

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

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

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NOTES ON THE SHELLEYS' NORTH-WESTERN PASSAGE TO ITALY

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This paper deals with the Shelleys' first physical impact with Italy, focussing on their experience of the borders they crossed when entering the peninsula through Mont Cenis. Their mostly negative reaction to the Kingdom of Sardinia, which in the course of the century would lead the process of Italian unification, invites reflection on how the reality of border controls and territorial fragmentation interacted with Romantic idealized notions of the Italian state, which as yet had no actual political existence.

L'ingresso negli Stati sabaudi attraverso la frontiera del Moncenisio rappresenta per gli Shelley il primo impatto fisico con il territorio italiano. La loro reazione perlopiù negativa a quel Regno di Sardegna che avrebbe guidato il processo di unificazione invita a una riflessione su come l'esperienza concreta delle frontiere e della frammentazione territoriale abbia interagito con l'idealizzazione romantica di una nazione italiana che ancora non esisteva come organismo statale.

Keywords: Shelley, Sabaudian states, borders, Simonde de Sismondi, Mont Cenis

Much has been written on how the Romantics contributed to the European perception of an Italian nation well before Italy existed as a unified state. Carried on in letters, journals and creative works such as Byron's fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* or Shelley's "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills", this contribution was based on the Romantics' experience of the Italian territory, which they visited, explored, lived and often died in. While the role that 'being on the spot' played in imaginative constructions of Italy has been amply highlighted¹, less discussed is the Romantics' first physical and cultural impact with the political realities of border controls and states' fragmentation. The Shelleys' negotiation of the first Italian border they crossed, when they entered the peninsula through the Kingdom of Sardinia, provides an example of the dynamics of cultural expectations and actual experience that characterized the Romantics' approach to Italy².

1. English travellers had always had the option of two main north-western passages to Italy: the Simplon Pass, which is the route Byron followed on his arrival in 1816, and Mont Cenis, which is the route taken by the Shelley party in 1818. During Napoleon's rule over

¹ Especially but not exclusively with reference to Byron's production see the by now classical study by S. Cheeke, *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2003.

² This research has been carried on with the financial support of the University of Eastern Piedmont.

Italy, the building of new roads made both passages considerably easier, allowing to dispense with the quite adventurous practices, documented by many eighteenth-century Grand Tourists, of dismantling the carriages and hauling them up the mountains, while the passengers were being literally carried across in the so-called *chaises-à-porteur*³. Consequently, the Napoleonic reshaping of the Alpine passes became the object of rapt comments and much admiration on the part of British travellers, who, after Napoleon's demise, resumed their trips to the Continent. While Mariana Starke enthusiastically hailed the Simplon Pass as "this eighth wonder of the world, this universal benefit to Europe"⁴, Claire Clairmont recollected that when dining "on the top of Cenis [...] [we] bless[ed] Napoleon for the passage must have been dreadful before the new Road was made"⁵ and the painter Henry Sass acknowledged that "[a]lthough he [Napoleon] has been our enemy, every one in passing the Alps must think as I do, and will almost have a feeling of gratitude towards him, if they would honestly express it; for in these wonderful works, as in many others, he has been a benefit to the human race"⁶.

After 1815 what both the Simplon and the Cenis led to was the restored Kingdom of Sardinia, which Napoleon had conquered in 1802. The Kingdom of Sardinia was a peculiar political entity, which stretched along two intersecting axes. The first ran from North to South – from Mont Blanc and the Southern shore of Lake Lemano to Nice and the former Republic of Genoa, which the Holy Alliance annexed to the Kingdom as a buffer against a possibly resurgent France. The second axis extended from North-West to South-East – from the former capital Chambéry to the new capital Turin, with Mont Cenis connecting the two by providing a passage across the Alps. The Kingdom did not coincide with any natural region but was rather built out of an older political geography, dating back to feudal partitions of the cisalpine and transalpine territories, which since 1416 the House of Savoy had been piecing together with alternate fortunes⁷.

³ For a detailed description of the whole process see S. Sharp, *Letters from Italy, Describing the Customs and Manners of that Country, in the Years 1765 and 1766*, Cave, London 1766, pp. 287-288.

⁴ M. Starke, *Travels on the Continent: Written for the Use and Particular Information of Travellers*, Murray, London 1820, p. 76.

⁵ C. Clairmont, *The Journals of Claire Clairmont*, M. Kingston Stocking ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1968, pp. 88-89.

⁶ H. Sass, *A Journey to Rome and Naples, Performed in 1817; Giving an Account of the Present State of Society in Italy; and Containing Observations on the Fine Arts*, Longman, London 1818, p. 53.

⁷ The lack of continuity in the House of Savoy's possessions (in time as well as in space) finds correspondence in the many names that were, and still to some extent are, used to refer to this composite state: originally the Duchy of Savoy, it became the Kingdom of Sicily following the Peace of Utrecht of 1713 and then the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1720, when the crown of Sicily was exchanged for that of Sardinia; but it was also known as Savoy or Piedmont, from the name of its most conspicuous constituents. The more recent historiography favours the term *Stati sabaudi*, translated "interchangeably, and not unambiguously, to signify, on the one hand, the geographical region 'Savoy Piedmont', and on the other, the political expression of 'the Savoyard State'" (P. Bianchi – K. Wolfe, *Introduction*, in *Turin and the British in the Age of the Grand Tour*, P. Bianchi – K. Wolfe ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 1-24 (p. 3)). Given these multiple renderings in English, the Italian term will henceforth be retained in the text.

Following the Congress of Vienna, most Romantic travellers to Italy registered their experience of stepping across the borders of the Kingdom of Sardinia as something distinct from the experience of entering Italy. This is the case of the Shelleys' recollections of their arrival in March 1818 at the frontier between France and Savoy, which ran across a bridge over the river Guiers connecting two towns that bore the same name of Pont de Beauvoisin – one in the French Dauphiné, the other in Savoy. Mary, Percy and Claire Clairmont all devote in their letters and journals considerable attention to the material experience of the frontier and the inconveniencies associated to custom controls. Claire presents the bridge as “most romantically situated” and goes on to detail the “curious scene” of “[t]he French soldiers at one end of the Bridge & the Piedmontese at the other”, while their carriage “[stood] on the middle of the Bridge nearly an hour before Passports, impots &c could be settled”. She also recollects that Shelley was worried about his books until he met “a Canon who [helped] him & who knew his father at the Duke of Norfolk’s”⁸. Claire’s reference to Shelley’s books is explained at length in the corresponding passage in Mary’s journal of March 26, written in Percy’s hand:

We dined at Les Echelles a village at the foot of a mountain of the same name the boundaries of France & Savoy – Before this we had stopped at Pont Beauvoisin where the legal limits of the French & Sardinian dominions are placed. We here heard that a Milanese had been sent all the way back to Lyons because his passport was unauthorised by the Sardinian consul a few days before & that we should be subjected to the same treatment. We – in respect to the character of our nation I suppose – were suffered to pass. – Our books however were after a long discussion sent to Chambéry to be submitted to the Censor a Priest – who admits nothing of Rousseau Voltaire &c into the dominions of the K.[ing] of S.[ardinia] – All such books are burned –⁹.

Although the Shelleys acknowledge that the legal limit between France and the Kingdom of Sardinia is at Pont de Beauvoisin, on the Western side of the Alps, in theirs as in most Romantic accounts the Italian frontier is identified with the natural divide of Mont Cenis. What legal borders delimited – the Kingdom of Sardinia – was hardly Italy to them. The Shelleys experienced it as a transit zone, which they traversed at a good pace: altogether it took them seven days to cover the 144 (Italian) miles from Pont de Beauvoisin to Turin. Like most Romantic travellers, with the notable exceptions of Lady Morgan and Mariana Starke, they hardly stopped anywhere before they reached Milan on April 4, having spent a whole day only in the two capitals: Chambéry – which they visited on March 27 – and Turin – where they remained through April 1. Predictably enough, the feature of the Kingdom’s territory that most captured their interest and imagination was the natural scenery, in particular the Alps, perceived as the real gateway to their promised land.

⁸ C. Clairmont, *Journals*, p. 88.

⁹ M. Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-1844*, P.R. Feldman – D. Scott-Kilvert ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/London 1995, p. 200. Thanks to the Canon’s connection mentioned by Claire, Shelley’s books were not burned, although he had to wait almost three months before he could have them back.

2. The crossing of Mont Cenis did signal in the Shelleys' accounts a momentous change. In her correspondence Mary recalls a "land of blue skies & pleasant fields", where "every thing appeared changed"¹⁰. In his first letter to Peacock from Milan, Percy also vividly paints a renewed natural and human landscape, significantly focusing on female figures:

Our journey was somewhat painful from the cold & in no other manner interesting until we passed the Alps: of course I except the Alps themselves, but 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 [...] With what delight did I hear the woman who conducted us to see the triumphal arch of Augustus at Susa speaking the clear & complete language of Italy, tho' half unintelligible to me, after that nasal & abbreviated cacophany [*sic*] of the French! A ruined arch of magnificent proportions in the Greek taste standing in a kind of road of green lawn overgrown with violets & primroses & in the midst of stupendous mountains, & a *blond* woman of light & graceful manners, something in the style of Fuseli's Eve were the first things we met in Italy¹¹.

From a source of wonder and delight, Italian women were soon to turn into the "very inferior race of beings" that Shelley sketched in his next letters to Peacock and to Hogg, where he labelled them as "a mixture of the coquette and the prude", finding fault even with their voices, which had "none of that winning persuasiveness of those of France"¹². The contradiction is blatant but not wholly unexpected. Despite the thrilled musings that accompanied his crossing of Mont Cenis, ill feelings had actually been brewing in Shelley ever since his first contact with the Kingdom of Sardinia, during his 1816 Continental tour. In his letter to Peacock dated July 12, 1816, where he describes the boat trip he took with Byron around Lake Lemano, Shelley thus comments on their stop at Evian:

The appearance of the inhabitants of Evian is more wretched, diseased and poor, than I ever recollect to have seen. The contrast indeed between the subjects of the King of Sardinia and the citizens of the independent republics of Switzerland, affords a powerful illustration of the blighting mischiefs of despotism, within the space of a few miles¹³.

Little more than a month later John Cam Hobhouse would add a significant detail to the recollection of the same crossing into the Kingdom of Sardinia, which he too made in the company of Byron. In his diary entry of August 29, 1816, he writes, "[w]e entered the Sardinian and Catholic country an hour from Diodati"¹⁴. In the later entry of October 13 he

¹⁰ M. Shelley, *Selected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, B.T. Bennett ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/London 1995, p. 31.

¹¹ P.B. Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, F.L. Jones ed., 2 vols, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2014, Vol. 2, pp. 3-4.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 14.

¹³ P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 480.

¹⁴ *Hobhouse's Diary*, P. Cochran ed., p. 159. <https://petercochran.wordpress.com/hobhouses-diary/> (last accessed October 9, 2018).

would expand on the Catholic qualification by defining the Piedmontese as “the most stupid of God’s creatures, and attached to every old prejudice” to the point that “so far from being proud, [they] are ashamed of Alfieri, because he did not go to mass every day”¹⁵. One may detect here the echo of Edward Gibbon’s critical description of Turin in a letter to his father dated 1764, where he wrote that in the capital “[e]very thing follows the example of the Court, which from one of the most polite in Europe is become bigotted, gloomy and covetous”¹⁶. Against this background, the lines Claire reports Shelley to have been singing all the way up Mont Cenis sound a decidedly fierce note of defiance to the territory he had just entered:

Now Heaven neglected is by Men
And Gods are hung upon every tree
But not the more for loss of them
Shall this fair world unhappy be¹⁷.

Perceived by Shelley as a powerful ally to despotism, Catholic bigotry is an essential part of the portrait both he and Hobhouse left of the transit zone identified with the Kingdom of Sardinia, controlled by censors-priests such as the one that scrutinized Shelley’s books at Chambéry and ruled by what, in Hobhouse’s recollection, was an ineffectual dynasty prone to religious superstition:

at the time when the French were about to seize the country, Queen Clothilda used to receive accounts of the dreams of a sister in a convent, then have them painted on a paper which she and a holy cobbler, [...] and a Father Charles, used to examine together, and then send to the king [Charles Emmanuel IV] with comments which he out before his council, and whatever was said always followed. [...] The present King [Victor Emmanuel I] will not let the hereditary Prince Carignani, who is eighteen, go near a woman, and he has ordered his doctor, who told it to Breme, to look at his shirts to see if there are signs of masturbation upon them. Yet by the side of this horrible deterrent always were men of Genius – an Alfieri, a Lagrange, a Denina, a Bodoni, a Caluso – of whom however the last is the only one who would live in his country¹⁸.

The authority behind this grand-guignolesque account of the Savoy royal family and their notorious religious pity was the Italian patriot and man of letters Ludovico di Breme, who was the son of the Sardinian Minister of the Interior and also the founder of the Milanese Romantic journal *Il Conciliatore*. Hobhouse and Byron met him, furnished with a letter of introduction by Mme de Staël, during the fortnight they spent in Milan from October

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹⁶ E. Gibbon, *Private Letters of Edward Gibbon (1753-1794)*. With an Introduction by the Earl of Sheffield, R.E. Prothero ed., 2 vols, Murray, London 1896, Vol. 1, p. 56.

¹⁷ C. Clairmont, *Journals*, p. 88.

¹⁸ *Hobhouse’s Diary*, pp. 298-299. Cochran identifies the late king as Victor Amadeus of Piedmont, but he was in fact Charles Emmanuel IV, husband to Marie Clotilde of France. They were both notorious for their religious pity.

12 to November 3, 1816. Responsible for the low reputation of the Piedmontese was also Giuseppe Baretti's *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy*, which the expatriate Baretti published in 1768 as a response to Samuel Sharp's *Letters from Italy* (1766), which he thought misrepresented the Italians. Less gossipy than di Breme but equally critical, the Piedmontese Baretti defined his fellow countrymen as "the most Alpine nation of Italy", whose distinguishing traits, when compared to all other Italians, were "their want of cheerfulness" and the very remarkable fact that "Piedmont never produced a single poet, as far as the records of the country can go". This deficiency, Baretti conceded, was somewhat compensated by their having "greatly the advantage when considered as soldiers". Some of them did succeed "tolerably well in civil law, physic, and the mathematics", but Baretti pointed out that "very few of [their nobility] know the Italian language, fewer still the Latin, and I never heard", he wrote, "of any who could read the Greek alphabet". As for their women, they "are likewise very ignorant. [...] A few of them plunge into gross vice; but the greatest part into stupid bigotry, even when still young and handsome"¹⁹. Lady Morgan is apparently more benevolent when summing up her experience of the Kingdom of Sardinia, but her irony makes her judgement even more scathing when she observes that, "[o]f all the little despotisms of Italy, Piedmont seems to have been the most complete, perfect, and compact; in a word, a 'despotisme de poche'"²⁰.

Recent historiography has qualified and redressed this representation of the *Stati sabaudi*, especially through a renewed interest in their relationships with the rest of Europe and notably Britain. Gregory Hanlon has written of a "Piedmontese exception", pointing out that as an aristocratic, centralized, and militarized state, "Piedmont was the only Italian state to evolve along a north European pattern in the early modern period"²¹. The essays collected in the exceptionally well-documented volume *Turin and the British in the Age of the Grand Tour* highlight the pervasive although mostly neglected presence of Turin in the itineraries of eighteenth-century Grand Tourists, discussing the role and reputation of cosmopolitan institutions such as the Turin Royal Academy. In their introduction, Paola Bianchi and Karin Wolfe specifically argue that, contrary to the rest of Italy, which was experienced in terms of the reminiscences of the past it activated, eighteenth-century Piedmont, and notably its capital Turin, provided travellers with what was felt as an example of *modern Italy*²².

The Napoleonic rule put an end to all this eighteenth-century animation, as Reverend Eustace had already pointed out, lamenting that Turin, once "the capital of a large and populous territory [...] furnished with all the establishments, literary and civil, that usually grace the seat of royalty [...] and frequented by crowds of strangers from the most

¹⁹ J. Baretti, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy*, 2 vols, Davies, London 1769, Vol. 2, pp. 115-122.

²⁰ Lady Morgan, *Italy*, 2 vols, Colburn, London 1821, Vol. 1, p. 88.

²¹ G. Hanlon, *The Twilight of a Military Tradition: Italian Aristocrats and European Conflicts 1560-1800*, UCL Press, London 1998, p. 275. See also P. Bianchi, *Immagine e realtà dell'"eccezione militare del Piemonte"*, in *Il Piemonte come eccezione? Riflessioni sulla "Piedmontese exception"*, *Atti del seminario internazionale (Reggia di Venaria, 30 novembre-1 dicembre 2007)*, P. Bianchi ed., Centro Studi Piemontesi, Torino 2008, pp. 57-78.

²² P. Bianchi – K. Wolfe, *Introduction*, p. 12.

distant countries”, had been “degraded into the chief town of a French department [...] stripped of its university, of its academy and of all its noble and its well endowed establishments”. As such, he concluded, Turin “mourns in vain its slavery, its impoverishment, and its solitude”²³.

The Shelleys did not pay much attention to the capital. The only thing they seem to remember about Turin is the Opera they went to on the night of April 1, when they had their first taste of the peculiarities of Italian operatic entertainment, with the audience talking through all the performance. But the slavery, impoverishment and solitude lamented by Eustace – and also highlighted by Hobhouse in the more sombre passages of his diary, where he writes that “everyone [is] discontent in Piedmont [...] the lower orders are starving amidst abundance”²⁴ – are all in Shelley’s description of their approach to Mont Cenis:

After dinner we ascended Les Eschelles, winding along a road, cut through perpendicular rocks, of immense elevation, by Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, in 1582. The rocks, which cannot be less than a thousand feet in perpendicular height, sometimes overhang the road on each side, and almost shut out the sky. The scene is like that described in the Prometheus of Æschylus. Vast rifts and caverns in the granite precipices, wintry mountains with ice and snow above; the loud sounds of unseen waters within the caverns, and walls of toppling rocks, only to be scaled as he describes, by the winged chariot of the Ocean Nymphs.

Under the dominion of this tyranny, the inhabitants of the fertile valleys, bounded by these mountains, are in a state of most frightful poverty and disease. At the foot of this ascent, were cut into the rocks at several places, stories of the misery of the inhabitants, to move the compassion of the traveller. One old man, lame and blind, crawled out of a hole in the rock, wet with the perpetual melting of the snows of above, and dripping like a shower bath²⁵.

The literary reminiscences prompted by the natural landscape might have helped shape Shelley’s ensuing political judgment. Read through the lenses of the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, Piedmont could only be a tyranny. Such view might owe part of its force also to the subterranean action of another, influential textual account of the place: Milton’s sonnet “On the Late Massacre in Piedmont”, which commemorated the 1655 massacre of the Waldensians by the Savoy army. Seen as an “Italian Geneva”²⁶, the Protestant enclave of Valle Angrogna represented a violated internal religious and cultural frontier that Shelley might have recalled and imaginatively superimposed to his experience of the Western borders of the Kingdom of Sardinia, contributing to his censorious attitude.

3. Equally influential might have been the historical tableau provided by Simonde de Sismondi’s *Histoire des Républiques Italienne du Moyen Âge*, published between 1807 and 1818. Sismondi’s account of the medieval republics of Italy, from the rise of the free com-

²³ J.C. Eustace, *A Classical Tour through Italy, 1802*, 4 vols, Mawman, London 1815, Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

²⁴ *Hobhouse’s Diary*, p. 235.

²⁵ M. Shelley, *Journals*, pp. 200-201.

²⁶ E. De Amicis, *La Ginevra italiana*, in *Alle porte d’Italia*, Treves, Milano 1888, pp. 153-197.

munes in the eleventh century to the defeat of the Florentine republic in 1530, posited a link between Italian republicanism and the flourishing of civic virtues, economic prosperity and the arts, which – he argued – could not have been possible under a unified national monarchy like that of England or France. Focused on dazzling examples of republicanism, Sismondi naturally neglected the most (and only) conspicuous example of European monarchy in Italy, the Kingdom of Sardinia, offering a portrait of the early Savoyards as “barbares” and “montagnards demi-sauvage”²⁷ that certainly reverberated on the contemporary reception of the Savoy rule.

Although the Shelleys’ reading of Sismondi is documented, in Mary’s journal, only in 1820, they are likely to have met the work of the Swiss historian before, as it enjoyed a vast success and permeated the debate about Italian government and Italian freedom both in Italy and abroad. In the context of the Austrian restoration, the *Conciliatore* group in Milan particularly valued “Sismondi’s claims for the Italians as pioneers of political liberty”²⁸; equally praised was Sismondi in the Coppet circle of Mme de Staël and in the Whig salon of Holland House, whose members looked with favour at the budding Italian liberalism. On 27 April 1815 the Scottish jurist and Whig politician Sir James Mackintosh, friend to Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant, implicitly referred to Sismondi while making a speech in the House of Commons against the annexation of the Republic of Genoa to the Kingdom of Sardinia:

We had in our hands the destiny of the last of that great body of republics which united the ancient and the modern world – the children and heirs of Roman civilisation, who spread commerce, and with it refinement, liberty and humanity over Western Europe, and whose history has lately been rescued from oblivion, and disclosed to our times, by the greatest of living historians²⁹.

A more textual index to the Shelleys’ early knowledge of Sismondi has been provided by Francesco Rognoni’s suggestion that Shelley’s character of Maddalo in his *Julian and Maddalo* (composed between September 1818 and August 1819) might owe his name to a Count Maddaloni that Shelley probably encountered in Sismondi’s *Histoire*³⁰.

Whether or not he actually read it by March 1818, the discourse of history articulated in Sismondi’s *Histoire* and the debate surrounding it were part of the cultural context in which Shelley’s republicanism developed, which in turn informed his approach to the Kingdom of Sardinia. From his very first encounter with the *Stati sabaudi*, Shelley retraces in them the link that Sismondi posits between monarchical despotism and degeneration. First stated in the journal entries describing the crossing of Mont Cenis, this link would

²⁷ J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Âge*, 16 vols, Treuttel et Würzt, Paris 1815-18, Vol. 9, p. 338.

²⁸ A. Lyttelton, *Sismondi, the Republic and Liberty: Between Italy and England, the City and the Nation*, “Journal of Modern Italian Studies”, 17, 2012, 2, pp. 168-182 (p. 173).

²⁹ Sir J. Mackintosh, *Speech on the Annexation of Genoa to the Kingdom of Sardinia. Delivered in the House of Commons on the 27th of April 1815*, in *Miscellaneous Works*, Appleton, New York 1871, pp. 523-524.

³⁰ P.B. Shelley, *Opere*, F. Rognoni ed., Einaudi/Gallimard, Torino 1995 (Biblioteca della Pléiade), p. 1468.

vehemently resurface in his Italian works, from the *Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks*, to *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*. The *Stati sabaudi* as such, on the contrary, were soon out of his mind and did not leave any lasting trace in his writings. Not even the failed uprising in 1821 elicited more than a passing remark in a letter to Peacock dated March 21 from Pisa, where Shelley mentioned “the Neapolitans & Piedmontesse [*sic*]” as examples of Italian “revolutionary volcanoes, which as yet give more light than heat”³¹.

Cursory as they are, Shelley’s references to the Kingdom of Sardinia might nevertheless have set the tone for his lasting perception of a ‘double’ Italy. In December 1818 he would more fully vent it in a much-quoted passage of a letter he wrote to Hunt from Naples, where the same dichotomy he had earlier experienced in the *Stati sabaudi* was once again generalized to accommodate his composite portrait of the (yet to be born) Italian nation:

There are two Italies; one composed of the green earth & transparent sea and the mighty ruins of antient times, and aerial mountains, & the warm & radiant atmosphere which is interfused through all things. The other consists of the Italians of the present day, their works & ways. The one is the most sublime & lovely contemplation that can be conceived by the imagination of man; the other the most degraded disgusting & odious. – What do you think? young women of rank actually eat – you will never guess what – *garlick*³².

³¹ P.B. Shelley, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 276.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

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