

Browning in Asolo

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The city of Asolo embraces Browning's career from *Sordello* and *Pippa Passes* at the beginning of the Victorian era to the last collection of poems, *Asolando*, published on the day of his death. Asolo is Browning's microcosm, an ideal city, almost pure stage and theatre, where the civic and religious buildings, the castle, the church, the convent and the fortress, are piled close together within the walls, and set on top of a hill overlooking the plain of Treviso below.

In looking at the way Browning used this city—I call it a city although at the time it had only a few thousand inhabitants, and is hardly any larger today—I want to separate the real city, visited briefly once in 1838 and again forty years later, from the ideal city, the setting of *Pippa Passes* and the other poems. How did Browning come to Asolo, what did he find there, and why did he return?

In his introduction to *More than Friend*, his edition of the letters of Browning and Katharine de Kay Bronson, Michael Meredith describes Browning's first and subsequent visits to the city¹. In *Sordello*, we find the earliest mention of Asolo in Browning's works: a boy from the town climbs the hills singing Sordello's song:

Lo, on a heathy brown and nameless hill
 By sparkling Asolo, in mist and chill,
 Morning just up, higher and higher runs
 A child barefoot and rosy. See! the sun's
 On the square castle's inner-court's low wall
 Like the chine of some extinct animal
 Half turned to earth and flowers; and through the haze

(Save where some slender patches of grey maize
 Are to be overleaped) that boy has crossed
 The whole hill-side of dew and powder-frost
 Matting the balm and mountain camomile.
 Up and up goes he, singing all the while
 Some unintelligible words to beat
 The lark, God's poet, swooning at his feet,
 So worsted is he at 'the few fine locks
 'Stained like pale honey oozed from topmost rocks
 'Sun-blanch'd the livelong summer,'—all that's left
 Of the Goito lay!

(*Sordello*, VI, 853–870)²

All this is very near the end of *Sordello*, and it is a breath of fresh and frosty air after so many pages of “unintelligible words”³) if you agree with Jane Carlyle's judgment on the poem. Rather than that, the point to notice is the precision of the observation: the poet's eye noticing heath, maize, balm, mountain camomile, the skeletal fossilized look of the fortress, the atmospheric effects. However precise the individual details, there remains some bewilderment about the exact season: we have powder-frost, on the one hand, but larks singing on the other.

When he returns to write about Asolo in *Pippa Passes*⁴), the season is mid-winter, New Year's Day, Pippa's only holiday from her work at the silk-mill where she is a silk-winder. Browning wrote an account of his first visit to his friend Mrs. Katharine Bronson, in June 1889, the summer before he died. In the letter he gave an account of the gestation of *Pippa Passes*.

“...I will answer your questions in detail. When I first found out Asolo I lodged at the main Hotel in the square, an old large Inn of the most primitive kind. The cieling [*sic*] of my bedroom was traversed by a huge crack or rather cleft: “caused by the earthquake, last year: the sky was as blue as could be, and we were all praying in the fields, expecting the town to tumble in.” On the morning after my arrival, I walked up to the Rocca; and, on returning to breakfast, I mentioned it to the landlady—whereon a respectable middle-aged man, sitting by, said—“You have done what I, born here, never thought of doing.” I

took long walks every day,—and carried away a lively recollection of the general beauty,—but I did not write a word of “Pippa Passes”—the idea struck me when walking in an English wood,—and I made use of the Italian memories. I used to dream of seeing Asolo in the distance and making vain attempts to reach it—repeatedly dreamed this for many a year: and when I found myself once more in Italy, with S., I went there, straight from Verona. We found the old Inn lying in ruins—a new one being [built] to take its place: I suppose that which you see now. We went to a much inferior Albergo—the best then existing—and were roughly but pleasantly entertained for a week, as I say. People told me the number of inhabitants had greatly increased, and things seemed generally more ordinary-life-like. I am happy that you like it so much: when I got my impression, Italy was new to me.”⁵⁾

That is Browning’s view from the end of his life: he elaborated on the dream about Asolo to Mrs. Bronson:

“It is simply this. I am travelling with a friend, sometimes with one person, sometimes with another, oftenest with one I do not recognise. Suddenly I see the town I love sparkling in the sun on the hillside. I cry to my companion, ‘Look! look! there is Asolo! Oh, do let us go there!’ The friend invariably answers, ‘Impossible, we cannot stop.’ ‘Pray, pray let us go there’ I entreat. ‘No,’ persists the friend, ‘we cannot; we must go on and leave Asolo for another day,’ and so I am hurried away, and wake to know that I have been dreaming it all, both pleasure and disappointment.”⁶⁾

What did Browning find in Asolo when he went there the first time? In exploring this question I shall take a recent history of Venice under Austrian rule, Alvisè Zorzi’s *Venezia Austriaca*, 1985, and measure his account against Browning’s in this order: the Emperor, the administration and the police state, social classes, religion and the clergy, and writers, artists and scholars.⁷⁾

Venice and Lombardy were joined under Austrian rule: Ferdinand I had succeeded to Franz I and was crowned with the iron crown in Milan on 10 September 1838. His father had been viewed by the Venetians with mixed feelings: they had been passed over to the Austrians after the brief period of

Napoleonic rule: one of Franz's more popular acts was to restore the bronze horses to the façade of Saint Mark's basilica. Ferdinand was less impressive than his father; a weak, sickly, epileptic and somewhat dim individual, whose celebrated remark on hearing the news of his father's death was 'I am the emperor, and I want some *Knödel*'⁸⁾: this ineffectual emperor was deposed in the revolution of 1848, and succeeded by Franz Josef, whom the Italians named Cecco Beppe and against whose rule the main thrust of the Risorgimento was directed. However, to look upon the Austrian rulers of Lombardy-Veneto at the time of Browning's first visit with vision distorted by hindsight is to misunderstand the circumstances and Browning's interpretation of them.

The vision of the Emperor, whom Browning sets in opposition to the King of long ago in Pippa's song⁹⁾, is a romantic one: he is shown as a fairy-tale trollicking, not as the head of an imperial bureaucracy operating through a complex decentralized administration. Luca Gaddi is imagined dreaming of being Metternich (while in fact he has been murdered by his wife and her German lover, Sebald) but much in the way one might dream of being Napoleon¹⁰⁾. The emperor is 'the king dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz'¹¹⁾—so it is the late emperor, already, who is the subject of the assassination plot, safely enough if he was already dead by the time of writing. Immediately he is mentioned, Luigi's mother defends his reign: "Half of these ills of Italy are feigned: your Pellicos and writers for effect,/Write for effect."¹²⁾ The mother goes on: 'you hear each petty injury, None of his virtues; he is old beside, Quiet and kind, and densely stupid.'¹³⁾ Not a very fervent defence of imperial rule. The plot to assassinate the emperor is equally romantic and unrealistic: Luigi will walk straight through the palace defences, go up to the emperor and kill him unimpeded, and Italy will immediately be free. The provinces of Italy were obtained, Luigi truly says, 'Never by conquest but by cunning'¹⁴⁾—and they will be as easily liberated. Luigi's mother tries to persuade him to wait until morning before setting off—the police already have him marked for arrest—but Pippa passes, singing 'A king lived long ago'¹⁵⁾—another fairy-tale king, wise and just, and the contrast with the present emperor prompts Luigi to leave

immediately on his quest.

Browning's attitude towards the emperor is hard to extrapolate from the poem. On the one hand he is a republican, and the end of the scene is that Luigi is sent off to risk the gallows (a new gallows, very badly designed, had recently been installed in Venice by the Austrians: it took half an hour to kill the victim by a ratchet mechanism, but left him neater to look at than the old-fashioned gallows)¹⁶⁾ on his death-or-glory mission. But Browning's recorded feelings about the state of Italy at this time (well before he began to share Elizabeth Barrett's strong views on the liberation and unification of Italy) seem to have belonged rather more to the mother in the poem; and even Zorzi, a Venetian of an old family from the Golden Book, admits that the conditions of Venetia-Lombardy under the Habsburgs were not so terrible, at least before the revolution of 1848.¹⁷⁾

It was the police-state nature of government that Browning commented on in a story told to Mrs. Bronson:

"One day Mr. Browning related an incident of a visit to Asolo when Austria was in possession of Venetian territory. He was asked by the chief dignitary of the town, "What have you come here for?" "To see the place," "Do you intend to stay?" "Yes; I hope to remain for a few days." "But you have seen the place already; how can you possibly wish to stay longer?" "Because I find it very beautiful." The Austrian looked at him in puzzled amazement, and then, after a moment's pause, signed the "permit of sojourn" required."¹⁸⁾ This is more reminiscent of Wilde's encounters with the American customs officials than anything more sinister: it is the official's lack of imagination, rather than his obstructiveness, that is the point of the anecdote.

The Austrian police in *Pippa Passes* are hardly any worse: Bluphocks the English vagabond runs rings around them, teasing them with mock Syriac that turns out to be a set of medieval names for syllogisms, insulting the clergy and the Jews of Koenigsberg, and cheating information out of them about Pippa, the girl he has been bribed by the Intendent to betray and sell into prostitution.¹⁹⁾ The ineffectual cunning of the second policeman in reading the coded

squiggles in Luigi's passport makes him a somewhat unimpressive agent of bureaucracy, and of course Luigi, prompted to leave by Pippa's song, slips through their fingers.²⁰ The police ignore, too, the suspicious signs of inactivity at Luca Gaddi's house, and the irony is piled almost too thickly for dramatic credibility in the phrase "Never molest such a household, they mean well."²¹ It is hard to imagine such a line surviving in the theatre.

Luca Gaddi owned ten silk-mills, and now he is dead they are promised by Ottima to Sebald. Ottima's careless dismissal of Pippa, who has passed singing her most famous song, the one that gave Browning the reputation of careless optimism, shows her up as a heartless oppressor of the poor, as well as a murderess, but still in romantic terms, not those that Mayhew would have used, or Marx:

"Oh—that little ragged girl!
 She must have rested on the step: we give them
 But this one holiday the whole year round.
 Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?
 There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
 She stoops to pick my double heartsease....Sh!
 She does not hear: call you out louder!

(Pippa Passes, Part 1, 231-237)

This is the speech that turns Sebald against Ottima, and he rejects her violently. Even though the revulsion is not forced, the speech that caused it surely is: the "But" in "But this one holiday the whole year round" carries such heavy weight of unconscious self-criticism that it is hard to sustain belief: Browning is at the beginning of his career as a dramatic monologist, and his powers have not matured to subtlety. But to the silk-mills: Pippa is a mill-girl, and we are invited to consider her lucky in that she has escaped the hands of the old hag Natalia, who forces the other poor girls to work as artists' models or worse. She has not been trapped into marriage like Phene, or forced to play court on 'Somebody I know, Greyer and older than my grandfather'²²—the threat comes from the Romantic, not the economic direction, through the

Bishop and Bluphocks and the Intendant, an intrigue that belongs outside the environment of the mills: Pippa after all is an heiress; she will not have to work there for ever, and Browning does not show her marked by her labour, or worn down by the prospect of years of toil ahead of her.

The silk-mills were real enough, and of recent development, part of the Austrian attempt at an industrial regeneration of the Veneto with its stagnant economy. Zorzi records that numerous textile plants were established in the region, two firms in Follina, near Treviso, employing 700 workers, and the great silk-spinning mill at Torre di Pordendone employing 450. These were private enterprises on the *Terra Firma*, while the greatest employer in Venice itself was the State, with the Mint, the Arsenal and the tobacco factory, besides the glass-makers of Murano. This in spite of the fact that the Austrian Empire was still a peasant empire.²³⁾ Pippa is a child of the industrial revolution, but Browning at this stage in his career does not concern himself overmuch with the conditions of child-labour in the mills, whereas Elizabeth Barrett was later to pioneer the movement to reduce working-hours and improve working-conditions. On his last visit to Asolo, Browning pointed out the tower of "Romano, cradle of the Eccelini, those cruel twelfth-century tyrants, you know,"²⁴⁾—not the equally-visible silk-mills and factories that were beginning to be built on the plain. Likewise, we are invited to feel sorry for Luca Gaddi as a cuckold and a murder-victim, not initially to condemn him for slave-driving his employees. But the labour itself is not denied: 'the next twelvemonth's toil/At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil.'²⁵⁾

Looking at Browning's portrayal of the clergy, we find him understanding Venetian conditions well: Venice has always maintained a distance from Rome, and has resented the imposition of foreign clerics—those from other parts of Italy. The Monsignor is from Messina, as far away from the Veneto as could be, and his family is the oldest in Messina, 'and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven.'²⁶⁾ The bishop is a villain and a descendent of villains, and his veniality and vice are a part of his power, his means of attaining it. This is a good ex-

ample of Browning's chief Italian blind-spot, his inability to put his Protestant non-conformism aside when dealing with the Roman Catholic church. Many of his clerics are tormented Luthers, damning themselves unconsciously out of their own mouths, almost inaccessible to remorse. The great exception is Pope Innocent in *The Ring and the Book*, but there Browning had a direct historical model—which did not stop him making rude puns about the English Romanists and jokes about the Umbilicus of Our Lord.²⁷⁾ In *Pippa Passes*, it is the Intendant, Ugo (also known as Maffeo of Forli) who is the unpardonable villain, for all that he is the bishop's catspaw in planning the downfall of Pippa. It is no 'agenbite of inwit' or remorse of conscience inwardly prompting that turns the bishop from his evil course, only the sound of Pippa singing "Suddenly God took me"²⁸⁾, and it is a puzzle beyond the scope of this paper to discover how much Browning intended Pippa to be the mouthpiece of God in speaking to the sinner.

The involvement of Bluphocks with the Monsignor is something of a puzzle too: is he that suspicious figure, the English Catholic abroad? We have no reason to suppose that he is anything but purely cynical—in fact, as he tells us, he has 'abjured all religions'.²⁹⁾ Bluphocks is more the *inglese italianato*, *diavolo incarnato* of the old stories, the travelling rake, the English Milord going to the devil on the continent—the very figure that Browning conspicuously was not, and never intended to be. He is barely a social phenomenon except as the personification of the evil man whose especial evil is to lead girls into ruin, and as such he belongs more to the Romantic, especially Byronic vision than to the Victorian; but Browning's condemnation of him and his type points forward to a sterner morality, generated in this case, it would seem, by his own puritanical and self-disciplined nature.

The difference between Bluphocks and the foreign art-students is significant: they are rascals and rogues, but at least they are in Italy for a purpose, studying Canova's sculpture. At this time it was not yet clear that Venice's art was to go into a terminal decline: Canova's career had been glorious and international: there is still a museum, the *Gipsoteca*, at Possagno with casts of all his

works, in the shadow of the great Doric Pantheon where he lies buried. Browning was not Ruskin, and did not dismiss the style of Canova or regard it in any way as cold or bloodless: the jokes about Jules studying 'the articulation of the knee-joint' are more like Auden's joke about the Oxford Groupers dissecting Miss Gee;³⁰ they are all missing the point, which is that there is more to admire in the *Psiche-fanciulla*. The comments on Schramm and Gottlieb belong to a vein of humour that the Victorians loved to quarry: the solemn ridiculousness of the German student, especially the German student abroad, whose verbosity could be tapped by removing his pipe, and then stopped up again by replacing it.³¹ But they are far more interested in the women who act as their models for three lire an hour—rather on the pricy side, at two shillings an hour in English money, so one suspects that they are called upon to do more than model.

The naming of characters is a clue to the step from sociology to poetry: *Pippa Passes* does contain, as we have seen, some accurate contemporary observation of the social structure and functioning of Asolo, but some of the names, at least—Sebald and Ottima—could have come out of the world of *Sordello*: as elsewhere, as in 'Mr. Sludge, the Medium', as in 'Bishop Blougram's Apology', Browning takes a contemporary theme and contemporary characters and makes a historical drama out of it, romanticising it in the sense that the creative movement is in the opposite direction from that of turning the same material into a 'realistic' novel.

Pippa herself is no plaster saint: she has a vigorous vision and sense of humour, making rude jokes about St. Agnes' nipple³² and about Zanze who gorges polenta until 'both cheeks are near as bouncing/As her....name there's no pronouncing.'³³ Sebald and the Bishop have powers of remorse, and even Ottima, who is the least redeemable of the 'Happiest Four in our Asolo'³⁴, is given powers of observation and beauty of language that set the city in our minds in a description that establishes its commanding position above the plain:

I can see St. Mark's;
 That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
 Should lie...there's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
 Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!

(*Pippa Passes*, Part 1, 28-31)

The effect is like being directed to look through a telescope, and indeed on a clear day one can see all the cities of the plain of the Brenta, and the hills and mountains beyond them, to a distance of forty miles or more.

The proper owner of this commanding vision, from her castle at the top of the city, is Catharina Cornaro, exiled queen of Cyprus, Kate the Queen in Pippa's song to Jules and Phene.³⁵ The dilemma of Jules and Phene, which seems the most artificially contrived and theatrically unconvincing of the situations in the poem, is that Jules has been led to believe that Phene is a cultivated woman and not just an ignorant girl. The art-students have sent forged letters to Jules, and arranged the marriage, and once Jules has discovered the deception he is about to send her away when Pippa passes, singing, and invokes the spirit of the Platonic dialogues concerning love that Cardinal Pietro Bembo had written and set in Asolo, at the court of Queen Catharine. These dialogues are the *Asolani*³⁶, and although I have not found a specific mention of them by Browning, I am convinced that it is from them that he draws some of the Platonic love-philosophy that begins in *Pippa Passes* and reappears for the last time in his collection, *Asolando*³⁷. The title of the latter collection is unequivocally borrowed from Bembo.

In this, Browning's last collection, there is far less topographical description of Asolo than in *Pippa Passes*—only in 'Inapprehensiveness' is there a description of place, the fortress of Queen Cornaro overlooking the city and the plain. This is the site of the *Asolani* dialogues, which describe the court of the exiled queen, with Bembo as her secretary, debating matters of love with the courtiers in the palace garden, at the foot of which Pen Browning, the poet's son, was to build his own Pippa's Tower. Here in this late poem we have a description of two friends on the tower, the lady wishing for a perspective-

glass—a telescope—to look at the shape of ‘certain weed-growths on the ravaged wall’³⁸⁾, and invoking Ruskin, whose perceptions of the region had by now taken over from Browning’s in the public mind, while the man beside her is filled with a burning passion that is mistaken for quietude. As in the letters between Browning and Mrs. Bronson, who must be the lady on the tower, there is little attempt to face the fact that Browning had, in old age, again fallen in love, but reserved his affection, dedicating the book to Mrs. Bronson but leaving it unclear whether she was the subject of these last poems.³⁹⁾

The dialogues of Bembo provided Browning with a mental vision of the court of the queen in exile: Mrs. Bronson records how Browning, after talking of the cruelties and fate of the Eccelini, would “put aside the tragic medieval memories, and looking towards the tower on the opposite side of the ravine....would talk of Queen Caterina Cornaro, and of her graceful, poetic little court”, saying that “People often speak of Caterina with compassion because she lost Cyprus; but surely this is a better place, far more beautiful than the distant island, where she was a stranger. I am sure the happiest years of her life were those when she was queen of Asolo.”⁴⁰⁾

The certainties of Browning’s settled philosophy in later years were similar to those of Bembo’s calm dialogues of love: the only doubt that comes into the issue is at the beginning of Book III of the *Asolani*, when Bembo declares the difficulty of establishing the truth of any matter, especially matters of love. This might be seen as the chief preoccupation of Browning’s mature poetry, and to the paradox of ‘Inapprehensiveness’, when another kind of love that dared not speak its name, a Platonic affection in the sense that the late Victorians would have used the term, is artfully concealed behind cultivated chatter about Ruskin and Vernon Lee; we have moved from a world of romance and melodrama to something approaching the novelistic world of Henry James: the town of Asolo has become, as Browning said, ‘more ordinary-life-like’⁴¹⁾, just as Venice now had gas-lighting and steamboats on the Grand Canal. In the face of this ‘ordinary-life-like’ age, Browning turns away from precise observation of nature and society, however changed and filtered, to an abstract philosophis-

ing in verse that matches the abstractions and idealizations of Bembo's dialogues. The change cannot be explained as simply the Victorianization of Browning, much as these later poems, read carelessly, seem to contain the epitome of Victorian complacency and certainty.

However, it is in the earlier poem, *Pippa Passes*, that we find Browning making a dramatic structure out of social observation, political comment and natural history, taking for his setting the city of Asolo, for its compactness, its concentration of the essential elements of a community, and its revelation, uncluttered by a larger population such as that of Venice, Florence or Rome, of the factors of power, influence, coercion, corruption, passion and vice. It is above all the beauty of the city that Browning returns to again and again, and to the beauty of Pippa, of Phene, even the superficial beauty of Ottima, betrayed by her villainy into seeming ugliness. It is on this matter that Browning is expert, and in which he has his greatest interest, that and in finding out the springs of human relationships, especially the relationships of love. Like Bembo, Browning takes as his setting a city so small, so perfect as to seem from the start to be an artificial creation, and so unfamiliar in the minds of most readers—those who have not made their pilgrimage to Asolo—as to appear to be Browning's own invention. It is only after living in the place and studying its history that one becomes convinced of Browning's powers of observation, however superficial his political or sociological interests may seem. Critics seem united in dismissing the idea that Browning has any serious political concern with the liberation and unification of Italy—Philip Drew does not mention it alongside the shorter poems, 'Up at the Villa' or 'De Gustibus'⁴²), and Barbara Melchiori agrees in refusing it consideration on grounds of its romanticism⁴³. To do this seems to make Browning more a committed Victorian before the fact, and to look forward to Elizabeth Barrett with her political sympathies rather than backward to Byron with his. The choice of the subject of the attempted assassination of the Austrian Emperor demands that we should consider the political aspects of Asolo in 1838, just as the choice of the silk-mill as Pippa's place of work demands that we should at least glance at the social

and economic conditions of that time and place.

The chief interest of Asolo to Browning, though, seems to have been its power to persist in the memory as a microcosm of an ideal city, a Renaissance kingdom in miniature miraculously preserved until his day, and even to the present. The precision and power of this observation, from a large number of angles, of all the intricate structures of the place prefigures the greater vision of *The Ring and the Book*, just as the figure of Pippa, in her vulnerable innocence, prefigures Pompilia in hers.

- 1) *More Than Friend: The Letters of Robert Browning to Katharine de Kay Bronson*. Edited with an introduction by Michael Meredith. Armstrong Browning Library of Baylor University and Wedgestone Press, Waco, Texas, 1985.
- 2) All of Browning's poems quoted in this article, except those from the *Asolando* collection, are taken from Robert Browning, *Poetical Works, 1833-1864*, edited by Ian Jack, Oxford U.P., 1970.
- 3) *Sordello* VI, 865.
- 4) Published in 1841, as the first of eight pamphlets under the general title *Bells and Pomegranates*.
- 5) *More Than Friend*, p. 94, Letter 56, dated 10 June 1889.
- 6) *More Than Friend*, Appendix A, p. 128.
- 7) Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia Austriaca*, Editori Laterza, Rome, Bari, 1985.
- 8) *Venezia Austriaca*, p. 163, my own translation.
- 9) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 11, 163 ff.
- 10) *Pippa Passes*, Part II (*Poetical Works 1833-1864* p. 343).
- 11) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 1, 14.
- 12) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 11, 18-20.
- 13) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 11, 23-25.
- 14) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 1, 136.
- 15) See note 9 above.
- 16) *Venezia Austriaca*, pp. 221-222.
- 17) *Venezia Austriaca*, p. 72.
- 18) *More Than Friend*, Appendix A, pp. 128-129.
- 19) *Pippa Passes*, Part II.
- 20) *Pippa Passes*, Part IV, 11, 44-50.
- 21) *Pippa Passes*, Part II.
- 22) *Pippa Passes*, Part III, 11, 234-235.
- 23) *Venezia Austriaca*, p. 66.
- 24) *More Than Friend*, Appendix A, p. 129.
- 25) *Pippa Passes*, Introduction, 11, 70-71.

- 26) *Pippa Passes*, Part IV.
- 27) *The Ring and the Book*, 'The Book and the Ring', XII, 11, 184-186.
- 28) *Pippa Passes*, Part IV.
- 29) *Pippa Passes*, Part II.
- 30) *Pippa Passes*, Part I.
- 31) *Pippa Passes*, Part I.
- 32) *Pippa Passes*, Introduction, 1, 89.
- 33) *Pippa Passes*, Part IV, 11, 72-73.
- 34) *Pippa Passes*, Introduction, 1, 113.
- 35) *Pippa Passes*, Part II, 11, 253-270.
- 36) Pietro Bembo, *Asolani*, 1505. I have used the edition: Pietro Bembo, *Opere in volgare*, Sansoni, Firenze 1961.
- 37) *Asolando* was published in 1889, two weeks before Browning's death in Venice.
- 38) *Asolando*, 'Inapprehensiveness', quoted from *More Than Friend*, Introduction pp. lviii-lix.
- 39) See Meredith's discussion, *More Than Friend*, Introduction pp. lvi-lxii.
- 40) *More Than Friend*, Appendix A, p. 129.
- 41) See Note 5 above.
- 42) Quoted from Philip Drew, *The Poetry of Robert Browning. A Critical Introduction*, 1970, by Barbara Melchiori, 'Browning in Italy' in *Writers and their Background: Robert Browning*, edited by Isobel Armstrong, Ohio University Press, 1975, p. 169.
- 43) *Writers and their Background: Robert Browning*, p. 169.

この論文は、昭和62年度文部省科学研究費補助金の交付を受けた一般研究 C、「イギリスルネッサンス文学と旅」（課題番号 62510252, 代表研究者 櫻井正一郎）の分担研究に関連して、書かれたものである。