



JEMS first ten years

Citation: D. Pallotti, P. Pugliatti (2021), JEMS first ten years. *Jems* 10: pp. 7-12. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-12679>

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

In the beginning was Authorship, the source, ownership and control of the *lógos* and its meanings. For we considered that, after being dismantled and transfigured, then in part neglected and finally abandoned, the notions of Authorship and the Author, by the time we planned the first issue of *JEMS*, were again gaining ground. Accompanied by the idea of ‘intention’, Authorship had been, in the first half of the twentieth century, the exclusive territory of textual scholars; then it started to be contested by mid-twentieth-century literary critics, deeply transmuted by French theorists and philosophers, and finally, since the 1980s, it was repossessed by a new generation of textual scholars in the shape of ‘a socialized concept of authorship and textual authority’. And it was an illustrious textual scholar we asked to write the theoretical Introduction to Volume One of *JEMS*, which tackled the issue of Authorship. We probably did not expect to receive from Hans Gabler a text in which the validity of the very ideas of ‘Authorship – authority – authorisation – the author – the author’s will – the author’s intentions’ for scholarly editing were deeply called into question; but this was what we received from him, and what we gratefully welcomed and published. Hans Gabler’s essay was tellingly entitled ‘Beyond Author-Centricity in Scholarly Editing’, it inaugurated volume One of the *Journal of Early Modern Studies* and soon gained the status of a reference text, amply quoted and discussed by other scholars. It also contributed to the prestige of our journal.

But we thought that a historical (*versus* theoretical) contribution on recent developments of the issue of Authorship was also needed. Dario Compagno had obtained a PhD in Semiotics at the University of Siena with a dissertation on the concepts of ‘author’ and ‘intention’ in twentieth-century philosophical and critical thought. We had never met him, but he seemed to be the right person; when invited, he accepted, and willingly and sedulously wrote a further introductory essay for us.

From the start, we thought of the journal as an interdisciplinary venture on early modern European culture that would ideally constitute an arena of discussion for a wide spectrum of themes in various fields of the humanities: literature, language, the visual arts, history, politics, sociology, religion, and cultural studies. The first issue reflects this intention: religious discourse, drama and the stage, the law, and the visual arts were the topics which provided various perspectives from which

questions raised by the issue of Authorship were posed and answers were given. From the start, we have been trying to suggest explorations of various themes, encouraging and welcoming a number of perspectives from which to view them. From the start, we welcomed essays by both established scholars and young researchers, the only criterion for inclusion being quality. From the start, we abstained from following in the wake of fashion, and opted either for well-established topics with a well-established (old or recent) tradition, or for topics that, on the contrary, were little practised or had recently emerged, or re-emerged in fresh guises. We decided to ask the members of the first Advisory Board to contribute to the volume: we wanted to introduce ourselves to our potential readership and show, in a tangible way, how different fields of interest and critical perspectives could fruitfully interconnect and grow. *JEMS* was then at its formative stage and therefore a great amount of attention and effort was centred on the journal's identity and the direction it would take. Ten years afterwards, the volumes show, if taken together, the presence of recurring research strands which testify to this identity and cultural direction.

Interest in Text and Author, Textuality and Authorship obviously prevails in Volume One (2012), not only in the introductory essays mentioned above, but also in contributions on religious discourse, on the uncertain authorship and function of certain accessory theatrical texts, on the vocational practices of actors and lawyers, on the birth of the figure of the Artist-Author, and so on. Issues of Text and Author are also present throughout Volume Five (2016), which was devoted to Shakespeare in the four-hundredth anniversary of his death. In the introductory essay, Roger Chartier discusses the many lives and uses of Shakespeare's texts (collaborative writing, the compilation of commonplace books where parts of his works appeared, prompt books, corrupted copies, the remaining autographs – from the holograph signatures to the text produced by Hand D in *Sir Thomas More*), as well as the 'multiple collaboration' and social authorship of even the published texts. In the same volume, the section on 'Biography and Biographism' explores 'everything and nothing' of what we know, and what we do not know, about the life of William Shakespeare and what has been invented about it: the evidence and the lack of evidence, and the authoring of fabricated lives. In the section entitled 'Authorship, Co-Authorship and Collaboration' and in the one on 'Attribution Studies', are examined some of the most controversial questions regarding the presence of Shakespeare's hand (that of *Hamlet* Q1, that of *Arden of Faversham*, that of *2 Henry VI*, that of Hand D in *Sir Thomas More*, and that of the lost *Cardenio*). The last section of the volume views certain forms of appropriation as forms of imposed, or feigned authorship (from the way in which Shakespeare was collaboratively constructed in *The Passionate Pilgrime*, to the annotations by certain seventeenth-century readers of Benson's 1640 *Poems*, seen as a form of re-contextualisation and re-writing).

The idea of authorship becomes even more problematic when we address the source and authors of the various kinds of inscriptions left mainly on the walls of historic buildings, or of prisons, or on such natural surfaces as rocks. Though authorless, or simply signed by the initials of lost authors, these inscriptions can be seen – and are seen, by a recent trend of research – as memory-keeping writings which, if not examined, will remain, as stated in the Editorial of Volume Nine (2020), 'almost forgotten scribblings that for centuries have been waiting to be photographed, copied, catalogued, filed and studied'. From the words, sentences and drawings carved, or drawn, or painted on the walls of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, to certain Medieval graffiti in buildings in the Tyrol, to inscriptions on the walls and windows in Ludwigsburg Residential Palace, to those left by nameless shepherds on the rocks of the Fiemme Valley, they constitute a huge historical authorless archive of 'exposed writings' imposed 'by someone's will', as Italo Calvino said, 'on the gaze of all the others who have no choice but to see them or

receive them'; for they inevitably force the gazer to reconstruct their authors' times, meanings, social condition, and – again – intentions.

Another field of interest, intersecting with the previous one, is the recurring theme of the culture of the people. In Volume Two (2013), 'popular culture' is examined through its impact on the works of William Shakespeare, but in a perspective (that of the influence of popular culture on his works) that runs counter to recent reflections on the so called 'afterlife' (such as performance, film, or advertising), privileging instead Robert Weimann's historical reconsideration of Shakespeare's work as influenced by the tradition(s) of medieval theatre, and Peter Burke's study of the European forms of popular culture from the viewpoint of a social historian. The field, defined as 'elusive, distant and impermanent', comprises the examination of the often authorless 'demotic voices' appearing in the works of Shakespeare, which are explored from a number of standpoints (historical, religious, legal, sociological) in the context that produced them.

The culture 'from below' returns in Volume Four (2015), which addresses the topic of service and servants. Issues are again examined cutting across several disciplinary lines and multiple geographical areas, as well as across texts belonging to several genres and socio-political contexts. The volume is introduced by two essays: the first surveys the state of the art with a particular focus on the representation of servants in Shakespeare's plays, while the second discusses the field of study in more comprehensive historical and cultural terms. The case studies explore various functions of household retainers: their position as scribes or even as independent poets, the legal aspect of their service relationship in disputes over wages or mistreatment, the rhetorical aspect in modes of speech expected from individuals engaged in particular forms of service, the theatrical rendition in the many stage representations of service and servants, the economic, political, and social aspects as expressed in conduct books, as well as issues arising from class and gender identities of servants and masters.

But 'popular' and 'culture' are highly charged words, and by 'popular culture' we do not, or not always, mean the culture made by the people; in other words, we do not always refer to cultural expressions originating from below. This indecision is fruitfully exploited in Volume Seven (2018), which devotes attention to practices of reading and reciting aloud, practices which are defined in the Editorial as 'an insidious territory'. The essays in the volume exploit the proximity of such phenomena as reading aloud (occasionally to illiterate people), or preaching in a piazza, or taking part in a poetic contest, and the more formalized theatrical experience; that is, they do not ignore the fact that the border dividing what is popular from what is elite is signally porous. (Indeed, for Roger Chartier, the alternative 'created by the people/created for the people' is a false problem.) The substantial introductory essay discusses storytelling, memory and the theatre, while the case studies tackle issues which are exemplary of the transition between 'high' and 'low' forms: from chivalric poems, to Italian *cantari*, public preaching, contests of poetry improvisation by women, up to the highly cultured and sophisticated polemic of the Crusca Academy about pronunciation, or the deeply discerning British eighteenth-century treatises on elocution.

The alternative between 'popular' and 'elite' cultural experiences is also present in Volume Eight (2019), which is devoted to certain practices that underpin and surround the writing and performance of plays; that is, as is stated in the Editorial, 'the relationship between performance cultures and practices of writing within and beyond the actual texts of the plays'. Here, too, the porous divide between 'popular' and 'elite' cultural practices and texts is a conspicuous presence: on the one hand, the French vernacular roots of specific theatre practices, the *sacre rappresentazioni*, the use of dramatic woodcut illustrations in printed performative genres, the

afterlife of certain popular, civic, and religious expressions of early modern drama, the vision of the city in Roman demotic theatre, in comic scripts and *zibaldoni*, are explored; on the other, side by side with these peripheral and lesser known domains, the play of refractions which concerns the theatre in the works of essayists, critics, spectators and actors is examined. Furthermore, the issue of Authorship reappears in one of its most sophisticated forms: that of attribution regarding the alleged, and much contested co-authorship between two illustrious playwrights: Thomas Kyd and William Shakespeare.

Letter writing is a form of auto/biography, and also a form of dialogue which develops over time. As is stated in the introductory essay of Volume Three (2014) to this field of study, and to 'its development in different periods and from different angles', 'increasing scholarly attention has recently been paid'. Furthermore, in the early modern period, the culture of epistolarity 'represents a turning point in the social function of letter writing', in that it 'shifted from the public to the more personal sphere'. The introductory essay of Volume Three assessed the state of this comparatively recent critical art; and the case studies present a wide spectrum of particular authors and instances in a multiple perspective: from the historical to the pragmatolinguistic and rhetorical, to the sociological, in a number of different contexts and countries of Europe (especially England, France, and Italy). Here, too, the alternative between popular and elite is present, for studies range from Queen Elizabeth's Italian letters, to the scientific interaction in Henry Oldenburg's letter network, to Michelangelo as letter writer, to the construction of women's epistolary identity, to letter-writing within the Samuel Richardson circle, to a group of letters the Lyon weavers sent to Louis XV, when in danger of being reduced to poverty by a handful of traffickers determined to capitalize on their work. Biographism, therefore, is present, in this volume – unlike what happened as far as the posthumous, and in part imaginary many lives of William Shakespeare – as constructed by the pen of the very subjects whose fragments of life are narrated, enriched by the construction of the circle of their relationships and their development over time.

A special kind of biographism is also to be seen in the (re)construction of the texts' many lives: from the many Shakespearean and other theatrical cases, to the issue of the lost identities that lie behind historical graffiti, to those of unnamed domestic servants in private houses and Courts of justice, where their 'life-cycle service' is to be read between the lines or through their masters' voice.

A different kind of life-cycle is illustrated in Volume Ten (2021): that of criminals. The present volume, which marks the journal's tenth year of life, is devoted to early modern crime literature and illustrates the complex relationships existing in early modern cultures between crime and its representations. As the editors say in the introductory essay, 'crime is not only "constructed" and perceived according to the moral and social codes of specific societies, but it also stimulates imaginative transpositions and even disrupting forms of creativity'. This complex dynamic is instantiated in the essays which compose the volume. Case studies go from the early crime fiction of the 'Original Hoods', to the complex religious and philosophical relationship existing between the concepts of sin and crime, to the issues raised by female criminality, to the 'social' crime of piracy, to Seneca's influence on early modern ideas of crime and punishment, to the sensational representation of crime in the theatre, to the demeanour of constables in catching thieves and the thieves' defensive tactics. Echoes of recurring themes, such as popular culture, biographism and performance permeate the volume, establishing unexpected links with many of the previous issues.

Time is naturally ubiquitous in all the journal's issues. Considered both synchronically and diachronically, it is the precondition of all the themes developed both in the introductory essays

and the case studies. Thus, Volume Six (2017) is specifically devoted to the awesome issue of time, its construction, perception, management and representation(s) in various early modern cultural contexts. The volume is introduced by three major essays which illustrate various ways in which time in history can be read (on the act of reading and time perception, on temporality and history in the Renaissance, and on the notions and experiences of time in women's activities and daily lives). These are followed by a number of case studies going from the gift of dated objects marking the New Year which show the weight of material culture on the perception of time, to the idea of time and 'ennui' and the idea of 'killing time', to establishing a significant biographical and intellectual connection between Giordano Bruno and Michel de Montaigne by examining their understanding of time, to the pedagogical idea of history as *magistra vitae* and its character as example.

A particular feature of *JEMS* we wish to mention are the Appendices which enrich and complete volumes One, Two, Three, Four, and Six with fragments from diverse sources, forms, and genres (poems, plays, treatises, letters, novels, and so on) related to the volume's theme. These compilations will reappear in future issues whenever the volumes' topics are deemed fit for the compiling of such garlands.

Alongside the intersecting investigations carried out in the volumes, *JEMS* has welcomed more in-depth and extensive analyses addressing themes relevant to the journal's aim and scope. Two 'Quaderni' (supplements) have so far been published: the first, by John Denton (2016), is devoted to 'the reception of Classical historical texts in Renaissance England' with particular attention to the perception of Plutarch by Shakespeare 'via vernacular translation' (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/7113/7111>>). The second supplement, by Angelo Deidda (2018), investigates the concept of the modern *self*, illustrated through an analysis of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* interconnecting issues of authorship, performance, inwardness and their linguistic and poetic representations (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/7114/7112>>).

Other 'Quaderni' are now in progress and forthcoming. In the first months of the 'plague year', Firenze University Press invited a few of their journals to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge, both scientific and historical, relevant to all aspects of Covid-19, in the belief that academic journals in any field had a commitment in the global challenge against the pandemics. We adhered to the project, which involved the publication of Online First articles, and launched a call for papers entitled 'Plagues in Early Modern Europe: History, Models, Representations and Metaphors'. Of the many proposals received so far, five have been accepted and four articles have already been published. The articles illustrate the experience of plague epidemics in various historical, national and local contexts, and include the publication of a long-forgotten pamphlet by Sir Thomas Brown (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/11931>>); in-depth analyses of the letters exchanged in two different family contexts, that of the actor Edward Alleyn and his wife (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/12082>>) and that of the Buonarroti family (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/12605>>); and a thorough discussion of a treatise by Daniel Defoe (<<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-jems/article/view/12554>>).

JEMS was born ten years ago within the humanities research community of the University of Florence, owing to the care and dedication of Beatrice Töttössy, who was then, and for many years, director of LabOA (Open Access Publishing Workshop); its growth and development have been made possible thanks to financial support from the different Departments of the University of Florence with which the journal has been affiliated. The committed team at Firenze

University Press, in particular the executive director and, especially, the managing editor of FUP Journals, have firmly believed in our project and greatly facilitated the dissemination of the journal.

During these ten years of commitment and endeavour, *JEMS* has greatly benefited from the knowledge and wisdom that friends and colleagues from all over the world have generously offered. To them, to the members of the Advisory Board, the guest editors of each volume, the authors of the single contributions, the invisible but hard-working referees, the Editorial Staff and to our unique and elegant Master of the English language go our deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks. Their dedicated work has fuelled the whole venture and contributed to make *JEMS* an internationally acclaimed journal.

There is one aspect of *JEMS* which distinguishes it from all the other journals: it is entirely produced by students and trainees in the Open Access Publishing Workshop of the Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures and Psychology of the University of Florence, in accordance with Firenze University Press. Under the scrupulous, effective and impeccable guide of Arianna Antonielli, they have become experts in digital as well as traditional publishing. We are grateful to each one of them and particularly proud that *JEMS*, in its 'immaterial materiality', is the fruit of the professional expertise they have acquired. Special thanks are due to our indefatigable journal manager, who has been a knowledgeable and patient adviser to us over the years.

Now, as we usher in *JEMS'* second decade, let us cherish its achievements with friends and colleagues and wish our *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 'in a festival thankfulness', many happy returns.

THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRERS. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

D.P. P.P.

PART ONE

Introduction

