

# L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

3

ANNO XXVII 2019

EDUCATT - UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

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PUBBLICAZIONE QUADRIMESTRALE

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA  
Facoltà di Scienze Linguistiche e Letterature straniere  
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore  
Anno XXVII - 3/2019  
ISSN 1122-1917  
ISBN 978-88-9335-566-7

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Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano | tel. 02.7234.2235 | fax 02.80.53.215  
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (*produzione*); librario.dsu@educatt.it (*distribuzione*)  
web: www.educatt.it/libri

*Redazione della Rivista:* redazione.all@unicatt.it | *web:* www.analisinguisticaeletteraria.eu

Questo volume è stato stampato nel mese di febbraio 2020  
presso la Litografia Solari - Peschiera Borromeo (Milano)

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## INTRODUCTION

BOOKS, BALLETS, AND PUPPETS:  
THE SHELLEYS' MILANESE EXPERIENCE

MARCO CANANI AND VALENTINA VARINELLI

On 11 March 1818 Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (then 20) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (25) set off from their lodgings in Great Russell Street, London, on the journey that would lead them to their Italian exile. They were accompanied by their two children, the two-year-old William and the newborn Clara, Mary's stepsister Claire Clairmont, Claire's daughter by Lord Byron Allegra (aged 1), a nursemaid, a female servant, and "the choice society of all ages"<sup>1</sup>, i.e. a trunk full of books. The next day the party crossed the Channel to Calais and, avoiding Paris, sped through France and Savoy, where the books were confiscated. Their destination was Milan, where they arrived on the evening of 4 April, and remained for about a month<sup>2</sup>.

Over twenty years later, Mary Shelley recalled that the "principal motive" for their emigration "was the hope that [Shelley's] health would be improved by a milder climate"<sup>3</sup>, but Percy's chronic ill health was not their sole reason. An additional motive was his fear of being deprived of his children by Mary following the Lord Chancellor's decision to deny him custody of Ianthe and Charles, his children by his late first wife, Harriet Westbrook. Shelley had expected the court to acknowledge his parental rights, and indeed the decision "set a legal precedent which is still cited" today<sup>4</sup>. As Shelley wrote to Byron in July 1817, he felt that "the tyranny, civil and religious, under which this country groans, has visited me somewhat severely". If the "interference exercised by Chancery" were to be extended to William, and, implicitly, the baby whom Mary was expecting, he would leave England with his family<sup>5</sup>. In Italy Percy could also escape his many creditors and improve his financial situation thanks to its "boasted cheapness". However, he soon discovered in Milan that "the English

<sup>1</sup> P.B. Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, F.L. Jones ed., 2 vols, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1964, Vol. 2, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> The Shelleys' journey to Italy and the vicissitudes of their life abroad are recorded in Mary Shelley's and Claire Clairmont's journals: M. Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844*, P.R. Feldman – D. Scott-Kilvert ed., 2 vols, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1987; C. Clairmont, *The Journals of Claire Clairmont*, M. Kingston Stocking ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1968.

<sup>3</sup> M. Shelley, "Note on the *Prometheus Unbound*", in P.B. Shelley, *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Mrs. Shelley ed., 4 vols, Moxon, London 1839, Vol. 2, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> K. Everest, *Shelley and His Contemporaries*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, M. O'Neill – A. Howe ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, pp. 513-529 (p. 529). On Shelley's Chancery suit and its impact on his works see also L. Chapin, *Children as Subject and Object: Shelley v. Westbrook*, in *Romanticism and the Object*, L.H. Peer ed., Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009, pp. 37-49.

<sup>5</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 547.

as usual are cheated in a way that is quite ridiculous, if they have not their wits about them”<sup>6</sup>. The last, important factor in the Shelleys’ decision to leave England was the impossibility of finding a “responsible person” who would safely convey Allegra to her father in Venice<sup>7</sup>. By accompanying Allegra to Italy and relocating there themselves, the Shelleys hoped that she would still see her mother, at least occasionally. They could also remain close to the child, who was as dear to them as if she were their own. As Julian (Shelley) said of Maddalo (Byron)’s daughter, “With me / She was a special favourite: I had nursed / Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first / To this bleak world” (“Julian and Maddalo”, ll. 150-153)<sup>8</sup>.

For nearly two years, the Shelleys restlessly criss-crossed the Italian peninsula to visit popular destinations and attractions. After leaving Milan, they stopped in Pisa on their way to Leghorn and saw the Cathedral and the Leaning Tower. From Leghorn they moved to the then fashionable resort of Bagni di Lucca. In August they visited Byron in Venice, where little Clara died in September, and they borrowed the villa that Byron had rented in Este, on the Euganean Hills. In November they set off for Naples on one of the major routes of the Grand Tour. They passed through Ferrara (where they saw Tasso’s and Ariosto’s manuscripts and visited Tasso’s cell), Bologna (renowned for its art galleries), Terni (where they admired the Cascata delle Marmore), and Rome. As was customary with British tourists, they wintered in Naples and moved back to Rome in time to attend the Easter celebrations. When William also died in Rome in June 1819, they returned to Leghorn, and then moved to Florence for the winter. At the beginning of 1820 they finally settled in Pisa, where they resided for the following two years, spending the warm months in nearby Bagni di Pisa (today San Giuliano Terme) and, fatally, San Terenzo in the Bay of Lerici in the spring of 1822.

The Shelleys’ travels in Italy are recorded in their rich correspondence with their English friends, beginning with the letter that Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote to Thomas Love Peacock upon his arrival in Milan. This letter contains one of the poet’s rare puns: “We have no Miss Millani here – in every other respect Milan is unquestionably superior”<sup>9</sup>. Shelley was playing on the name of Mademoiselle Milanie, a ballet dancer he had seen on the London stage who had “enchanted” him<sup>10</sup>. His sophomoric pun is a sign of the new-found light-heartedness, the almost physical relief at leaving behind the oppressive and repressive atmosphere of Regency England that Shelley had lamented earlier in the same letter:

no sooner had we arrived at Italy than the loveliness of the earth & the serenity of the sky made the greatest difference in my sensations — I depend on these things for life

<sup>6</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 584.

<sup>8</sup> P.B. Shelley, *The Poems of Shelley*, Vol. 2, K. Everest – G. Matthews ed., Pearson Education, Harlow 2000 (Longman Annotated English Poets), p. 671. On the question of Allegra and Claire see I. Origo, *Allegra*, Hogarth Press, London 1935, and, more recently, F. Rognoni, “Shelley, Byron e l’ostinata follia: attorno al *Julian e Maddalo* di P.B. Shelley”, in P.B. Shelley, *Poemetti veneziani*, F. Rognoni ed., Mondadori, Milano 2001, pp. vii-xxxii.

<sup>9</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, as Comprised in The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley by Thomas Jefferson Hogg, The Recollections of Shelley & Byron by Edward John Trelawny, Memoirs of Shelley by Thomas Love Peacock*, H. Wolfe ed., 2 vols, Dent, London 1933, Vol. 2, p. 330.

for in the smoke of cities & the tumult of humankind & the chilling fogs & rain of our own country I can hardly be said to live<sup>11</sup>.

It was, then, an unusually cheerful and carefree Shelley who arrived in Milan on 4 April 1818. The crossing of the Alps had already furnished him with the fundamental inspiration for *Prometheus Unbound*, which he began later that year, and the *coreodrammi* by Salvatore Viganò that he saw at the Teatro alla Scala further influenced the final act of his “lyrical drama”<sup>12</sup>. The Shelleys’ stay in Milan, however, had a more profound impact on their works. The few weeks that they spent in the city mark the beginning not only of their four-year residence in Italy, but also of their lifelong immersion in Italian culture, epitomised by Percy’s habit of reading Dante’s *Divine Comedy* inside the Duomo, Milan’s iconic cathedral<sup>13</sup>. The impressions that they then received of the Italian landscape, history, literature, and performing arts influenced all their future works. It is in Milan, for instance, that Percy became fascinated with the life of Torquato Tasso. He read Pierantonio Serassi’s biography, *La vita di Torquato Tasso* (1785)<sup>14</sup>, and planned a never-completed tragedy on Tasso’s madness as his contribution to the construction of the Romantic myth of the Ferrarese Renaissance poet. As he wrote to Peacock on 20 April 1818, the “subject” seemed to him, “if properly treated, admirably dramatic & poetical”<sup>15</sup>. In later works, namely Percy’s “Ode to Naples” and “Ode to Liberty” and Mary’s *Valperga*, the Shelleys engaged with the political history of Milan. A trip to nearby Lake Como inspired, by contrast, the settings of Percy’s eclogue *Rosalind and Helen*, and some scenes in Mary’s novel *The Last Man* and the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*.

Compared to the wealth of information available about the Shelleys’ sojourn in other Italian cities and towns, remarkably little is known of their daily life in Milan in April 1818. Likewise, the influence of this brief but seminal period on their works beyond Percy’s *Prometheus Unbound* has not been much investigated. In his *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Edward Dowden writes that a “few days [...] at Milan sufficed for the first inspection of its objects of beauty and historical interest”, while the “later days [...] went by in uneventful fashion”<sup>16</sup>. Owing perhaps to the small number of letters that the Shelleys sent from Milan, and the relatively short entries in Mary’s and Claire’s journals of that period, even later biographers, such as Glynn Grylls (1938), White (1940), Holmes (1974), Sunstein (1989), Gittings – Manton (1992), Seymour (2000), Bieri (2004-05), and Worthen (2019)<sup>17</sup>, dedicate only

<sup>11</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> See M. Shelley, *Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 200; L.M. Crisafulli, “A Language in Itself Music”: Salvatore Viganò’s Ballet en Action in Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, in *The Romantic Stage: A Many-Sided Mirror*, L.M. Crisafulli – F. Liberto ed., Rodopi, Amsterdam 2014, pp. 135-159.

<sup>13</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> M. Shelley, *Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> E. Dowden, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., London 1886, Vol. 2, pp. 192, 198.

<sup>17</sup> R. Glynn Grylls, *Mary Shelley: A Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1938; N.I. White, *Shelley*, 2 vols, Knopf, New York 1940; R. Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1974; E.W. Sunstein, *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston 1989; R. Gittings – J. Man-



a few paragraphs to the first month of their residence in Italy. While multiple studies have been devoted to the Shelleys' experience and representation of Pisa, Naples and Campania, Venice, and Este<sup>18</sup>, there is no analogous bibliography relating to their stay in Milan. Even the principal studies of the Shelleys' travels abroad – Rossetti Angeli (1911), Giartosio De Courten (1923), Cline (1952), Weinberg (1991), Crisafulli (1998), Colbert (2005), Schoina (2009), Marino (2011), Pite (2013), and Stabler (2013)<sup>19</sup> – have focused on other moments of their Italian exile, and have left the Milanese period unexplored.

The articles in the present issue aim to fill this gap. They were first presented at a two-day conference celebrating the bicentenary of the Shelleys' arrival in Milan that was jointly organised by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and the Università degli Studi di Milano in April 2018 to coincide with the publication of the new Italian edition of Percy Bysshe Shelley's works<sup>20</sup>. Each contribution investigates a different aspect of Mary and Percy Shelley's experience of Milan, from their first impressions of the Italian states to the influence of this period on their artistic development. Taken as a whole, the articles in this issue demonstrate that the Shelleys' reading, the places they visited, the encounters they made, and the cultural atmosphere they experienced in and around Milan in early 1818 left an indelible mark on their later works.

In the opening article, Kelvin Everest suggests that Percy Shelley's literary activity during the first few months in Italy was more intense than critics have usually argued. As his notebooks reveal, the period was marked by an often unnoticed experimentation with various forms of composition. However, his principal activity consisted in translations from Greek, particularly a version of Plato's *Symposium*, which shaped his "Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love". The translation of such a subversive text – which celebrates spiritual love, but also includes an apology for homoeroticism – should be read in the context of the Shelleys' decision to leave England and

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ton, *Claire Clairmont and the Shelleys*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992; M. Seymour, *Mary Shelley*, Murray, London 2000; J. Bieri, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Biography*, 2 vols, University of Delaware Press, Newark 2004-05; J. Worthen, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Critical Biography*, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ 2019.

<sup>18</sup> *Paradise of Exiles. Shelley and Byron in Pisa*, M. Curreli – A.L. Johnson ed., ETS, Pisa 1988; E. Marino, *I coniugi Shelley in Campania*, "Rivista di Scienze del Turismo", 2, 2011, 1, pp. 99-116; K. Kroeber, *Experience as History: Shelley's Venice, Turner's Carthage*, "English Literary History", 41, 1974, 3, pp. 321-339; M. Wilson, *Travellers' Venice: Some Images for Byron and Shelley*, "University of Toronto Quarterly", 43, 1974, 2, pp. 93-120; F. Rognoni, *Byron e Shelley: da Arquà a Este*, "Terra d'Este", 18, 1999, pp. 27-38; *Isole in fiore. Mary e Percy B. Shelley tra Este, Venezia e i Colli Euganei*, F. Selmin ed., Cierre edizioni, Sommacampagna 2017.

<sup>19</sup> H. Rossetti Angeli, *Shelley and His Friends in Italy*, Methuen, London 1911; M.L. Giartosio De Courten, *Percy Bysshe Shelley e l'Italia*, Treves, Milano 1923; C.L. Cline, *Byron, Shelley, and their Pisan Circle*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1952; A.M. Weinberg, *Shelley's Italian Experience*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1991; *Shelley e l'Italia*, L.M. Crisafulli Jones ed., Liguori, Napoli 1998; B. Colbert, *Shelley's Eye: Travel Writing and Aesthetic Vision*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2005; M. Schoina, *Romantic "Anglo-Italians": Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and the Pisan Circle*, Ashgate, Farnham 2009; E. Marino, *Mary Shelley e l'Italia: il viaggio, il Risorgimento, la questione femminile*, Le Lettere, Firenze 2011; R. Pite, *Shelley and Italy*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, pp. 31-47; J. Stabler, *The Artistry of Exile: Romantic and Victorian Writers in Italy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013.

<sup>20</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Opere poetiche*, and Id., *Teatro, prose e lettere*, F. Rognoni ed., Mondadori, Milano 2018 (I Meridiani).

their first, rather solitary weeks abroad. As Everest argues, Shelley's translation foregrounds "a mind freed from all constraint of custom and propriety, and thus free to go where intellect alone was leading" (p. 23). From this perspective, the *Symposium* marks a double watershed in Shelley's growth as a man and as a poet, granting him that "striking new confidence" (p. 34) which would find its first expression in *Prometheus Unbound*.

In the following essay, Will Bowers further investigates Shelley's translations from Greek with a focus on his response to A.W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1815). Percy read passages from the *Lectures* to Mary and Claire as they were crossing the Alps in March 1818, and the book provided "a spur and a foil to his dramatic thought" (p. 35). Bowers documents the influence of Schlegel on Shelley's response to Salvatore Viganò's *coreodramma*, *Otello*, at La Scala. He also illustrates the ways in which Shelley's maturing Hellenism progressively departed from Schlegel's views, as exemplified by his attitude towards Euripides. In particular, Shelley's translation of *The Cyclops* manifests his desire to offer a complete picture of Greek life and society in direct opposition to more prudish conceptions of Hellenism. Interestingly, such an intention surfaces in his lexical choices and his use of stichomythia, in an attempt to recreate the "domestic diction" (p. 42) of the Greeks.

The following three contributions by Carla Pomarè, Marco Canani, and Valentina Varinelli retrace the geography of the Shelleys' journey through Northern Italy, investigating their experience of Savoy, Milan, and Lake Como. As Pomarè argues, the Kingdom of Sardinia was a "transit zone", and like "most Romantic travellers" the Shelleys "registered their experience of stepping across [its] borders [...] as something distinct from the experience of entering Italy" (p. 47). Pomarè's article discusses the Shelleys' impressions of the "Stati Sabaudi" in the context of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travel writing, emphasising how recent scholarship has foregrounded the ideological aspects embedded in such views. Moreover, the author suggests that Percy's opinion of the Sabaudian States as a political entity marred by despotism, bigotry, and degeneration may indicate that he was familiar with J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi's *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge* (1815-1818) prior to March 1818.

In his article, Canani focuses on the four weeks that the Shelleys spent in Milan so as to map the places that they visited and the acquaintances that they may have made in the city. The hotel where the Shelleys stayed, the Albergo Reale, suggests that they experienced a more culturally lively and up-market area of town than the poet's correspondence indicates. Owned by one of the leading neoclassical architects of the time, Luigi Cagnola, the Reale had been the lodgings of Caroline of Brunswick and possibly hosted J.M.W. Turner during his first Italian tour. Despite the difficulty in establishing the existence of an actual 'Milanese Circle', Canani moves from some brief notes in Mary's and Claire's diaries and letters to shed light on the Shelleys' contacts with Giuseppe Marietti, a banker and impresario involved in Queen Caroline's trial in 1820, and Domenico Mombelli, a renowned tenor and Salvatore Viganò's brother-in-law. As a final point, the article discusses Shelley's references to Milan in "Ode to Naples" (1820) and *Hellas* (1822) as "political" and "transhistorical" (p. 69) allusions to post-Napoleonic Italy.

Varinelli's essay illustrates the significance of Percy and Mary's visit to Lake Como in early April 1818. Although the shores of the lake are represented in Percy's *Rosalind and Helen* (1819), they left a stronger impression on Mary Shelley, who revisited its sites with her son, Percy Florence, in the summer of 1840. References to Villa Pliniana and Lake Como occur in her essays for the *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Italy, Spain and Portugal* (1835-37), where historical accuracy arguably conflates with autobiographical experience, in the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, and in *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* (1844), where the author's memories seem to reflect her "new-found religiosity" (p. 78). Yet, it is in *The Last Man* (1826) that topography clearly voices, as Varinelli observes, "Mary Shelley's disillusionment with a country that may well have seemed like paradise to the English exile until she lost her children and, later, her husband there" (p. 75).

As Percy's, Mary's, and Claire's correspondence and journals amply document, the theatre was their favourite pastime in Milan. On 5, 7, 20, 21, and 29 April they went to La Scala<sup>21</sup>, and on 13 April they saw a puppet show at "the Theatre of Marionetti"<sup>22</sup>, i.e. Teatro Fiando or "Gerolamo", the only puppet theatre in town. In their contributions, Alberto Bentoglio and Anna Anselmo examine the important cultural role that the theatre had in post-Napoleonic Milan with a focus on the performances seen by the Shelleys. Thanks to its former status as the capital city of Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy, Milan could boast an extremely vibrant theatre life that was unrivalled in the rest of the peninsula. In his essay, Bentoglio illustrates the threefold theatrical organisation of the city, which included two theatres financed by the government, the Teatro alla Scala and the Teatro alla Canobbiana, two private theatres operating in the evenings and offering melodramas and "well-made plays", as well as two amphitheatres which were especially popular among the lower classes. After illustrating the historical and cultural reasons for the popularity of the theatre in Milan, Bentoglio examines the shows on the bill in April 1818, and discusses the contemporary reception of Salvatore Viganò's *Otello* and *La spada di Kenneth*.

Anselmo focuses on Claire Clairmont's experience of Milan, which occurred at a poignant time of her life, as she was about to be separated from her daughter Allegra. In this context, Anselmo's article connects Claire's reading in Milan, which suggests "a strong interest in comedy rather than the tragic music of the opera house" (p. 93), with the puppet show that she saw at the Teatro Fiando, *Girolamo e Argante nell'isola incantata dalle streghe di Benevento*. After drawing on archival evidence to reconstruct the probable plot and structure of the performance, the essay traces the history of Gerolamo – the Milanese puppet *par excellence* – and investigates the possible reasons for which Giuseppe Fiando's work appealed to Claire in light of her intellectual dialogue with Percy and Mary Shelley, i.e. its interplay of politics, music, and dancing.

Milan is not only the first stop in what was going to be the Shelleys' exile in Italy. Their arrival in the city also marks the beginning of a period of personal and artistic development

<sup>21</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 4; M. Shelley, *Journals*, Vol. 1, pp. 203, 205-207; C. Clairmont, *Journals*, pp. 89, 92. See also the Appendix to J. Mulhallen, *The Theatre of Shelley*, OpenBook Publishers, Cambridge 2010, p. 250.

<sup>22</sup> C. Clairmont, *Journals*, p. 91.

which spanned the next four years and crystallised, as Antonella Braidà and Lilla Maria Crisafulli show, in both Mary's and Percy's aesthetic reflection and writings. In "A Philosophical View of Reform" (written between November 1819 and January 1820), Percy Shelley praised "the undisputed superiority of Italy in literature & the arts", extolling the "union of energy & of beauty" of Dante's poetry, and the "restlessness of fervid power" of Italian painting, sculpture, and architecture<sup>23</sup>. Braidà documents the constant presence of Dante in the Shelleys' reading in Italy starting from the Milanese period. After examining their "cosmopolitan" approach to Dante, which was mediated by their reading of Schlegel, Sismondi, Mme de Staël, and Henry Francis Cary's "Life of Dante" in *The Vision* (1814), the article argues that the *Divine Comedy* should be viewed as the common hypotext of Mary Shelley's *Matilda* (written in 1819), *Valperga* (1823), "Giovanni Villani" (1823), and *Rambles in Germany and Italy*. Focusing on Mary's 1844 travelogue, Braidà maintains that the "references to Dante contribute to her need to negotiate genre" (p. 113) in response to the current changes in travel writing as an increasingly popular and tourist-oriented form. The article also foregrounds Mary Shelley's contribution to the changing reception of Dante in Britain, and connects her interest in the poet with the development of her "identity as a woman writer, claiming the greater freedom of a composite Anglo-Italian identity" (p. 118).

Focusing instead on Percy Shelley, Crisafulli argues that in Italy he not only reached his poetic maturity, but also developed a "holistic" aesthetic system which reconciled his empiricism with his idealism, and his political commitment with his poetic project. In "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) Shelley articulated "a poetics that worked by extension", and identified poetry as "a hyper-genre" (p. 122) encompassing all other genres and all other arts. It is because of its linguistic nature that Shelley viewed poetry as "necessarily conditioned by contingency and contiguity". In this sense, as Crisafulli illustrates, his conception of poetry is grounded in metonymy. This perspective explains Shelley's conflation of genres in works such as *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819) and *Oedipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820), and reveals an organicist aesthetic system that is most evident in *Prometheus Unbound*, a work that foregrounds "Italy as a privileged metonymic referent of Shelley's poetry and poetics" (p. 129). Bringing us back to Milan and La Scala, Crisafulli demonstrates the influence of the "inter-artistic experience" offered by Viganò's *coreodrammi* on the last two acts of Shelley's "lyrical drama".

It is often forgotten that the Shelleys had thought of visiting Italy in the summer of 1816. Claire Clairmont convinced them instead to travel to Geneva, bringing her with them, so that she could be reunited with her then lover Byron<sup>24</sup>. In the last essay, Michael Rossington revisits the Geneva summer in his reconstruction of the afterlife of some manuscripts and early editions of Percy Shelley. The article focuses on three lifetime editions of the poet once owned by the Keats editor and bibliophile Richard Monckton Milnes, which are now preserved at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Princeton University Library. The first is a copy of *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* (1810) that Milnes received

<sup>23</sup> P.B. Shelley, "A Philosophical View of Reform", in *Shelley and His Circle, 1773-1822*, 10 vols to date, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1961-2002, Vol. 6, D.H. Reiman ed., p. 964.

<sup>24</sup> P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 450, 470; M. Shelley, *Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

from Henry Hart Milman, a fellow student of Shelley's at Oxford, and bears the handwritten dedication of the author. Milnes also acquired a copy of *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) that contained a leaf from the visitors' book of an inn in Chamonix where in July 1816 Shelley infamously described himself as "αθεος". The leaf with Shelley's Greek inscription, which Rossington examines afresh, is reproduced on p. 141. The third item discussed in the essay is a first edition of *Adonais* (1821) with autograph corrections, which "came direct from Italy" (p. 139) and contains a holograph fair copy of Shelley's poem beginning "Swifter far than summer's flight".

The articles in this special issue of "L'Analisi Linguistica e Letteraria" contribute to Romantic scholarship by shedding light on a moment of the Shelleys' Italian exile that has been hitherto only marginally examined. However, they do not intend to be the final statement on the Shelleys' residence in Milan and the contribution that their first months in Italy made to their artistic maturity. Further debate on both the biographical and literary aspects of their Milanese experience is certainly desirable, especially at such a time as the present, when the bicentenary celebrations of the Romantics offer fruitful opportunities for scholarly research and exchange.

This project would not have been realised without the commitment of Giovanni Iamartino of the Università degli Studi di Milano and Francesco Rognoni of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, who first had the idea for the conference that was held in Milan in April 2018. We are profoundly grateful to both for their work as conference directors as well as for their constant generosity, trust, and encouragement. The 2018 event was supported by a number of institutions, which contributed in a fundamental way to its success. The conference was generously funded by the Dipartimento di Scienze linguistiche e letterature straniere at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, the Dipartimento di Lingue e letterature straniere at the Università degli Studi di Milano, and "Romantic Bicentennials", an initiative of the Keats-Shelley Association of America and the Byron Society of America. Liceo Classico Manzoni, Milano, promoted the event among their students and hosted a preliminary talk on the Shelleys in Italy by the indefatigable Francesco Rognoni. Moreover, the conference was organised under the auspices of the Comune di Milano, Newcastle University, the research centre "Romanticismo and Romanticismi" at the Università degli Studi di Milano, the Centro Interuniversitario per lo Studio del Romanticismo (CISR) at the Università di Bologna, and the Italian Association of English Studies (AIA). We wish to thank all these institutions for their help and support.

The publication of this special issue devoted to "The Shelleys in Milan" has been made possible by Marisa Verna, Director of the Dipartimento di Scienze linguistiche e letterature straniere at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and editor of "L'Analisi Linguistica e Letteraria". We sincerely thank her for her enthusiastic response to our proposal. Sarah Bigi, Giulia Grata, and the editorial team have also been invaluable throughout the editorial process, and we would like to thank them for their unfailing help and advice. Last but not least, our gratitude goes to all the contributors and anonymous reviewers without whose work this issue would have never appeared.

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
**L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA**

ANNO XXVII - 3/2019

EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario dell'Università Cattolica  
Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano - tel. 02.72342235 - fax 02.80.53.215  
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (produzione)  
librario.dsu@educatt.it (distribuzione)  
redazione.all@unicatt.it (Redazione della Rivista)  
web: www.educatt.it/libri/all

ISSN 1122 - 1917

