Abstract

Building on research recently undertaken as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Beyond Text project titled ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory, 1796–1909’, this essay demonstrates the role played by material culture in preserving and creating the reputation and cultural memory of Burns, then undertakes a comparative study of the role played by a selection of memorabilia in the cultural afterlife of Byron, signalling the way in which this kind of research can be implemented well beyond the study of Burnsfiana. Arguing that the evidence points to a provisional contrast between the afterlives of these two particular poets – namely that Burns projected a nation to the world while Byron projected the world to a nation – the essay suggests that much is to be gained more widely from an understanding of the way in which a variety of materials ‘beyond text’ create and preserve the cultural memory of poets and their works.

Research recently undertaken as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Beyond Text project titled ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory, 1796–1909’ has opened up a new and exciting avenue of interdisciplinary scholarly investigation, incorporating literature, history and the history of art (among other disciplines) in the study of the effects of cultural environment on memory: what the project has begun to call cultural environmentalism. One of the key research questions of ‘Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory’ was whether the concept of ‘composure’ – composed memories – used in today’s study of oral history could be transposed back beyond the era of the modern media into the nineteenth century.

The answer was that it could. The research incorporated earlier findings on sites of memory, the cult of the centenary, public memory and cultural memory, but it went beyond the realm of public statuary and its colonisation of space in the interests of secular sainthood and the projection of cultural power. By linking memorabilia and the domestication of memory in the private sphere, ‘Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory’ sought to show that the ‘composure’ of internal and external space was not only connected to, but also a powerful influence on, the creation of memory and the Foucaultian ‘loi de rareté’, the limited range of things which were worthy of remembrance in the composure of post-Bastille cultural and national histories. Selectivity and reiteration underpinned the cultural environment, both private and public, of memory.

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in the long nineteenth century, as it does in its different way in the digital era. The research undertaken on this project was a kind of Proustian cultural history, where the environment and sensation of objects were taken seriously as generators of literary and cultural memory. At the same time it reversed the approach posited by Christopher Frayling, itself drawn from Proust, where ‘time and memory are embodied or encoded in our perception of everyday things’, to note instead the importance of these things as powerful influences in the generation of these very perceptions.³

The primary output of our research has been the production and publication of two new web resources – a detailed online catalogue of Burns statues and major public memorials erected prior to 1909, and a taxonomy of private and domestic Burns-related objects produced during the same period – which document the memorialisation of Robert Burns through objects and public monuments, enabling the whole range of images and items used in the transmission of Burns’s reputation into the sphere of cultural memory to be openly available for consultation in one place for the first time.⁴ This is a particularly important development, because Burns was one of the most commemorated of all poets, and the documentation of the poet’s material cultural afterlife provides an invaluable evidence base for the analysis of Burns as a cultural icon, as well as a model for the development of similar records for other writers: some preliminary explorations of the possibilities here took place in ‘The Object of Poetry’ conference at the University of Dundee in March 2011. The essay that follows will use this evidence base to demonstrate the role played by material culture in preserving and creating the reputation and cultural memory of Burns, then undertake a comparative study of the role played by a selection of memorabilia in the cultural afterlife of that other highly significant British literary figure, Lord Byron, signalling the way in which this model can be implemented well beyond the study of Burnsiana.

Following Burns’s death in 1796, the poet was commemorated on all manner of private and domestic objects and souvenirs. By the early nineteenth century Burns and his works were being depicted on intricate, individually hand-crafted pen and ink snuff boxes. The mass production of objects claiming associations with the Scottish National Bard and his works, the places where he lived and even objects and trees that he allegedly touched, commenced with W & A Smith of Mauchline, who exploited their proximity to Burns’s locale to manufacture wooden objects ranging from snuff boxes, drinking ephemera and razor hones for male consumers, powder boxes and knitting/sewing paraphernalia for ladies, pop guns for children and miniature cradle-shaped souvenirs to celebrate an infant’s birth or christening.⁵ Such extensive production, however, was not only fuelled by a rapidly increasing fame of the Scottish National Bard, but by a new cultural practice which reached the height of its popularity in the Victorian era, that of ‘literary tourism’.

Nicola Watson argues that ‘nineteenth century British travellers developed to an unprecedented extent a taste for visiting a range of places of purely literary interest, associated with dead authors and their writings’; she also comments that in Burns’s case, the ‘Burns Country’ generated by nineteenth-century tourism ‘bears witness to a habit of memorial that outdoes the memorialisation of any other writer dead or alive’.⁶ To
such encounters, visitors would bring the prestige of travel (undimmed in the nineteenth century by cheap rail as it is in the twenty-first by cheap flights). From such encounters, they would take away memories and a portion of the prestige of the writer. The reification of both kinds of prestige in a proof that they had visited that commemorated both the writer and themselves was an obvious way to develop this burgeoning activity, and this reification was fed by the ‘orgy of mixed media’ that became available in the early Victorian period, from ‘steel engraving and lithography’ to photography. Mauchline ware was one of these media, utilised others and was mass produced in response to the literary tourist market. The representations it gravitated towards were those which stressed both the particular locale of the poet, ‘Burns Country’ (a parallel ‘Highland Mary’ country for that shadowy individual was also created), and also the poet’s relation to the visitor as an encompassing version of ‘everyman’, a character of ‘universal appeal’. Larger objects such as jewellery boxes were adorned with transfer images of multiple Burns-related locations (Alloway Kirk, The Braes of Ballochmyle, the Burns Monument in Dumfries), while one photograph album shows a box decorated with Burns Cottage in Alloway (the poet’s birthplace) and the text ‘The Land O Burns’ (Figure 1). Such objects served both as souvenirs of and advertisements for ‘Burns Country’ at a time when literary tourism was extremely popular.

That Victorian literary pilgrims wished to experience proximity to their hero is apparent from the wealth of objects that claimed to be relics ‘made from the wood’ of particular locations associated with Burns’s poetry and life: objects made from wood allegedly extracted from the rafters of Auld Alloway Kirk (the setting of ‘Tam o Shanter’), from the floorboards underneath the bed in which Burns died or, even more tenuously, from within the railings of the first Burns monument erected posthumously at Alloway and unveiled in 1823 (Figure 2).

These were the inheritors of the ‘improbable number of souvenirs made from the wood’ of the mulberry tree which Shakespeare was said to have planted, reinforced
by the sacralisation of Robespierre’s revolutionary festivals designed to capture public space from the Church for the State. These ritualistic tokens supported a cult of secular sainthood which invited the purchaser of such objects to share in a reliquary of location, transposing the state to the local, the local to the individual and the individual to the fragmentary, mass produced for the market’s version of memory. Their rise in the early nineteenth century may be a function of the demise of the popular festival in the same period, noted by Robert Malcolmson almost forty years ago, which took place in response to increasing legislative standardisation. The secular sainthoods of nineteenth-century writers such as Burns (the case of Byron is more complex as we shall see) may be examples of one kind of intensive celebration of locality being replaced by another.¹⁰

Such practices – through their intensive composition of biography through memorabilia – fed into the cultural nationalism of the nineteenth century as found in texts such as Auguste Comte’s Positivist Calendar (‘a list of 558 worthies of all nations and ages’) and Frederic Harrison’s New Calendar of Great Men.¹¹ These in turn reinforced the growing power of biography to contribute to the definition of memory, biography which itself (as with the cult of Highland Mary) often rested on the object record for its assumptions. Thus was the circle of recollection complete without necessarily touching on the archive of evidence in anything more than a passing fashion. The cult of centenaries (Mozart in 1856, Handel in 1857, Burns and Schiller in 1859, Shakespeare in 1864, Dante in 1865, Scott in 1871) was another manifestation of this, one which in these cases underlined the growing moves to German unification, its achievement in Italy and the apogee of British imperial power.¹² In Scotland, Robert Burns was very much central to literary tourism, and therefore to W & A Smith’s commercial success; success that, by the mid-nineteenth century, was being enjoyed by manufacturers of Burns-related ceramics, glass and pottery, not only in Scotland, but south of the border and as far afield as Germany and Austria (Figure 3).¹³

Unlike his predecessor, Byron had personal experience of the penchant for literary tourism – and, indeed, for the Grand Tour – that rose to such heights in the Victorian period: Byron’s own Grand Tour commenced in 1809 and saw the poet traverse Portugal,
Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece. The experiences that he enjoyed as part of this tour, combined with his seeming awareness of literary tourism as a cultural phenomenon, powerfully inform the first two cantos of what is perhaps Byron’s most iconic work for the nineteenth century, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which famously catapulted Byron to literary celebrity – a celebrity which far surpassed any experienced by Burns during his lifetime. The image of the travelling exile depicted by Byron in *Childe Harold* was reinforced by the poet’s own public image, and the perceived convergence of Byron’s poetry and life propelled the general public’s enthusiasm for experiencing travel as Byron did, a development capitalised upon by John Murray in *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy: Comprising Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardi, Venetia* (1843) and *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy including the Papal States, Rome, and the Cities of Etruria* (1857). Murray’s guidebooks were, of course, littered with Byronic references and quotations from Byron’s poetry (and especially from *Childe Harold*) that related to specific scenery and locales in order to equip the reader with a way of experiencing Europe through the eyes of the poet and/or his famous Byronic Hero.14 The consequence of this was that the Byronic literary trail stretched far beyond that of Burns, which was by comparison geographically confined. If Scotland (or rather Ayrshire, for even Dumfries was relatively ignored) was ‘the land of Burns’, then the land of Byron extended far beyond the local, or even national, to Italy, Greece and elsewhere. As we will come to see, the distinctions between Byron’s international associations and Burns’s local and national associations are clearly reflected and reinforced in the material cultural afterlife of the poets.

The question remains: what aspects of Burns and Byron, of their lives and works, rendered them so marketable? As Geoffrey Bond usefully suggests, to ‘sustain a market in personal memorabilia the supplier needs a character readily identifiable, of national or – better still – international reputation, and of universal appeal’.15 The object record
demonstrates that Burns and Byron satisfy this criteria in numerous and varied ways. Their appeal was multi-faceted.

The comprehensive study of Burns memorabilia undertaken as part of the Beyond Text project demonstrates that, alongside the poet’s most iconic works (themselves in many cases, as with the locodescriptive ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, rendered canonical through the object record’s iteration of ‘Burns Country’), Burns’s biography and his numerous dealings with the opposite sex established him as an icon of convivial masculinity, fraternity, drinking culture, sexuality and, of course, Scottish nationality.

Burns’s enjoyment of homo-social club culture and his activities as a Freemason have been well documented, both in the poet’s writings and by biographers. Consequently, a significant quantity of nineteenth century memorabilia commemorated the convivial and fraternal aspects of the poet’s life. Manufacturers recognised that Burns, as a ‘man’s man’, appealed to a certain kind of masculine psyche, and so illustrations of Burns’s more convivial works appeared on snuff boxes depicting animated scenes from ‘Willie Brew’d a Peck o Maut’ and of Tam o’ Shanter ‘bousing at the nappy’ (5) with his famous cronie Souter Johnie. Pipes were moulded into Burns’s likeness. Whisky jugs and dram glasses were mass produced, not to mention the ubiquitous ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ razor hones, with their tangential references to the castration anxiety of the poem. One example of early Mauchline ware – an individually handmade pen and ink snuff box by Crichton of Cumnock – depicts a scene of drunken conviviality (Figure 4). Three friends drink and smoke together, one filling another’s glass while a broken pipe lies on the floor, as the other casts his hand to the window and a crescent moon, indicating that their enjoyment boasts no regard for time. The base and sides of the box are decorated in an intricate vine design, symbolic, of course, of wine. Conviviality of this kind was a dominant image on objects sold with male recipients in mind, and helped reinforce the
gendering of Burns’s poetry towards the celebration of masculine appetites.

The commemoration of Burns and his works on objects such as this represents just one example of the way in which the poet’s material cultural afterlife diverges from the biographical record. Indeed, while Burns’s biographers often express disapproval of the poet’s masculine appetites and association with drinking culture – James Currie notoriously, and without evidence, referred to Burns as perpetually ‘stimulated by alkohol in one or other of its various forms’ and suffering from ‘the pollution of inebriation’ – souvenirs such as this positively celebrate them.

The same might be said of objects which make reference to the poet’s sexuality, and to the sexual subject matter which runs through some of his most famous works. Once again we might return to a fine example of early Mauchline ware, a snuff box depicting the witches’ dance in ‘Tam o Shanter’ (Figure 5). The witches perform the native sword dance over cross swords on the floor, an image which bears both national and phallic undertones. Cutty-sark is to the fore: scantily clad, her breasts and bare legs are visible as a transfixed Tam and his terrified mare, Meg, gaze on through a large gap in the wall of Alloway Auld Kirk. Lightning strikes over Tam, a sinister warning of the consequences of his voyeurism. Open coffins surround the scene as do billows of smoke and, in the top right hand corner, Satan plays the bagpipes.

Finally, on the base and sides of the box is an elaborate thistle design which, along with the cross-swords, symbolises Burns’s role as a national bard. Depictions of ‘Tam o Shanter’ on such objects stress the sexuality that permeates the poem and celebrate Burns’s own overt masculine sexuality to a degree untypical of nineteenth century biography and criticism.

Byron also emerges as a figure of masculine adulation (albeit to a lesser extent than Burns) – a consequence of his military associations and, of course, the poet’s reputation.
for overt sexuality. It is unsurprising that the type of manufacturers who established the marketability of Burns in the nineteenth century became aware of the potential marketability of Byron for the same audience, and so appeared Byron snuff boxes and other smoking paraphernalia, as well as Byron razors. It should be noted that Byron memorabilia is not as readily available for consultation as Burnsiana. One possibility for this is that it largely remains in the hands of private collectors. However, it seems likely that Byron was not as commonly commemorated on domestic items as the Scottish National Bard. For example, searches to date would suggest that the amount of Burns Mauchline ware produced far exceeded that of Byron ware, though one might assume this is a consequence of the locale of the manufacturers. Thomas Keith’s and David Trachtenberg’s survey of Mauchline ware records only two editions of Byron (in 1873, approaching the 50th anniversary of the poet’s death) while twenty-one Mauchline ware editions of Burns are recorded as being consistently published and republished throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. It is certainly possible – indeed perhaps likely – that Byron, the reputedly aloof and certainly international aristocrat, was a far less comforting and couthy presence than Burns the Ayrshire bard, fraternal Freemason, social drinker and undiscriminating lover of the locality and its lasses, and that, as a result, Burns was more frequently commemorated on domestic memorabilia.

Searches did, however, identify a remarkable early nineteenth-century Mauchline ware sycamore and pen-work snuff box by McKerrow of Cumnock. The snuffbox depicts an image of Byron based upon the portrait by Richard Westall currently held by the National Portrait Gallery in London. Of particular interest is the fact that Byron is depicted surrounded by an intricate thistle design, symbolic of Scottish nationality. This is remarkable insofar as, despite his Scottish roots (indeed, some early biographies and notices suggested he was born there), Byron is rarely specifically nationalised on memorabilia (a statue to him stands outside Aberdeen Grammar School, of course, but his Scottish connexions were marginalised by his biographers, as has been recently demonstrated). While Burns is consistently portrayed as a local celebrity, or as a Scottish national icon, depictions of Byron very much rely on the international aspects of his life and career. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the commemoration of the poets on medals.

Following Byron’s death at Messolonghi in April 1824, commemorative medals were struck from London to Milan: medals which cemented the poet’s reputation as an international revolutionary hero. J. Woodhouse struck a medal which bears the poet’s likeness on one side, while the obverse depicts a fully-armoured soldier, sword in hand, mourning beside a funerary urn: a symbol of the immediacy of Byron’s death, as well as its effect upon the soldiers assigned to him and upon the Greek revolutionary campaign. On a plinth appears the tribute (in Greek): ‘Ever mindful, Greece will include his name in her annals’. Bond recounts that the 2002 to 2003 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, ‘Mad, Bad and Dangerous: The Cult of Lord Byron’, ‘explored the cult of Byron, how the Byron legend gathered strength from his participation in the Greek War of Independence, and how he is now viewed as a revolutionary hero invested
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with an almost mythic quality’. Medals commemorating Byron typically celebrate his poetic talent by reference to classical Greek mythology. Several medals by British designers such as W. Binfield and R. B. Faulkner, as well as by Italians G. Galeazzi and L. Manfredini, adopt mythical Greek imagery to represent Byron’s poetic muse. One depicts a ‘harp on clouds within a circle of fruit’ while various others depict Apollo playing his instrument as lightning strikes in the sky, a symbol of the poet’s tragic and abrupt demise. Only one medal, perhaps tellingly by the Italian designer L. Manfredini, declares Byron to be ‘The Pride of England’.

Byron’s celebrity was fuelled by his infamous personal life and, latterly, by his cosmopolitanism and liberationist revolutionary activities, and so, as will become apparent, he was not accepted or celebrated as a local or national icon to the same extent as Burns, something that is also reflected by the fact that Byron was denied a state burial at Westminster Abbey, the consequence of his infamous sexual liaisons and his perceived ‘immorality’. If Burns’s life was sanitised by some of his early biographers (though not by the object record), Byron’s was arguably demonised.

The commemoration of Burns on medals identifies the poet with specific locales and, more generally, as the Scottish National Bard. That Burns did not enjoy the fame in his own lifetime that Byron did during his is apparent from the lack of medals commemorating his death in 1796. However, the centenaries of the poet’s birth and death in 1859 and 1896 yield numerous examples for consideration. 1859 saw Moore of Birmingham produce a medal for ‘THE FIRST CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF ROBERT BURNS THE SCOTTISH BARD XXV JANUARY MDCCCLIX’. On one side of the medal was engraved the profile of Burns, on the other a lyre surrounded by a wreath of thistles, a native substitute for the ‘circle of fruit’ on the Byronic medal discussed above and symbolic of Burns’s status as the national poet of Scotland. The lyre confirms Burns as a true poet in the Classical tradition, and serves as a claim to comparability with the achievements of the ancients. The wreath of thistles also appears on a medal by John Cameron & Son of Kilmarnock struck in commemoration of the centenary of the first edition of Burns’s poetry in 1886. Here the thistles surround the Earl of Kilmarnock’s coat of arms, emphasising both national and local associations and symbolising Burns’s loyalty to his roots. In 1896, the centenary of the poet’s death, Pinches of London produced a medal depicting the Burns Mausoleum in Dumfries, the poet’s final resting place. The medal, which distinguishes the occasion as a ‘celebration’, indicates the triumph over mortality of Burns’s poetry, while the image of the mausoleum on the reverse indicates the status of the poet as a great national public figure and the persistence of his historic reputation. Added to these were the multiple medals produced to commemorate the public unveiling of memorials to Burns, among these the Dundee statue in 1880 and the Irvine statue in 1896. Burns medals, then, served as both commemorative objects and local advertisements – celebrating and promoting Burns as a local and national bard.

The commemoration of Burns’s Kilmarnock edition is also indicative of the fact that his poetic output acted as the most significant inspiration for the poet’s material cultural
afterlife. The Beyond Text research team have also demonstrated that ‘Tam o Shanter’ emerges as the most commemorated of Burns’s works in nineteenth century private and domestic objects. The public’s fascination with Byron, however, was fuelled more by the poet’s character and tumultuous personal life. This is reflected in the fact that Byronic memorabilia adheres much less to the poet’s work than Burnsiana. Taking the object record as an index, Byron’s fame can almost certainly be attributed to the man himself, more than to his poetry.

Inspired by Burns’s most iconic poem, the ‘Tam o’Shanter’ razor hone was a core product for W & A Smith by 1830. An obvious sign of masculinity, its linkage to the poem was a key piece of its attractiveness, and helped underpin the reputation of ‘Tam’ as one of Burns’s key works in the nineteenth century and beyond. The eponymous hero of the poem begins his evening drinking in male company and making sexual advances to the landlord’s wife, continues it by ogling a young woman – ‘cutty sark’ (189), wearing only a ‘cut’ or short shirt – on the way home while drunk, and ends it by having his horse’s tail (symbolic of the male member) torn off while he escapes scot-free. The imagery of severing and cutting, including the murderer ‘new-cutted frae a rape’, the ‘Five tomahawks, wi’ blude red-rusted; / Five scymitars, wi’ murder crusted’ and the ‘knife’ (133–37) which cuts a father’s throat, much as a cut-throat razor might do, is core to the poem. These images emblematise masculinity and some of its deepest anxieties, evoked but in the end avoided by the drinking, lecherous hero: the razor hone is in this context an outstanding product, created ‘beyond text’ to reinscribe the textuality of ‘Tam o’Shanter’, and some of its deeper meanings, in the minds of its purchasers. The images of Alloway Kirk (where some of the poem’s key action takes place) and Burns Cottage make a thematic link between the life of the poet and the hero of the poem. W & A Smith were ‘brilliant at marketing their wares as point of purchase mementoes’.

The same cannot, however, be said of Wade & Butchers Co., N.Y., the name adopted by Sheffield steel blade manufacturers William and Samuel Butcher when trading with American associate Robert Wade in the mid-late nineteenth century. One of the company’s exports was the ‘Wade & Butchers “LORD BYRON” Razor No. 1140’, engraved with a bust of the poet and inscribed with a rather clumsily quoted excerpt from a stanza of *Childe Harold* (albeit a stanza that was edited out of the poem before its first publication): ‘In golden characters right well designed / First on the list!! Byron, *Childe Harold*’. As used here, these lines (the second of which is incomplete) might be considered a rather vulgar commercial, and are testament to the relative insignificance of Byron’s poetry (as opposed to Byron himself) in the marketing and production of Byronic memorabilia. Indeed, the Victorian public’s consumption of Byron would appear to be almost entirely biographical. Francis Wilson usefully informs us that, ‘in the hands of the Victorians, Byron’s posthumous renown in England […] had less to do with his poetry than his pose, although the two were seen as indistinguishable’. The marketability, or rather the appeal, of the ‘LORD BYRON’ razor as a masculine object might therefore be considered to rest largely upon the popularity of the poet himself,
or perhaps upon the romanticised and eroticised Byronic Hero so often assumed to be a version of Byron himself — the dark and mysterious cultural icon born in *Childe Harold*, parodied in *Don Juan* and adapted in a range of nineteenth-century fiction, perhaps most notably as Heathcliff.

The Byronic Hero, of course, also appealed to a cross-section of admiring and curious nineteenth-century female readers, and Byron’s material cultural afterlife adheres more to his poetry than to his pose is in those objects directed more towards a female (or domestic) market. Perhaps because of the reputation Byron acquired from his personal dealings with the opposite sex (most notably Augusta Byron, Lady Caroline Lamb and Annabella Milbank), objects were produced which depicted scenes and verses from the poet’s most celebrated love poetry. Manufacturers of Staffordshire ware, for example, produced figurines depicting Byron and the ‘Maid of Athens’, inspired by Byron’s poem of 1810 addressed to Theresa Makri, the twelve-year-old daughter of Byron’s landlady in Athens. One figurine produced c.1850 depicts Byron reclining on a rock, taking the young girl by her hand, and yet their gazes are focused in very different directions, perhaps indicative of the unlikelihood of their union. Another pair of figurines — a set of book stands — depicts Byron holding his head in

*Figure 6* Staffordshire figurine, ‘Burns & Hd Mary’.

Image © Robert Burns Beyond Text, courtesy of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.
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his hand, symbolising his frustration and grief, while the maid, physically separated
from the poet in every sense, looks away from him and casts her eyes skyward: she is
unattainable.

Staffordshire potters also produced multiple figurines of Burns and his great lost
love ‘Highland Mary’ invariably sitting underneath the bough of a tree symbolic of the
thorn under which the couple allegedly shared their last interview (Figure 6).

To date, the legend of Burns and Highland Mary remains shrouded in mystery, and
yet statues of Highland Mary were being sculpted as early as 1842. Manufacturers in
the nineteenth century, inspired by poems such as ‘To Mary in Heaven’, produced a
multitude of ‘Highland Mary’ objects: from napkin rings, to porcelain busts and snuff
boxes allegedly made from the thorn under which she was courted by Burns. And so
we might consider that the material cultural memory of Burns’s love-life, like that of
Byron, diverged somewhat from the biographical record.

The fame of ‘She Walks in Beauty’ is also reflected in the object record. On one
example of a nineteenth century enamel pill box, an ethereal, fair-haired female in a
white dress walks through an idyllic garden, watched from a distance by an adoring
male, above her the moon and stars. Inside the lid of the pill box is a silhouette of
Byron and the first lines of the poem. Another example sees the poem appropriated to
very different, much less conventional, effect on a Staffordshire child’s cup produced
c.1820. On this cup is an image of an African woman with jewellery on her ears and
around her ankles. Once again the woman is depicted walking through a landscape
surrounded by plants and a thatched cottage, but this time in the heat of day, as she fans
herself with a leaf. It is just possible that this mug was produced for export to America
in response to the Missouri Compromise of 1820: an agreement between pro- and anti-
slavery factions in the United States to attempt the regulation of slavery. In any case, we
might consider this remarkable object as testament to Byron’s association with inter-
nationalism, liberty, freedom and equality, and to his status as an international, indeed
a universal poet, another characteristic that he shares with Burns, of course, who, as
author of ‘A Man’s a Man for a’ that’, is renowned worldwide as a humanitarian poet.

Although perhaps not recognised as an international poet in the same way that
Byron was during his lifetime, Burn’s reach beyond merely ‘the land of Burns’ to a
universal audience is demonstrated by the vast number of public memorials to the poet
worldwide, erected in the nineteenth century, the majority of which can be usefully
compared by reference to the online catalogue produced as part of the ‘Inventing
Tradition and Securing Memory’ project. Unfortunately, the limits of this essay render
it impossible to provide a comprehensive investigation of every aspect of Burn’s and
Byron’s material cultural commemoration. Even on the basis of the object record of
the poets here discussed, however, we might suggest a provisional conclusion, namely
that Burns projected a nation to the world while Byron projected the world to a nation.
But we also hope that the foregoing discussion has demonstrated that, just as it is fasci-
nating, indeed invaluable, to draw comparisons between writers and their texts, it is
also valuable to examine their cultural afterlife, propelled by memorabilia, and draw
comparisons between the way in which the memory of such writers manifests itself in
the public consciousness and is ultimately shaped by the public’s perceptions, which themselves are often generated in dialogue with the statues and objects through which writers are commemorated. This essay has begun to foreground this practice. The study of Burns ‘beyond text’ has provided a model for what we hope will become an entire suite of digital repositories that will allow more in-depth examination of the material cultural afterlife of Britain’s most famous literary figures, and of the ways in which cultural memory is driven by the creation of appropriate environments: Burns Country, Shakespeare’s birthplace and its national bard of ‘Middle England’, Loch Katrine and Scott-land, Byron’s Italy and Greece. Much is to be gained from an understanding of the way in which different materials ‘beyond text’ create and preserve the cultural memory of poets and their works.

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1 For ‘composure’ as a historiographical theory designed to secure a narrative of personal and communal memory and the reassurance of personal equilibrium, see Penny Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews’, Cultural and Social History, 1:1 (2004), pp. 65–93.
2 See: Pierre Nora (ed.), Les Lieux de mémoire, 7 vols (Paris: Edition Gallimard, 1984–92); Roland Quinault, ‘The Cult of the Centenary’, Historical Research, 71 (1998), pp. 303–23; Charlotte MacLeod, Heroes of Invention (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ann Rigney, ‘Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory’, Journal of European Studies, 35:1 (2006), pp. 11–28, and ‘Portable Monuments: Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans’, Poetics Today, 25:2 (2004), pp. 361–96.
3 Christopher Frayling, ‘Preface’, in Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley (eds), Material Memories (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp. xiii.
4 See www.gla.ac.uk/robertburnsbeyondtext/
5 An extensive range of Mauchline ware, including those items mentioned here, may be viewed on the ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory 1796–1909’ project website at www.gla.ac.uk/robertburnsbeyondtext/ (see also David Trachtenburg and Thomas Keith, Mauchline Ware [Woodbridge: Antique Collector’s Club, 2002]).
6 Nicola Watson, ‘Introduction’ in Nicola Watson (ed.), Literary Tourism and Nineteenth Century Culture (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1–12 (p. 3); Watson, The Literary Tourist (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), p. 82. For Burns and literary tourism, see Karyn Wilson Costa, ‘The Land of Burns: Between Myth and Heritage’, in Watson (ed.), Literary Tourism and Nineteenth Century Culture, pp. 37–48.
7 Peter Mandler, ‘“The Wand of Fancy”: The Historical Imagination of the Victorian Tourist’, in Kwint et al (eds), Material Memories, pp. 125–41 (pp. 135–36).
8 Geoffrey Bond, ‘Byron Memorabilia’, in Christine Kenyon Jones (ed.), Byron: The Image of the Poet (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2008), pp. 79–87 (p. 79).
9 Julia Thomas, ‘Building for the Bard: Shakespeare, the Victorians, and the Auction of the Birthplace’, Nineteenth-Century Contexts, 30:3 (2008), pp. 215–28 (p. 216). Thomas suggests that this process started as early as the 1760s, before the French Revolutionary cults detailed by Mona Ozouf in Festivals and the French Revolution, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).
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10 See Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

11 Auguste Comte, *Calendrier Positiviste* (1849); Frederic Harrison, *The New Calendar of Great Men* (London: Macmillan, 1892).

12 For more details, see Quinault, ‘Cult of the Centenary’, pp. 305–8, 313, 318.

13 Dunmore Pottery, c. 1866–1902, produced figures of Tam o’ Shanter and Souter Johnie. Clyde Pottery Co., Greenock, 1816–1905, produced a range of objects from whisky jugs to plates, wall plaques and commemorative punchbowls. Minton, Stoke-on-Trent, are known to have produced porcelain figurines of Burns and Highland Mary from the mid-nineteenth century through to the early twentieth. Falcon Pottery, also in Stoke-on-Trent, produced Goss china busts of Burns and figurines of Burns-related statues, while unknown manufacturers in Austria and Germany (respectively) produced wooden wall plaques and pink china tea services. See: James Mackay, *Burnsiana* (Alloway: Alloway Publishing, 1988); Valerie N. S. Boa et al., *The Clyde Pottery 1816–1905* (Greenock: Inverclyde District Libraries, 1987).

14 For Byron and John Murray’s travel books, see Barbara Schaff, ‘John Murray’s Handbooks to Italy: Making Tourism Literary’, in Watson (ed.), *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth Century Culture*, pp. 106–18.

15 ‘Byron Memorabilia’, p. 79.

16 Burns’s poetry is quoted from James Kinsley (ed.), *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). Line references follow quotations in the text.

17 For Currie’s account of Burns and drinking, see James Currie (ed.), *The Works of Robert Burns; with an account of his life, and a criticism on his writings. To which are prefixed some observations on the character and condition of the Scottish peasantry*, 4 vols (London: Cadell & Davis, 1803), I, pp. 220–21.

18 Thomas Keith and David Trachtenberg, *Mauchline Ware: A Collector’s Guide* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2002), p. 266.

19 See Bonhams Sale Catalogue, Sale 17241: The Winter Fine Sales, 2–4 December 2009, Edinburgh, Lot No: 52.

20 See, for example, Sir Cosmo Gordon, *The Life and Genius of Lord Byron: with additional anecdotes and critical remarks from other publications, to which is prefixed a sketch on Lord Byron’s death by Sir Walter Scott* (Paris: Baudry, 1824), pp. 40, 96.

21 See Murray Pittock, ‘Byron’s Scottish Romantic Networks’, *Byron Journal*, 37:1 (2009), pp. 5–14.

22 See Laurence Brown, *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals 1760–1906*, 2 vols (London: Spink, 1995), I, p. 298.

23 Bond, ‘Byron Memorabilia’, p. 80.

24 Brown, *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals 1760–1906*, pp. 298–301.

25 See: Nicola Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 28; Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: John Murray, 2003), p. 534.

26 David Trachtenburg and Thomas Keith, *Mauchline Ware* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector’s Club, 2002), p. 124.

27 See http://www.strazors.com/uploads/images/Butcher_W orks_Panels_1-7.pdf

28 On this omitted stanza from *Childe Harold*, see: Lord Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar’s Publishing, 2009), p. 22; unsigned review, ‘Dallas’s Recollections of Byron’, in *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences &c. for the year 1824*, Vol. 8 (1824), pp. 778–79 (p. 779), where it is noted that Murray was responsible for this omission.

29 Francis Wilson, ‘Introduction: Byron, Byronism and Byromaniacs’, in Wilson (ed.), *Byromania: Portraits of the Artist in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 1–23 (p. 1).

30 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century reception of Byron among female readers see, Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 58–69.

31 See MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend*, pp. 114–15.