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978-1-107-62925-7 - Byron, Hobhouse and Foscolo: New Documents in the
History of a Collaboration

E. R. Vincent

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BYRON,
HOBHOUSE AND FOSCOLO

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PREFACE

The following pages are concerned with a double collaboration over the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*—of John Cam Hobhouse with Byron, and of the Italian poet Ugo Foscolo with Hobhouse. The hitherto unpublished documents on which this study is based seem to me of sufficient interest and importance to justify the separate relation of a little-known episode of literary history. As far as possible I have let the documents speak for themselves in all their freshness. Something of the character of the actors and the reality of the scene may in this way come to the reader more effectively than in any second-hand narrative. This method has been possible because of a general unity of subject and, to some extent, of an artistic unity in what at first seemed a great confusion.

Foscolo's papers, with the letters written to him by Hobhouse amongst them, are normally preserved in the Labronica Library at Leghorn, but during the war they were removed to the Certosa at Calci for safe keeping. Here they were damaged by flood-water. They are now being restored in the Istituto di Patologia del Libro at Rome, where I was given excellent facilities to study them.

Most of John Cam Hobhouse's MSS. are in the British Museum, where they are known as the Broughton Papers. His diaries for the years that concern us, however, are in the family archives, and most of the letters

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[More information](#)

written to him by Foscolo are preserved in the same place. I have to record my deep sense of gratitude to Lady Hobhouse for permission to study them and for entrusting me for a time with certain of them at Cambridge. The Trustees of the Will of the late Rt Hon. Sir Charles E. H. Hobhouse, Bart., P.C. have kindly allowed me to print the unpublished letters and diary extracts of John Cam Hobhouse. I also wish to express my appreciation of the kindness shown to me by Mrs Mary Hobhouse, whose arrangement of the family papers in which she takes such a deep interest has been of great value to those privileged to see them. I also thank Sir John Murray for hospitably giving me facilities to copy and permission to print from the MS letters written by Hobhouse to Byron now owned by him, as indeed to print extracts from the published letters of Byron himself.

In such work as this one receives help of various kinds from many quarters, but it would seem disproportionate to give a long list of helpers in the preface to a short book. I mean therefore to acknowledge my numerous obligations when the time comes to publish a work, as I hope to do, on *Ugo Foscolo in English Society*.

July, 1949

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE
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E. R. Vincent
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

I THE COLLABORATION	<i>page</i> 1
II ATTACK AND COUNTER-ATTACK	18
III FURTHER COLLABORATION	38
IV THE QUARREL	59
V A PROPOSAL	97
NOTES	124

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E. R. Vincent

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Plate</i>		<i>facing p.</i>
I	UGO FOSCOLO (Filippo Pistrucci pinx 1822)	I
II	JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE	48
	From the engraving by C. Turner, after the painting by James Lonsdale.	
III	LORD BYRON	90
	Engraved by H. Meyer from a drawing by G. H. Harlow. Published 1816.	

Cambridge University Press

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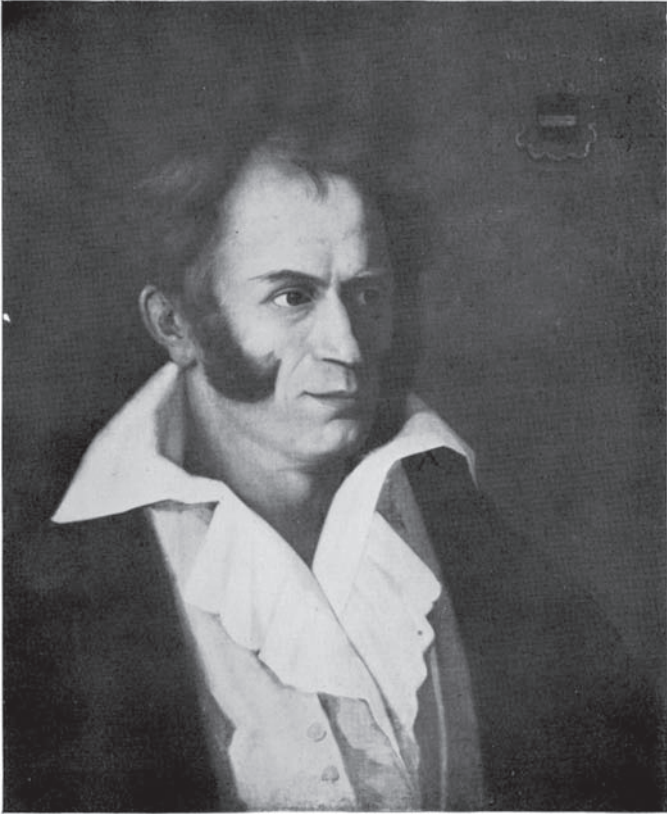
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



UGO FOSCOLO

Filippo Pistrucci pinx 1822

On the back of this portrait is the sonnet *Solcata ho fronte* (holograph) as reproduced in facsimile by Mazzini in *La Commedia di Dante Alighieri illustrata da Ugo Foscolo*, Londra, 1842, Vol. 1, p. xxxi. The portrait was painted for Hudson Gurney and is now in private ownership at Cambridge.