuscript documents in Italian relating to Lord Byron's legal proceedings against Francis Merryweather

1818-1819

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Summary

Title: Five manuscript documents in Italian relating to Lord Byron's legal proceedings against Francis Merryweather

Date: 1818-1819

Size: 5 items

Abstract: Francis Merryweather was an English shopkeeper in Venice from whom Lord Byron had bought a number of goods, mostly alcoholic beverages and condiments. Toward the end of 1817, Merryweather was fined by Italian authorities for violating import laws; Byron loaned Merryweather 600 lire to pay the fine. Later, angered by some "ingratitude" of Merryweather, Byron brought legal action against him for repayment of the loan, plus interest and court fees. For more on the Byron-Merryweather controversy see Shelley and his Circle, volume VII, pages 311-315. · Jacopo Castelli's autograph petition signed : [received 11 Jul 1818] : (B'ANA 0188a) : 2 pages (double sheet) : to sue Merryweather on Byron's behalf for repayment of a 600-lire loan, plus interest and court expenses; with docket and notes on page 4 of the double sheet; attached (sewn inside) is a receipt for 600 lire received from Siri and Willhalm, Byron's bankers, drawn up by the officers at the Salute Custom House and dated 7 Jul 1818.

Preferred citation: Five manuscript documents in Italian relating to Lord Byron's legal proceedings against Francis Merryweather, Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Francis Merryweather was an English shopkeeper in Venice from whom Lord Byron had bought a number of goods, mostly alcoholic beverages and condiments. Toward the end of 1817, Merryweather was fined by Italian authorities for violating import laws; Byron loaned Merryweather 600 lire to pay the fine. Later, angered by some "ingratitude" of Merryweather, Byron brought legal action against him for repayment of the loan, plus interest and court fees. For more on the Byron-Merryweather controversy see Shelley and his Circle, volume VII, pages 311-315.

Scope and Content Note

- Jacopo Castelli's autograph petition signed : [received 11 Jul 1818] : (B'ANA 0188a) : 2 pages (double sheet) : to sue Merryweather on Byron's behalf for repayment of a 600-lire loan, plus interest and court expenses; with docket and notes on page 4 of the double sheet; attached (sewn inside) is a receipt for 600 lire received from Siri and Willhalm, Byron's bankers, drawn up by the officers at the Salute Custom House and dated 7 Jul 1818.

- Francis Merryweather's autograph letter signed : [received 11 Dec 1819] : (B'ANA 0188b) : 1 page (single sheet) : to the General Police Headquarters of Venice, applying for a passport; with docket and notes on the verso.

- Police report : 13 Dec 1819 : (B'ANA 0188c) : 1 page (double sheet) : declaring there was no reason for denying Merryweather a passport to Florence; on blue paper; with notes on page 4 of the double sheet.

- Jacopo Castelli's autograph petition signed : [received 13 Dec 1819] : (B'ANA 0188d) : 2 ¹/₂ pages (double sheet) : urging the police to refuse Merryweather a passport; with docket and notes on page 4 of the double sheet.

- Description of the court proceedings of Byron v. Merryweather : [Mar 1819?] : (B'ANA 0188e) : 18 pages (6 double sheets) : in an unidentified hand; the trial conducted before Judge Foscarini; follows events from the time the original suit was brought until the final decision was rendered on 4 Mar 1819.

Along with these documents are: a legal notice in the *Supplimento alla gazzetta ufficiale di Venezia* of 12 Jun 1861, regarding unclaimed money awarded to Byron through the court case; a copy of Leonardo Olschki's *Lord Byron a Venezia*, which describes the above manuscripts and the Byron-Merryweather controversy; and three pages of notes on the case (B'ANA 0188f), dating from 1862 or slightly later, in an unidentified hand, on two double sheets.

Key Terms

Subjects

Legal documents -- Italy -- 19th century -- Manuscripts -- Specimens

Names

Byron, George Gordon Byron, Baron, 1788-1824

Castelli, Jacopo, 1791-1849

Merryweather, Francis (Shopkeeper)

Merryweather, Francis (Shopkeeper)