

ROMANTIC TEXTUALITIES
LITERATURE AND PRINT CULTURE, 1780–1840



Issue 19
(Winter 2009)

Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research
Cardiff University

Romantic Textualities is available on the web @ www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext

ISSN 1748-0116

Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840, 19 (Winter 2009). Online: Internet (date accessed): <www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext/issues/rt19.pdf>.

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Published by the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, Cardiff University.
Typeset in Adobe Garamond Pro 11 / 12.5, using Adobe InDesign CS4; images and illustrations prepared using Adobe Illustrator CS4 and Adobe PhotoShop CS4; final output rendered with Adobe Acrobat 9 Professional.

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Aims and Scope: Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality, and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists, and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. As of Issue 15 (Winter 2005), *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality, and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

ies of literary tourism, meanwhile, might have formed the basis for a more integrated theoretical consideration of the subject, such as Dean MacCannell provides in *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), not mentioned in this study, but whose notion of 'sight sacralisation' also has a clear bearing on Watson's discussion of the textuality of place and commercial reproductions thereof.³ Such minor concerns aside, the writing is confident, often eloquent, and Watson, a self-confessed and passionate literary tourist, occasionally and self-consciously allows her scholarly mask to slip, revealing the enthusiast in the field, her children in tow (or vice versa), comparing her own readings to literary sites as they exist today, herself and her subject the best antidote for the 'embarrassment' that has hitherto kept literary tourism in the shadows of scholarly respectability. 

NOTES

1. J. R. Hale (ed.), *The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), pp. 142–43.
2. Donald Reiman (ed.), *Shelley and his Circle, 1773–1822*, vol. 7 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 719.
3. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class*, with a foreword by Lucy R. Lippard (1976; Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 39–56.

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Edoardo Zuccato, *Petrarch in Romantic England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), xiv + 241pp. ISBN 978-0-2305-4260-0; £50 / \$80 (hb).

THE INSPIRATIONAL POTENTIAL OF ITALIAN LITERATURE for British Romantic authors has been investigated in studies such as Peter Vassallo's discussions of Byron and Shelley or Ralph Pite's *The Circle of our Vision: Dante's Presence in English Romantic Poetry* (1994). In the past decade, works such as Saglia and Bandiera's *British Romanticism and Italian Literature* (2005) and William Keach's study of Byron's *ottava rima* in *Arbitrary Power: Romanticism, Language, Politics* (2004) have examined these transnational relationships with a strong emphasis on textuality and stylistics; while Joseph Luzzi's *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (2008) explores the mythopoeic representations of Italy within Romantic Europe. The revival of the sonnet, too, has attracted significant attention, especially in the field of Romantic women's poetry, as testified by anthologies such as *A Century of Sonnets: The Romantic-Era Revival* (1999), edited by Paula Feldman and Daniel Robinson—the latter also author of other studies on the sonnet revival.

Dealing simultaneously with the resurgence of interest in the sonnet and the fascination with Italian culture, Edoardo Zuccato's *Petrarch in Romantic England* is a noteworthy historical overview of the uniquely British Petrarchan revival during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Petrarch's meditations in the solitary landscape, centrality of self-analysis, and cult of the *humanae litterae* could all be readily appropriated by Romantic discourse. As Zuccato's study demonstrates, those traits could also be modulated according to gender ideology, political beliefs, and individual poetics in order to fit diverse and often opposing agendas.

Zuccato's thorough research provides a cultural context indispensable to understanding the numerous links between British poetry and Petrarch in the pre-Romantic and Romantic eras. A detailed and readable account of the reception, appropriation, and re-use of Petrarch, which supplies a mine of references and cross-references, Zuccato's original, well-documented, and far-reaching work reads the phenomenon of the Petrarchan revival through the lenses of rewriting, inspiration, fictional biographies, and the reformation of the sonnet.

This remarkable study on translation, imitation, copy, and tradition invites us to consider how these categories came into play in the Romantic imagination:

I think that it is simplistic to believe that the layer text always has the last word [...] Rewritings do not blot out or manipulate the original text as a dead thing which cannot react. [...] An imitation or a translation often keeps the original meaning alive, not merely as something to be distorted, changed, or denied, but as a second, more secret layer of meaning to be played against the surface of the text [...] (p. 56)

Zuccato provides us with a polyphonic image—both synchronic and diachronic—of Petrarch's literary afterlife, and of Romanticism at large, which illustrates the complexities of the Romantic age provoking us to rethink Romanticism as a category.

The various phases of the British Petrarchan revival are explored in a chronological order: expanding on Zuccato's contribution to the aforementioned *British Romanticism and Italian Literature*, Chapter One gives a comparative account of the eighteenth-century biographies of Petrarch. The beginning of the Petrarchan revival is made to coincide with Susannah Dobson's *The Life of Petrarch* (1775). Principally an adaptation of the Marquis de Sade's *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarch* (1764), Dobson's *Life* mediated Petrarch for the British audience as a hero of Sensibility, inaugurating the conflation of poetry with fictions of biography that Zuccato describes as central to the British reception of Petrarch. Against this tendency, critics re-evaluated Petrarch's scholarly and political commitments, and questioned Dobson's sources. Hallam's influential pages and Hazlitt's reflections on the relationship between elaborate poetic techniques and the intimacy of subjectivity are also mentioned in Zuccato's

study, while Foscolo's re-evaluation of Petrarch is revealed as being indebted to British literary culture.

Chapter Two examines the eighteenth-century translations of Petrarch's poetry. Zuccato's persuasive analysis of Gray's poem 'On the Death of Mr Richard West' (one of the numerous imitations of Petrarch's 'Zephiro Torna') demonstrates how Petrarch's language could be reused to encode the themes of sexual desire and frustrated intimacy. Further, Zuccato's reading suggests that imitations, rewritings, and translations could function as sources of influence in addition to 'original' texts, raising crucial interrogatives on how poetic production, reception, and influence are strongly reciprocal processes. Translators such as John Nott or Sir William Jones exposed the connections between Petrarch's poems and Eastern literatures, while Charles Burney's widely read *History of Music* created the iconography of Petrarch composing to the music of his lute—as exemplified by the front cover of Zuccato's book.

Zuccato's investigation of Anna Seward and Charlotte Smith in Chapter Three encompasses translation, critical debates, and the practices of address and imitation. Discussing Smith's original and 'imitated' sonnets, Zuccato displays a remarkable stylistic and linguistic sensitivity, which one wishes had been more often exploited in the volume. Together with Smith's 'illegitimate' sonnets, the authoritative female critic Seward also chastised Smith for her use of intertextual allusion—something that Zuccato specifies as being a neoclassical, rather than pseudo-postmodernist, practice. Besides demonstrating the involvement of women poets in the debate on poetical form, Smith's and Seward's writings contributed towards a greater critical awareness of the sonnet.

Chapter Four contextualises the Petrarchan revival within the general Romantic appropriation of Italian literature through the poetry of the Della Cruscans and Mary Robinson. The Della Cruscans' interest in formal elaborateness and theatricality shaped their unsentimental rewriting of Petrarch through principles of self-control and technicality (p. 84). Discussing women poets' patterns of identification with Petrarch and/or Laura, Zuccato identifies Robinson's pseudonym 'Laura' as a strategy that aimed to subvert the limiting Petrarchan model of femininity (p. 83). Robinson's sonnet sequence *Sappho and Phaon* (1796), interrogating the potentially paralysing effect of 'extreme sensibility' (90–91) on poetic creativity, exemplifies the conjunction of Sappho and Petrarch in British Romanticism.

Coleridge's reception of Petrarch, and its evolution from the dismissive preface to *Sonnets From Various Authors* (1796) to a unique understanding of Petrarch's philosophy, is the object of Chapter Five. Although originally rejecting Petrarch's 'querulous egotism' (p. 100), following his Mediterranean sojourn in 1804, Coleridge later re-evaluated Petrarch's writings: strongly appreciative of Petrarch's Latin prose of introspection, Coleridge adapted Petrarch's philosophy of love into an ideal of domestic affections, avoiding the personal exposure entailed in the sonnet form. Coleridge's derogatory opinion of any formalistic

and sentimentalising debate on the sonnet was voiced in some of his polemical and parodic writings. Tracing the evolution of Coleridge's appreciation, Zuccato demonstrates how Petrarch could be used either to endorse or to oppose the culture of Sensibility by virtue of his intellectual complexities.

In Chapter Six, Zuccato highlights Byron's and Wordsworth's attempts either to replace or to erase the Petrarchan tradition, as well as the resonance of Petrarch's language and idealisation with Shelley, whose *Mask of Anarchy* (1819, published 1832) and *Triumph of Life* (1824) Vassallo reads as a conflation of Dante and Petrarch. Keats's adoption and deconstruction of the sonnet form are read through Leigh Hunt's influence, while Zuccato pays particular attention to women writers' appropriation of Petrarch, from Madame de Staël's legitimising amalgamation of Petrarch, Corinne, and Sappho to Letitia Elizabeth Landon's reinscription of Petrarch as an instrument for 'speculating on the philosophy of writing' (p. 148). Zuccato goes on to demonstrate how Elizabeth Barrett Browning's and Christina Rossetti's sonnet sequences offer alternative strategies available for subverting the Petrarchan tradition, by either blurring the roles of subject and love-object or parodying the logics of Petrarchan love.

The greatest merit of Zuccato's book resides in the questions it raises and in the approaches it encourages its readers to develop. His attentive study of the translations and imitations encourages us to ponder the reciprocal action of translation and influence, and his choice of authors suggests alternative ways of considering the Romantic canon and imagination. In the context of the rising interest in transnational and comparative approaches to Romanticism, Zuccato provides one of the possible models for investigating transnational reception and responses. His portrait of Petrarch as a complex author—pliable to diverse political ends, gender representations, and poetics—counters the identification of Petrarch with canonicity and conservatism, thus offering a refreshing perspective not only to Romantic studies, but also to Petrarchan scholarship. ❏

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Don Shelton is a collector, researcher, and writer on miniature portraits from Auckland, New Zealand. His collection includes over 800 miniature portraits which, together with his research notes, can be viewed at <http://portrait-miniature.blogspot.com>. He finds research into sitters such as Sir Anthony Carlisle fascinating, and is frequently surprised at how much information can be gleaned via dedicated Internet research.

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