The Works of Lady Caroline Lamb

Ada Reis, A Tale (1823)

Edited by
Leigh Wetherall Dickson

ROUTLEDGE

THE PICKERING MASTERS

THE WORKS OF LADY CAROLINE LAMB
VOLUME 3

CONTENTS OF THE EDITION

THE WORKS OF LADY CAROLINE LAMB

Volume 3
Ada Reis, A Tale (1823)

Edited by
Leigh Wetherall Dickson

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2009 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Lamb, Caroline, Lady, 1785–1828.
The works of Lady Caroline Lamb. – (The Pickering masters)
1. Aristocracy (Social class) – England – Fiction. 2. England – Moral conditions – Fiction.
I. Title II. Series III. Dickson, Leigh Wetherall. IV. Douglass, Malcolm Paul. V. Lamb, Caroline, Lady, 1785–1828. Glenarvon. VI. Lamb, Caroline, Lady, 1785–1828.
Graham Hamilton. VII. Lamb, Caroline, Lady, 1785–1828. Ada Reis.
823.7-dc22

ISBN-13: 978-1-85196-902-9 (set)

Typeset by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In a letter simply dated 1821 Lady Caroline Lamb wrote to John Murray II to reassure him, as the publisher of her third novel, *Ada Reis*, that there would be no repeat of the scandal created by the publication of her first novel, *Glenarvon*, in 1816:

> As to Ada Reis I shall have it corrected as well as I can and just venture it. It is not personal, it will make no row. It need never be known to be mine. I would not if I could not have written Glenarvon. And after all it is of very little importance – it goes with the Tide of other Rubbish – pray therefore fear not to let it have your name[.][1]

Murray had initially been offered the manuscript of *Glenarvon* but had rejected it, possibly out of sensitivity towards his most notable author, Lord Byron. Murray's professional relationship with Byron was over by the time *Ada Reis* was published in 1823, but not at the time Lamb wrote the above letter in 1821. Murray must have, therefore, been assured by Lamb that there was nothing in the novel that could identify it as having been written by Lamb, and yet *Ada Reis* is as personal as her preceding two novels. If not the wider reading public, certainly members of Lamb's immediate family could not fail to recognize her within the text because of the inclusion of autobiographical scenarios, such as when Lamb describes an outburst of the heroine's temper, asking 'could Fiormonda, that lovely, that gentle child, have given the yellow slave that terrible bump upon his right eye'.[2] Fiormonda's flare of temper is actually Lamb's own, drawn from an incident when she injured one of her pages by throwing a cricket ball at his head after he continued to throw exploding squibs into a fireplace after repeated warnings to desist.[3] Similarly, the description of Fiormonda being visited by the mysterious Zezel Peer Banyan, who performs a rite of exorcism around a flaming cauldron whilst surrounded by dancing and singing children recalls Lamb's own exorcism of Byron when she burned his effigy in a bonfire, having enlisted the aid of village girls to dance around it.[4] Of most significance, however, is Lamb's appearance as the tormented soul of herself in her own specially constructed version of hell. Ada Reis approaches the shade of 'that thin woman',[5] referring to Lamb's slender physique once described as skeletal by her cousin,[6] to question her as to why she is there. Lamb's shade responds 'I was once

one of them [...] but am nothing now'.[7] Part of her punishment is the indifference of those once dear to her as they pass by, her crime being that she 'felt the harshness and the unkindness of some too keenly' and, in retaliation, 'seized a pen [...] which knew once but to write with the milk of human kindness [she then] dipped in gall'.[8] She is, of course, referring to the writing and publication of *Glenarvon*, the motivation for which she justified in a letter to Granville Leveson Gower as her 'sole comfort' after having her 'wrongs, crimes, follies [...] raked up even from the days of infancy and brought forth to view without mercy'.[9] This misrepresentation of her character is something that she still feels keenly, for the second half of the punishment of the shade of Lamb echoes the letter to Leveson Gower: it is to 'hear from time-pieces, all day and all night long, not the hours, but all my thousand follies and faults repeated; and to be conscious that all my thoughts, wishes, and actions are misrepresented'.[10] It would be better for her, sighs the shade, if she was forgotten altogether rather than falsely remembered.

In the introduction to *Ada Reis* Lamb states that she has retired from the world of social intercourse like a 'beast of prey when, weary and wounded, retires to his lair and effaces even the track' which could lead the curious to discover it.[11] Though Lamb had not quite retreated into obscurity, she was no longer at the hub of metropolitan, fashionable society and her writing serves as a connection with those she has left behind. The act of writing serves as a 'link which yet binds [Lamb] to those who are journeying on the same road [...] and to the same end'.[12] The journey Lamb sees as being undertaken by others is the one of reckless abandonment that can only lead to the same end as that of herself and of her lonely shade, that of alienation from all those whom she loved and who loved her in return. Lamb punishes herself for the writing of *Glenarvon* because the anger that motivated its production eradicated any thoughts as to the embarrassment it might cause to those whom she owed consideration. Ada Reis asks his guide in the underworld, Kabkarra, about the punishment of another shade, 'is injuring oneself an offence?' Kabkarra speaks for Lamb's regret for this unforeseen consequence of her actions when he replies 'one of the greatest; because, in your world, no one can injure himself without injuring all with whom he is connected, and more particularly those with whom he is the most nearly connected, and whom it is his particular duty to benefit and assist'.[13] Because this is a hell specifically constructed for the punishment of the sins of the aristocracy, Lamb is berating not only herself but others like her who had every advantage while on earth and yet thought of nothing but their own immediate gratification, thus returning to the theme of *noblesse oblige* begun in *Glenarvon* and developed in *Graham Hamilton*. Lamb considers that she is not the only aristocrat who has to make amends, and she clearly feels that the message is worth repeating.

When Lamb writes in her introduction 'The only communication the wretch who has exiled himself from the world, or is sent from it, holds with his fellow

creatures is by books',[14] she is speaking of herself as a novelist and as the 'editor' of the posthumously recovered autobiography of the eponymous character. As a communication from beyond the grave, Ada Reis's narrative becomes fully meaningful in retrospect, much like Graham Hamilton's narration of the events that led to his own exile. Lamb, acting as editor, surrounds the tale by an editorial apparatus that indicates how the book should be read. Lamb is in a more playful mood with her material than previously seen, making her presence felt by reining in Ada Reis's ostensible excesses, such as deleting his '662 pages of romantic love, such as former times were enthusiastic and patient enough to read'.[15] However, the epigraph chosen for the title page of all three volumes of *Ada Reis* indicates that Lamb still has a point to make; taken from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, it translates from the original Greek as 'This was how he would talk on the subject, half joking, half in earnest'.[16] The moral purpose of Lamb presenting the reader with this 'recovered' manuscript is that the protagonist's guilt will have meaning to a later age; the manuscript dates from the mid-eighteenth century; the key for dating the events is the catastrophic earthquake that occurred in Lima on 28 October, 1746. Lamb incorporates the earthquake into her plot by way of precipitating the fulfilment of the prophecy that he should wear a monarch's crown by throwing him into the protective custody of an anonymous Indian who will lead him to his destiny. The earthquake signals the day of reckoning for Ada Reis, about which he is warned by the shade of Muley Hadgi when he tells Ada Reis that 'Upon the 28th of October, at half an hour after ten at night, five hours and three-quarters before the full of the moon, thy signal crimes shall meet with their recompense'.[17] In her endnotes for volume II of *Ada Reis* she quotes a description of the earthquake from a work Lamb simply refers to as 'Ulloa's *Voyage*',[18] that gives the exact time that the disaster happened as being at 'half an hour after ten at night, five hours and three-quarters before the full of the moon'.[19] It is also at this exact time, though some years previous to the earthquake, that Ada Reis murders Bianca di Castamela.[20]

As 'editor' Lamb expressly states that 'the moral of the tale appears to be, that he, who remains amidst the busy scenes of life, himself without employment is in constant danger of becoming the prey to wicked feelings and corrupt passions; for as use preserves iron from rust, so labour and exertion purify and invigorate the soul'.[21] Lamb has already explored this lack of a sense of purpose in both *Glenarvon* and *Graham Hamilton*, and illustrated the disastrous results that its lack perpetuated on a political and personal level. In *Glenarvon* the ennui of aristocrats and their failure to attend to their duties with regard to their tenants resulted in the indigenous Irish population mounting a rebellion. In *Graham Hamilton*, Lady Orville ruins herself and those dependent upon her because of the financial extravagance born out of boredom. Ada Reis represents the aris-

tocracy *in extremis*, as he awaits the fulfilment of a prophecy, which promises an imperial crown for his daughter and the status of a king for himself:

> Continue thy course: a monarch's crown awaits thee, in a land where diamonds and emeralds shall be strewn under thy feet, and where the blood of the innocent may flow, without fear of revenge.[22]

Ada Reis is guaranteed impunity from crimes motivated by greedy acquisition, which bolsters his own belief that his wealth can act as an effective buffer from any consequences of his actions. After all, he asks, 'What law can be stronger than the law of power and possession?'[23] Ada Reis was not born into auspicious circumstances; having been abandoned by his parents and sold into slavery, he is taken in by a kindly merchant who gives him a good education and the name of Adamo. Having gained access to the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ada Reis becomes 'cunning and corrupt' during his time there.[24] After leaving the court, Ada begins a life of 'peril and adventure' in emulation of the 'histories of the Corsairs', and acquires the 'title as well as the authority of Reis'.[25] According to Lamb's own endnotes for the novel, Reis is the rank of captain in the Turkish navy, and it is a position that Ada acquires by instigating a mutiny and murdering the existing captain.

Ada Reis, as he is now referred to throughout the novel, later reminisces that he 'was prouder of the title of Reis than of any other because he had laboured for it, and won it by his own energy'.[26] Despite his initially active start in life, the steady decline towards his own damnation really begins when he surrenders himself to awaiting the promises of the prophecy to manifest itself. Even when he considers what he would do if offered the prestigious position of Viceroy, it is an empty speculation; it is not the position itself he covets, but the pomp and ceremony that attends the role. He takes excessive pride in his independent wealth and status, declaring that 'were the appointment [of Viceroy] offered to him he would disdain it', Ada Reis, 'like most pretended philosophers, [...] valued above all things he ever affected to despise'.[27] This is a repetition of Lamb's portrayal of Glenarvon as man who 'seemed [...] to differ in practice from his principles'; while many who also adopted the rebellious cause of the United Irishmen, in their attempt to overthrow the oppressive and aristocratic landholding elite, renounced their claims to titles and properties, Glenarvon resumed his claim upon forfeited ancestral lands and insisted that he alone must be referred to by his title.[28] Ada Reis's pride in his own achievements is short-lived; he prepares himself and his daughter for the fulfilment of their destinies, by assuming the 'symbols of royalty' such as sumptuously dressed slaves and guards for his palace 'such as are employed in the service of the Pasha of Tripoly [sic]'.[29] While Glenarvon sought to remind his followers of his claim to superior status, Ada Reis attempts to convince himself and others of his greatness by acquiring the external signifiers of a legitimate ruler. Like Graham Hamilton, Ada Reis believes that

he merely has to adopt the dress and mannerisms of the aristocracy to join their ranks and earn the respect of others. All three of Lamb's novels illustrate that the dazzling exterior of the aristocracy, particularly the Whigs who possessed an air of glamour that was not matched in the Tory camp, stands in stark contrast to private lives and political standing descending into chaos. Leo Braudy observes that the 'Aristocracy, so used to considering its style a by-product of status, now had to convince of status by its style'.[30] Style, as an indicator of distinction, was subject to imitation and manipulation and therefore becomes unreliable as an indicator of inherent worth. Lamb illustrates the point with the revolutionary glamour of Glenarvon, Lady Orville's superficial appearance of wealth when actually crippled with debt in *Graham Hamilton*, and the brutality and greed of Ada Reis masked behind the external accoutrements of the ruling elite.

In *Ada Reis* Lamb sustains her critique of separatist elitism by employing the connotations of excess associated with Orientalism, yoked together with the motif of descent into the subterranean mythology of the Underworld and the theme of temptation and redemption that draws upon and acknowledges its predecessors. A review in *The Examiner* provided a list of 'kindred works of the imagination', by way of denigrating her work as merely an amalgamation of works that had gone before and thereby denying *Ada Reis* any originality:

> Anastasius, Don Juan, and the Corsair, seem to furnish the *tout ensemble* of [Ada Reis'] characteristics. Maugraby, the Giaour in the Caliph Vathek – [...] and the Mephistophilies [sic] of Faust make up the infernal instigator of himself and daughter, whilst the latter is Nouronihar, and her Good Genius [is] somewhat of the Gulchenrouz of Mr. Beckford. Le Diable Boiteux and the Visions of Quevodo, come into play in a satirical description of Hell. [...] It would not be astonishing to those whose souls are too high (we envy them not) to read Eastern and other Tales, to learn how much they owe to each other [...] but we might proceed in this ungracious way, *ad infinitum*, to very little purpose – so no more of it.[31]

The reviewer pointed out that Lamb's work could be considered as merely a repetition of those that had gone before, but it also did her the unintended favour of placing her work within a literary tradition that invokes the supernatural, the classical and the exotic in order to practise what Marilyn Butler recognizes as a tried and tested method of critiquing excesses nearer to home.[32] 'Anastasius' refers to Thomas Hope's *Anastasius: or, Memoirs of a Greek; Written at the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (1819), a novel that was initially attributed to Lord Byron and is the story of a brave but unscrupulous Greek travelling in the Middle East in the eighteenth century, getting involved in a variety of escapades. Byron's *The Corsair*, which tells the story of Conrad, the pirate chief, had been published in 1814, and the first two cantos of *Don Juan* had been published in 1819 by John Murray, amidst a storm of outrage because the work contained a sustained attack on the politicized morality of the Tories, and for its ribald com-

bination of politics, blasphemy and obscenity. Although Murray was still uneasy about the contents, cantos 3, 4 and 5 appeared in print in August 1821, possibly about the same time that Lamb had written to Murray with her assurances that *Ada Reis* would not make a row, and by 1822, Byron had severed his connection with Murray and had handed over the publishing of the remaining cantos to the radical John Hunt. 'Maugraby' appears in Jacques Cazotte's *The Arabian Nights*, which according to Robert Irwin, were reworked from the authentic tales into mystical allegories upon spiritual reintegration and salvation;[33] 'The History of Maugraby the Magician' relates the spiritual battle between the King of Tadmur and Maugraby, an agent of Satan who specializes in kidnapping children and taking them to caverns under the sea to be brainwashed in the evil art of sorcery. The 'Visions of Quevodo' refer to the work of Spanish satirist and novelist, Francisco de Quevodo y Villegas (1580–1645) and his satiric account of the inhabitants of hell in his work *Los Sueños* ('visions'). These were first published in 1627, and a translation by Roger L'Estrange in 1667 was published in London under the title *The Visions of Dom Francisco de Quevedo Villegas, Knight of the Order of St. James*. The tales are represented as a series of five 'dream-visions' that satirize contemporary morality. *Le Diable Boiteux* (1707), was written by Alain-René Le Sage, better know as the author of *Gil Blas*. The 'lame devil' of the title, the spirit Asmodée, is released from a bottle by the student Cleofas and, in return, Asmodée lifts the roofs of the houses for Cleofas to see what is really going on, resulting in a series of satirical sketches of Parisian society. It is worth noting here that Le Sage's *Le Diable Boiteux* is not to be confused with Cazotte's *Le Diable Amoureux* (1772), from where Lamb acquired the name 'Biondetta' that she used in correspondence with Byron.[34] While a similarity can be discerned between the content and satiric purpose of these literary ancestors of *Ada Reis*, it is by no means certain that Lamb consciously alludes to them, but the one text in the reviewer's list about which it can be said with certainty that Lamb was familiar with is William Beckford's *Vathek*.

The influence of *Vathek* upon *Ada Reis* as a tale of excess leading to damnation is directly acknowledged by Lamb twice in the text. The first is upon Ada Reis's arrival at the palace of Zubanyánn, where he observes that the other inhabitants there are not 'like the followers of Eblis, wandering about, each with his hand upon his heart [...] as told in the sublime and affecting description of Vathek'.[35] The second reference is Lamb's use of a quotation from the novel for the epigraph of chapter 5 in volume III. The parallels between the two novels are obvious from the outset as both eponymous protagonists are goaded towards their own damnation by an envoy of the devil, who offers each his heart's desire. Perhaps needless to say, it is the blood shed in pursuit of these desires that secures for them their place in hell. Although both represent the passion of the ruling elite for decadent luxury and for putting their chosen pleasures above the

humanity of those around them, the fundamental difference between Caliph Vathek and Ada Reis is that the former is the legitimate ruler of his people, who wields his authority like a cudgel, cowing his subjects into submission. Ada Reis, like Graham Hamilton before him, is eager to the join the ranks of the ruling elite; his reckless pursuit of the empty pomp of self-aggrandizement renders the recognition that he earns by his extravagance as worthless.

Ada Reis does not simply stand in for the whole of a corrupt aristocracy; he is also represented as a distinct individual. Lamb concludes *Ada Reis* thus: 'Look then into your own heart; repent, and pray; beware of the fate of Ada Reis; for however seductive the paths of pleasure, however delightful the palace, the banquets, and the song of the tempter, remember that, step by step, they lead to the gate of the burning vault. Over which it is written 'Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'intrate'.[36] The last line is a direct quotation from the entrance gates of Dante's *Inferno*, 'Abandon all hope ye who enter here', and the wording suggests that the perils of hell are not pre-determined and are therefore avoidable. Ada Reis is presented with opportunities to review and repent his crimes; when addressed directly by Kabkarra, the envoy of Zubanyánn, who urges Ada Reis to 'continue thy course', there is the suggestion that the fate of individuals rests in their own hands but Ada Reis chooses to maintain his direction right until the end, even during the day of probation granted by the devil himself. As Condulmar, the son of Zubanyánn, states, 'we force no votaries into our train [...] You came here by your own free choice',[37] and all are granted a second chance to repent and escape their fate. Needless to say, they all fail as they all re-enact the passion, jealousy, cruelty and infidelity that brought them there in the first place. All, that is, except for Fiormonda.

Fiormonda is an innately spiritual child, unlike her father, and harbours 'a secret consciousness [that] told her there was a Being, to whom she owed the tribute of obedience and gratitude'.[38] As Ada Reis is in no position to help her unravel the spiritual mysteries of the universe, his 'cold philosophy' being ultimately a self-serving one, Fiormonda prays for someone to explain to her how to avoid 'delusions and errors' when surrounded by those 'whose sluggish soul[s]' can find 'no delight in anything but in the indulgence', and who are happy only in indifference and insensibility'.[39] Guidance comes in the form of a page called Zevahir, who is really the spirit of light and goodness and who also appears under two other names, Phaos and Zamohr. As children, Fiormonda and Zevahir delight in the purity of each other's company; they are kindred spirits in the purity of virtuous love, unsullied by sexual desire or power over others. Zevahir continues to visit Fiormonda as long as she keeps her temper in check, but as she grows up and begins to revel in the admiration of herself by others, she soon tires of what she considers to be the unsophisticated idealism of Zevahir, who remains childlike in his innocence, especially when later compared to the

enigmatic, world-weary Condulmar. Fiormonda's passionate nature develops as a result of her cloistered aristocratic existence. She is used to having every whim obeyed without question but it is also indicative of her growing awareness of her own consequence outside of herself. The outbursts that Fiormonda, as a child, inflicts upon her attendants are not crimes to be punished by adult law, as she commits them in the amoral atmosphere of protected childhood and innocence. It is when Fiormonda steps away from childhood into an arena where she must take responsibility for her actions that her decline into damnation begins. Lamb acknowledged complete responsibility for actions that led to the punishment of her own sins when she wrote to Lady Morgan 'my life has not been the best possible. The slave of impulse, I have rushed forward to my own destruction.'[40] Fiormonda rushes to her own destruction, expressing her determination that she will conquer the world that Condulmar dominates, after having been misrepresented by him as his mistress, and then abandoned in favour of another woman. Fiormonda sets out to ensure that 'their names will be forgotten when mine is celebrated', and making sure that those that passed 'with such insolence of contempt, shall do [her] homage'.[41] Having been warned by the shade of a murdered suitor, Alphonso, to renounce all earthly pride in rank, beauty and youth in favour of humility, charity and faith, this stubborn determination proves to be Fiormonda's undoing. Even though the girdle of jewels given to her by Kabkarra is cursed, the decision to wear them is hers. Fiormonda's path to perdition is a repeat of Lady Orville's determination to retain her social prominence. They both forsake their individuality because the arena they seek to dominate is made up of people that can only operate effectively as a collective, and who are nothing individually. They both reveal the emptiness of the realm of collective humanity inhabited by the social elite, and both discover the plenitude of the depths in the individual being through their altruistic acts at the end of each of their stories. They both leave behind those condemned by Lamb to hell that are incapable of saving themselves because they act as a herd, following Ada Reis into damnation. Fiormonda manages to save herself because she has the courage to rise above and separate herself from the crowd.

It was in Byron's copy of *Vathek* that Lamb inscribed 'Remember me' when she entered his rooms in January 1813 which in turn inspired Byron's invective composition, addressed to Biondetta:

> "Remember Thee," nay – doubt it not –
> Thy Husband too man "*think*" on thee!
> By neither canst thou be forgot,
> Thou false to him – thou fiend to me!
>
> "Remember thee"? Yes – yes – till Fate
> In Lethe quench the guilty dream.

> Yet then – e'en then – Remorse and *Hate*
> Shall vainly quaff the vanquished stream.[42]

James Soderholm notes that Lamb's inscription is reminiscent of the last words of the Ghost to Hamlet: 'Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me' just as Byron's repetition of 'Remember Thee' is reminiscent of Hamlet's words. Soderholm also recognizes that 'Remember me' is perhaps a conscious echo of 'Ricordati di me che son La Pia' ['do thou remember me, who are La Pia']; La Pia is among three sinners who were impenitent up to the last hour in Dante's *Inferno*, a defiant stance echoed by Ada Reis.[43] Andrew Stauffer observes that Byron's response to Lamb's request is an expression of Byron's antipathy towards his own memory; it is, writes Stauffer, 'a cruel poem, as Byron blames [Lamb] for the very infidelities he enjoyed, the memory of which he calls a "guilty dream"'.[44] Lamb did not see Byron's response until after *Ada Reis* was published and Byron was dead, when it appeared in Thomas Medwin's *Conversations of Lord Byron*, published in 1824. Lamb was shocked by the vehemence of the response, and sadly wrote to her friend, Lady Morgan, some time after that Byron had 'left that terrible legacy on me – my memory. Remember thee – and well'.[45] This triangular discussion of the torments of memory between Lamb, Byron and Lady Morgan is anticipated in *Ada Reis*, it reflects Lamb's own torture.

In all three of Lamb's novels, the necessity of reflection, which is born out of the faculty of memory, is depicted as intrinsic to moral growth and development. In a letter to William Godwin, Lamb wrote 'It were all very well if one died at the end of a tragic scene, after playing a desperate part, but if one lives, and instead of growing wiser one remains the same victim of ever folly and passion without the excuse of youth and inexperience, what then?'[46] Glenarvon, Graham Hamilton and Ada Reis each confront their memories of error and sin which enables Lamb to drive her message of moral reform home. Having seduced and abandoned Calantha, the daughter of the Duke of Altamonte. Glenarvon also seduces and abandons the Irish, changing sides to fight for the British in exchange for the restoration of his lands. He betrays both the governors and the governed for which his punishment in hell is to recall how he 'dreamed away life's joyous hour, nor denied [him]self aught that the fair earth presented [him]',[47] as Glenarvon made the most of his aristocratic privileges whilst on earth. He is also doomed to repeat his story, 'to cry upwards from these lower pits [...] to the sinner [...] who basks in prosperous guilt [and] tell him how fearful at such an hour [as death] is remembrance of the past.[Tell the sinner that] neither arts, nor talents nor possessions shall save him [...] for the axe of justice must fall'.[48] However, like the prophecies of Cassandra, Glenarvon's warnings are doomed to fall upon deaf ears and as he exhorts amendments, the sinner shall, like Glenarvon himself, delay until it is too late. Since only the aristocracy are represented as reprehensi-

ble in the novel, it is they that Lamb intends to be the recipients of Glenarvon's dire warnings which, as the voice of judgement predicts, are unheeded. Lamb describes the lasting effects of the revolution upon the aristocracy after it has been suppressed by the English army:

> The Marquis of Delaval [son of the Duke of Altamonte] forgot the lesson adversity had taught. In the same follies and the same vanities his predecessors had passed their days, he likewise endeavoured to enjoy the remainder of his. [The aristocratic ladies] passed joyfully with the thousands that sail daily along the stream of folly [and] fluttered away likewise each pleasurable moment as frivolously.[49]

They have already forgotten where the fault lay for the uprising, and that the indigenous population became 'mutinous and discontented' because they 'refused to attend to the grievances and burthens of which the nation generally complained'.[50] Lamb, in closing *Glenarvon* with a summary of the vagaries of the aristocracy, suggests that history will go on repeating itself and that they will continue its course of hereditary privilege, a course that will ultimately alienate them from the people that they claim to represent. Graham Hamilton, as narrator of events, relates his tale with the benefit of hindsight. Having inherited Sir Malcolm's fortune and tormented by his 'bitter remembrance [of his] errors and misfortunes', Hamilton banishes himself not only from London, but from the whole of Europe; having told his narrative retrospectively, Hamilton has only just arrived in America and with a vast fortune at his disposal. At the end of his tale, there is no resolution because he is spiritually and emotionally paralysed, tormented by the knowledge that he has ruined, destroyed and estranged from himself everyone he most loved.

Like Glenarvon and Graham Hamilton, Ada Reis's punishment is to have presented before him 'his past life in full review, and all his sins blazoned forth without excuse or palliation'.[51] Memory and knowledge of the past is a recurring theme throughout *Ada Reis*, the 'manuscript' of Ada Reis's autobiography is a commitment to paper of his memories so as to provide a basis for the 'editor' to comment upon the morals of the present. Ada Reis, throughout the tale, is in pursuit of 'debauchery and buffoonery' by way of avoiding 'the reflection he dreaded'.[52] Reflection is what memory forces to occur, so by refusing to engage with the one he is blotting out the other, for to have no memory is to have no past, and Ada Reis's constant state of intoxication is a method by which he strives to remain in the here and now. However, he cannot blot out his past deeds forever and 'often the remembrance of past deeds awakened in his soul'.[53] His memory is the one thing he cannot control, nor can he prevent others forcing it upon him, such as the shade of Muley Hadgi, which comes back to warn Ada Reis of his fate. His fate, though, is presaged in a song sung to Fiormonda by Condulmar, an original composition by Lamb, 'Sir Henry de Vaux', in which Sir Henry finds

his heart is 'seer'd by crime', and cannot, any more than Ada Reis, subject his memory to his will and blot it out altogether. He is caused physical pain by the continual remembrance of his past:

> 'Oh! the pain that I feel with such deadly force,
> That it strikes through my burning brain:
> 'Tis the pain of the soul – despair – remorse –
> There is none can endure such pain.
>
> 'Tis the voice of an angry God that cries,
> Till it harrows the mind within:
> 'Tis the worm of the heart that never dies –
> 'Tis the memory of sin.[54]

Ada Reis's punishment is not only a continual remembrance of the past, but also the consciousness of the denial of any salvation. He is made to suffer in the same way that the lord of Lamb's underworld suffers; Kabkarra asks Ada Reis to 'Judge thou, then, [...] what the agony of [the Devil's] heart must have been [...]; what the grief, the despondency, of that mighty mind which had known the perfection, and the loveliness of the scenes, he had ever renounced?'[55] Even for the devil, memory is a terrible thing to suffer for eternity, because it is a reminder of what has been forsaken. The clarity of memory could be devastating, even fatal, as in the case, recounted by Kabkarra, of the hysterical girl abandoned by her lover; he anointed her lips with a juice of his own concoction and, upon the instant she gained her reason and remembered her abandonment, her grief killed her.[56] Kabkarra offers the same juice to Ada Reis, but for a different effect; 'drink of it, and thou shalt see and know everything as I do, and accompany me wherever I go'.[57] Lamb's exploration of her memory of her own sins, and those perpetrated by the neglect and selfishness of the aristocracy in all three novels, is to enable the reader to 'see and know' everything as she does, even if it is a painful task for all concerned.

Glenarvon, *Graham Hamilton* and *Ada Reis*, comprise a body of work with a sustained intellectual commitment to reform. Lamb's envisioned audience included Byron but in a much broader context than a mere re-telling of their affair, the telling of which does give *Glenarvon* and *Ada Reis* much of its impetus. Instead, Lamb portrays their relationship as a microcosm of a morally bankrupt section of society, and it is towards this section that Lamb orientates her writing with a consistent message for the need for internal transformation. It is precisely her own connection with the aristocratic lifestyle of ephemeral excess that enables Lamb to exhibit the lack of a sense of purpose, discipline and integrity within the aristocracy, and the dangers of being too closely associated with fashionable elitism. Her novels reflect the increasing criticisms of the aristocracy that followed in the aftermath of the French Revolution and in the build-up to the

1832 Reform Bill, and how easily entrenched and arbitrary privilege could be replaced by the emerging class of evangelical and entrepreneurial professionals that practised morality in both public and private. Although Lamb is not unique in criticizing the system of 'Old Corruption', a phrase identified by Gary Kelly as meaning a recognition of the inadequacies of the patronage system of a hierarchical and paternalistic social order,[58] she is extraordinary in that she is doing so from within its very heart, and it is this milieu that is Lamb's envisioned audience. *Graham Hamilton* was acknowledged to be a credit to Lamb due to the elegant simplicity of the style, whereas *Ada Reis*, in the eyes of the critics that reviewed it, merely reaffirmed the conception of Lamb as the embodiment of a dissipated and dysfunctional aristocracy. One such critic, from the *New Monthly Magazine*, read the novel as a 'faithful index of her mind, nothing can be more *bizarre* than the nature of her compositions', which was, he argues, due to her existence in the 'magic circle within which the exclusive upper class congregates', and therefore the novel only reflects this exalted sphere's 'follies, its dissipations, its heartless inanity and its freezing apathy'.[59] He adds that Lamb is, at least, 'better employed writing even a bad book, than in setting society a bad example of idleness and dissipation'.[60] The reviewer in question appeared to have missed the point completely; it is precisely this innate sense of belonging to the cultural and political elite that is important when considering *Ada Reis,* and indeed any of Lamb's novels. Lamb's insider status grants her the authority with which to speak upon the subject of the lapsed morals of the aristocracy and gives weight to the consistent message of reform present in her novels. Lamb was prepared to submit her own experiences and that of her immediate family to the scrutiny of public gaze as a means to ensure the efficacy of her communicative intent. Unflinchingly, she demanded that her aristocratic and aspiring middle-class readers recognize not only her as the author, but themselves in relation to what she describes.

Notes:

1 Lady Caroline Lamb to John Murray II, MS letter, Murray Archives, Byron Papers, Acc.12604/0355.
2. *Ada Reis*, p. 42.
3. P. Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb; A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 180.
4. Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb*, p. 138-139.
5. *Ada Reis*, p. 182.
6. Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb*, p. 137.
7. *Ada Reis*, p. 182.
8. Ibid., p. 183.
9. *The Whole Disgraceful Truth*; *Selected Letters of Lady Caroline Lamb*, ed. P. Douglass (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 159.
10. *Ada Reis*, p. 183.

11. Ibid., p. 4.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 179.
14. Ibid., p. 4.
15. Ibid., p. 108.
16. The editors would like to thank Alan Harvey for sourcing the Greek original and the translation of the quotation.
17. *Ada Reis*, p. 105.
18. Ibid., p. 205, n. 32; p. 147, n. xii.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 16.
21. Ibid., p. 3.
22. Ibid., p. 12.
23. Ibid., p. 28.
24. Ibid., p. 7.
25. Ibid., pp. 7–8.
26. Ibid., p. 13.
27. Ibid., p. 21, p. 90.
28. See volume 1, p. 181.
29. *Ada Reis*, p. 90.
30. L. Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 348.
31. *Examiner*, 796 (27 April 1823) p. 284.
32. M. Butler, 'Orientalism', *The Penguin History of Literature, Vol. 5: The Romantic Period*, ed. D. B. Pirie (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 396.
33. R. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights; A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2003), p. 263.
34. Lamb called herself 'Biondetta' in a note she sent to Byron on 9 August 1812, that accompanied a clipping of her pubic hair, which read 'next to Thryza Dearest / & most faithful – God bless you / own love – ricordati di Biondetta / From your wild Antelope'. Quoted in Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb*, p. 119. 'Ricordati di Biondetta' translates from the Italian as 'Remember Biondetta'; 'biondetta' is a diminutive for 'small blonde female', and the capitalisation indicates the appropriation of the description as a name. The editors would like to thank Sam Hopkins for confirming the translation.
35. *Ada Reis*, p. 169.
36. Ibid., p. 197.
37. Ibid., p. 189.
38. Ibid., p. 29.
39. Ibid., p. 30.
40. *The Whole Disgraceful Truth*, ed. Douglass, p. 209.
41. *Ada Reis,* p. 122.
42. Quoted in Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb*, p. 144.
43. J. Soderholm (1991), 'Lady Caroline Lamb; Byron's Miniature Writ Large', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 40 (1991), p. 42.
44. A. M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 153.
45. Ibid.
46. Letter quoted in E. Jenkins, *Lady Caroline Lamb* (London: Cardinal, 1974) p. 133.

47. See Volume 1, p. 352.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p. 345.
50. Ibid., p. 132.
51. *Ada Reis,* p. 194.
52. Ibid., p. 20.
53. Ibid., p. 18.
54. Ibid., pp. 65–66.
55. Ibid., pp. 161–162.
56. Ibid., p. 160.
57. Ibid.
58. G. Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789–1830* (London & New York: Longman, 1989), p. 222.
59. *New Monthly Magazine,* 8 (1823), pp. 317–21.
60. Ibid.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Lamb provided her own notes, which appear at the end of each volume, with note indicators within the main body of the text. To distinguish between Lamb's own note indicators and those of the editor, Lamb's have been changed from Arabic to Roman numerals. Lamb also placed her note indicators before punctuation; this has been retained. However, Lamb, in her enthusiasm to demonstrate her wide reading of historic sources, sometimes provided note indicators with no corresponding note. The reverse also occurred; Lamb occasionally provided a note but did not provide a note indicator within the text. Therefore Lamb's note indicators and notes required reordering and renumbering to enable the reader to make sense of the large amount of extra information provided by Lamb. I have included this renumbering and reordering process within the list of silent corrections. Also within the text, conversations are carried out in French that, in some cases, takes several pages of the original manuscript to conclude. For the sake of the reading experience, rather than having an editorial endnote at the end of every sentence, I have put one at the end of each conversation. Therefore the translation of each conversation appears in one endnote, rather than sentence by sentence.

ADA REIS,

A TALE.

τοιαύτα μεν περι τουτων επαιξεν άμα σπουδάζων.
Xenophon. Memorabilia, lib. i. cap. iii. s. 7.[1]

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.
1823. /
LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS. /

TO
LYDIA WHITE.[2]

To you, who, without paying undue deference to what is termed the world, have succeeded in retaining around you, even when sickness has rendered you incapable of exertion, many who are distinguished by superiority of intellect and literary talents, to you I venture to dedicate these pages; not that I think them worth your acceptance, but that I wish to prove my grateful recollection of your kindness to me in the time of affliction, and also the admiration I feel for the courage and patience you have ever manifested / under all the irritating circumstances which necessarily attend a protracted illness. To cultivate your own understanding, to consult the feelings, and to promote the happiness of others, have ever been the principal objects of your life. The consequence is, that, even at this moment, when malady presses heavily upon you, when amusement would naturally be looked for in other circles, your society is eagerly sought by those anxious and affectionate friends, who find their pleasure in the enjoyment of your conversation, and in the contemplation of your fortitude and magnanimity. Though I scarcely venture to add my name to the list, I cannot refrain from expressing / the interest I feel for you, and my respect for the high qualities which you possess and exert. If a tale, but lightly written, amuse you even for a moment, I am satisfied; and when you have read it, you will know the meaning of what I add, – 'may Zevahir be ever with you!'

Your grateful and
affectionate friend,
THE AUTHOR. /