

ABSTRACTS

CRISTIANO AMENDOLA, «*Soprascripti de le lettere missive cominciando a maggiori principi spirituali e temporalì*». *Riflessioni sul paratesto nell'epistolografia del '400*

Despite the surge in epistolary studies in recent years, little attention has been dedicated to 15th century treatises. However, thanks to the publication of some important catalogues, i.e. *Medieval and Renaissance Letter Treatises and Form Letters* (Polak, 1993-2015) and the ISTC database, there is good reason to believe that this trend will soon change. As for texts written in the vernacular, the catalogues have made it possible to identify what may well be the first printed manual, the anonymous *Trattato de li ditamini* (ISTC it00427400), and with regard to manuscripts, the catalogues have traced one of the first *ars epistolandi* treatises from the Quattrocento (cod. 2333, Biblioteca Statale di Lucca) and identified a new early witness of Bartolomeo Miniatore's well-known *Formulario di epistole missive e responsive* (cod. Harley 4168, British Library). Enlisting the Polak catalogue, this article examines a collection of headings written in the vernacular in and around Bologna in the last quarter of the 15th century. This type of treatise has been particularly neglected by critics, though such works can shed precious light on a key phase in the history of Renaissance epistle writing, i.e. that of the developments in the 14th and 15th century *salutatio*, one of the most theorised upon sections in mediaeval *artes*. From this short treatise (*trattatello*), in fact, there emerged a new form of epistle writing which differed from that traditionally used in manuals from the 13th and 14th centuries, one which in various ways resembles forms still in use today. This article offers a detailed description of the *Soprascripti*, providing an extensive extract in the appendix.

ARNALDO DI BENEDETTO, «*Vagabondaggi*» *culturali per l'Italia di Mary Shelley*

Mary Shelley's interest in Italy is seen in her historical novel *Valperga: or The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca* (1823). The writer had been to Italy several times and had written impressive articles on the country and its culture; and for a while the translation of Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* was amongst her work projects. The two volumes of *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* belong to 1844. These are written in epistolary form, as was often the case with travel books. The greater part is dedicated to Italy. There are examples of the beauty of the landscape, artistic works, fashions and customs. There are attempts to correct the largely negative judgements passed on Italians by travellers since the eighteenth century.

Italy is experiencing years of deep political and cultural renewal. Mary Shelley writes favourably of the Resurgence/Risorgimento, although condemning the 'Carbonari' and 'The Young Italy' as secret societies. She dedicates much space to Italian literature: quoting Dante several times, and mentioning Petrarch, Ariosto, Berni, Tasso, Alfieri and Monti. Her judgement of the Renaissance is not however completely positive: its classicism, she believed, led to a lack of originality. At the end of the eighteenth century there began a deep renewal that led to Romanticism. Shelley writes that in Italy one reads less than in England or France, but that there are many contemporary writers: Foscolo, Berchet, Grossi, Pellico, D'Azeglio, and above all Manzoni and Giovan Battista Niccolini. The historians Botta, Colletta and Amari are also admired.

FILIPPOMARIA PONTANI, *In un caffè remoto: l'Alessandria greca e non greca di Ungaretti*

Giuseppe Ungaretti's autobiographical texts repeatedly insist on his contacts with the group of young writers who gave rise to the important periodical *Grammata* (1911-1921) in Alexandria, Egypt, under the auspices of Constantine Cavafy. However, a closer analysis shows that Ungaretti's ties with the Greek community in Alexandria were probably not that strong after all. In fact, his own later memories reveal themselves to be inaccurate and contradictory, and references in his work to the glorious Hellenistic and imperial past (so dear to Cavafy) of Alexandria are exceedingly rare, for Ungaretti saw the city predominantly in an "Arab" light. Moreover, not only was any direct linguistic contact with the Greeks (and thus with Cavafy's poetry) impaired by the linguistic divide, despite the mediation of French, but the contacts with *Grammata* (whose first issue was published a few months before Ungaretti's departure from Egypt) were also clearly short-lived, and his ties with the so-called "Apuani" (led by the Cretan George Vrissimitsakis) weakened after 1914. Finally, it is striking that in 1917 *Grammata* published a very harsh review of the *Allegria*, written by the Sardinian writer and journalist Romolo Garbati, a member of those Italo-Egyptian anarchist circles that had attracted Ungaretti in his early youth, though not in his later years.

STEFANO CARRAI, «Caro e gentile Solmi», «Carissimo Saba». *Lettere fra Umberto Saba e Sergio Solmi*

This article contains what survives of the correspondence between Umberto Saba and Sergio Solmi, covering a 30-year period that extends from the time they met to the poet's death in 1957. The letters are primarily from Saba, who most likely did not carefully conserve those he had received from Solmi. The correspondence is important in that it bears witness not only to the decisive role that Solmi played in Saba criticism but also to Saba's exquisite style as a letter writer.

CLARA ALLASIA, *L'eredità inquieta del "Libro ritrovato" di Rodolfo Renier*

Between 1913 and 1915, at the Laterza publishing house Benedetto Croce blocked the publication of two works, the first an essay by Umberto

Cosmo on De Sanctis and the second a recently published (2018) collection of essays by Rodolfo Renier. Both books demonstrate how the members of Turin's historically-oriented critical tradition were intent on questioning not only political activism and their position with respect to the aesthetics movement, but also on how public stances were distorted and manipulated during that period. Amidst disavowals and monopolising efforts, from these pages there emerge questions that would go on to have a fundamental impact in subsequent years.