



## Female political facilitators: a case study of post-Napoleonic Rome

Geoffrey Hicks

To cite this article: Geoffrey Hicks (2023): Female political facilitators: a case study of post-Napoleonic Rome, Women's History Review, DOI: [10.1080/09612025.2023.2237227](https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2023.2237227)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2023.2237227>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 26 Jul 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 21



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## Female political facilitators: a case study of post-Napoleonic Rome

Geoffrey Hicks



School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

### ABSTRACT

This article presents a case study of the way in which elite women in informal social networks could facilitate political contacts and discourse in a manner that does not accord with existing typologies. Focusing upon exile society in post-Napoleonic Rome, it describes this group of women as political 'facilitators'. After considering the nature of the society and the network of women at the heart of it, it assesses in particular the activities of two—Teresa, Countess Guiccioli and ex-Queen Hortense of Holland—to explore the gendered dimensions of the socio-political culture in which they moved. Taken together, the activities of the group of women examined here illuminate three themes: that exile society offered a breadth of informal political space; that women with no obvious political goals could be important facilitators of political connections within that space; and that some aristocratic women were autonomous actors, independent of male authority. It suggests that more analysis and exploration would illuminate the roles played by such women.

This article focuses upon exile society in Rome during the post-Napoleonic period. It uses this to present a case study of the way in which elite women in informal social networks could facilitate political contacts and discourse, wittingly and unwittingly, in a manner that has often eluded categorisation. In this case, 'politics' are defined in their broadest sense, partly in relation to national, dynastic and geopolitical goals—more often associated with male actors in this period—and partly in relation to the dynamics of the social space in which these women operated. With that broad definition in mind, it describes them as political 'facilitators'. The roles of those examined here do not readily correlate with existing assessments of aristocratic women in politics or diplomacy. Consideration of their activities reminds us of the multiplicity of roles women played in political society.

Against the backdrop of a wider network, this article will focus upon the activities of Teresa, Countess Guiccioli and Hortense, ex-Queen of Holland, to explore the gendered dimensions of socio-political culture in this particular elite. Guiccioli (1800–1873) is familiar to literary biographers for her relationship with the poet Lord Byron. She was

**CONTACT** Geoffrey Hicks  G.Hicks@uea.ac.uk  School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

the wife of Count Guiccioli of Ravenna, to whom she remained married until his death in 1840, although in all meaningful terms they had separated many years before. Guiccioli's relationship with Byron had lasted from 1819, when they met in Venice, until his death in 1824. It brought her celebrity long after the demise of Byron and the Count, and even after her second marriage to the Marquis de Boissy in 1847. She was a well-known figure in the Roman society of which she was a social mainstay in the later 1820s. Accounts of her life have mostly been produced in the tradition of literary history, where she appears in connection with Byron, often as glamorous courtesan or abandoned lover.<sup>1</sup>

Hortense (1783–1837) was the daughter of Alexandre and Josephine de Beauharnais, and afterwards stepdaughter to Emperor Napoleon I of France on his marriage to her widowed mother. She was also Napoleon's sister-in-law: in 1802 she married Louis Bonaparte, one of his brothers, who from 1806 to 1810 was installed as King of Holland. With Louis, Hortense had two sons who survived infancy, the younger of whom, Louis-Napoleon, would eventually become Emperor Napoleon III. After 1815 she was in exile from her native France, having supported Napoleon I during the Hundred Days. She received a new title, Duchesse de St Leu, although she was still widely known as 'Queen Hortense'. She and Louis were semi-estranged. Like Guiccioli's marriage, theirs had never been a love match and they lived apart. She oversaw the upbringing of their younger son; her husband had custody of the elder. From 1824, Hortense and Louis-Napoleon wintered in Rome. Historiographically, Queen Hortense is a marginal figure. She has no modern English-language biographer, while French biographers have demonstrated very limited interest in the 'Roman' phase of her life.<sup>2</sup> A privileged woman, but without conventional power and lacking the glamour of Guiccioli's Byronic connection, she remains relatively obscure.

Guiccioli and Hortense offer up useful examples of women whose roles lack sufficient historiographical definition. Guiccioli had no formal political role and no marital or dynastic connection with a man who did, but she performed an important function in the politics of social spaces, acting in particular as a facilitator of other connections. Her celebrity is useful to the historian, because it meant that contemporaries noted her presence and behaviour, more so than might otherwise have been the case. That there were other women behaving similarly is certain, but Guiccioli presents a good example of an under-explored role. Hortense's was different from Guiccioli, but also bears examination. As a sometime *salonnière*, she might appear easier to categorise, yet on closer examination she is not: like other such women, she adopted a persona as patron of the arts and avoided open association with politics, but unlike them she simultaneously operated as a dynastic politician, facilitating connections that enhanced that role. Taken together with the wider group of women examined here, their activities illuminate three themes: that exile society offered a breadth of informal political space; that women without conventional political goals facilitated connections within that space; and that some aristocratic women were autonomous actors, independent of male authority.

The kinds of roles examined here remain rather obscure, despite the important and growing body of research that has explored female political activity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The role of the *salonnière*, for example, has attracted considerable attention, predominantly in its French manifestations, both in pre-revolutionary Paris and from the Napoleonic era onwards.<sup>3</sup> Steven Kale's extensive work on salons in the latter period has described the way in which a *salonnière* provided space for

interaction, but while she could assist the political aspirations of the men she invited to her salons, she 'never gained any personal advantage from these services, because the assistance she rendered was never accomplished on her own behalf. Her ambition never went beyond her own salon.'<sup>4</sup> Hortense, however, played a more ambiguous role, while other women examined here were openly political participants in salons; others, who did not host, instead facilitated political connections in their shared spaces. None fits the conventional model of a *salonnière*.

The work of Elaine Chalus, focusing on aristocratic women in eighteenth-century Britain, has provided another valuable framework within which to consider female political activity.<sup>5</sup> Chalus proposed a four-part categorisation: 'confidantes', largely passive recipients of male political confidences; 'advisers', who extended the role of confidante in a more active manner; 'agents', with 'increasingly public, direct, and autonomous political involvement'; and 'partners', who were highly politicised, acting in conjunction with men but often making independent decisions.<sup>6</sup> Elements of these descriptions certainly might be applied to the individuals examined here: they may all at times have been 'confidantes' or 'advisers', and some at a stretch might be described as a 'partner'. Yet at the same time, their roles elude that categorisation: they were both more socially independent and less overtly connected with men's political identities.

These women also do not fit neatly into other typologies. Most were acting independently of their husbands—who were estranged or otherwise absent—and so do not conform to the model described by Kim Reynolds, of aristocratic wives who were 'incorporated' as a vital component in their husbands' political lives.<sup>7</sup> The women considered here were not married to men of much political significance or influence, as were those whose roles have been illuminated by Jennifer Mori and Jennifer Davey.<sup>8</sup> Neither can their roles as political actors be sufficiently explained by reference to motherhood, important though that was in Hortense's case in particular. Marina d'Amelia has described the way in which, during the Risorgimento, motherhood offered women 'a more favourable context in which to express their emotions and channel their passions.'<sup>9</sup> Yet Hortense's activities cannot be adequately explained by her role as a mother; there would, for example, have been no need to create a salon simply for the purpose of enhancing her sons' education.

These women also operated in a rather different milieu from the middle-class women examined in Sarah Richardson's work, although they are—like those women—obscured because they 'did not describe their endeavours as political, preferring to use terms such as philanthropic, civilising, or educative.'<sup>10</sup> They nevertheless fulfilled a vital role in the dynamics of political space. As Davey has described, women in social elites have often been depicted in a 'caricatured world', consisting of 'party-planning, mindless gossip and bed-hopping', which does not do justice to them.<sup>11</sup> An assessment of this particular group suggests that political society has further unexplored dimensions.

## Exile communities and social networks

Elite exile society in Rome in this period was one in which women played a central part. It makes for a useful case-study, both because of the presence of a number of independent women who formed its backbone, and because the nature of the environment enabled them to flourish socially. The conjunction of three factors made that society

unconventional, fluid and stimulating, allowing opportunities to subvert what might have been political and societal norms elsewhere: firstly, the papal government, despite its conservatism, was tolerant of political refugees, at least all the time they respected its own laws; secondly, the city was flooded with exiles and travellers, who brought with them a mixture of ideas and approaches; and, thirdly, the city's culture reflected a continental—particularly French—tradition of socialising in salons, in which women's roles were enhanced.

Rome was a political paradox in the 1820s: reactionary, yet tolerant of refugees whose politics did not always correspond to its own. It was ruled directly by the Pope and his senior cardinals, but despite the restoration of the Pope's absolute authority and most of his territories after the Napoleonic wars, the French Revolution had 'secured a few small strides forward.'<sup>12</sup> During the reign of the restored Pius VII there were some moderate reforms, and by Vatican standards his Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, was innovative. Under Leo XII from 1823, however, the Papal States became more and more repressive. The Vatican was at the centre of what was, effectively, a police state, with a range of reactionary policies.<sup>13</sup> Leo's conservative regime did not tolerate opposition. Nevertheless, it made no attempt to remove refugees who had been allowed to live in exile in Rome under Pius, including several members of the Bonaparte family. Given the uncomfortable relationship between Bonapartism and the Papacy during the Empire, this was no small gesture.

The Bonapartes were far from the force they had been, but they were widely suspected of revolutionary sympathies, particularly the younger representatives such as Hortense's sons. The ex-Queen herself preserved a façade of neutrality, but her nostalgia for the Empire was no secret.<sup>14</sup> No-one could be sure how far her ambitions extended on behalf of her sons, whom she fiercely protected. Nevertheless, Leo was keen to preserve the Vatican's international independence. He perhaps demonstrated more shrewdness in geopolitics than he has been credited by historians. One of a number of astute female contemporaries, Baroness Bunsen, writing after Leo's death in 1829, thought he had a 'knowledge of the state of public spirit in foreign countries which rendered it ... easy to argue with him, and get him to understand reason'.<sup>15</sup> He had little desire to draw too close to Austria, which otherwise dominated the Italian peninsula and constrained the freedom of its own Bonaparte, Napoleon's son and heir the Duc de Reichstadt. In Rome, therefore, there was no attempt to prevent the free movement of exiles from France or from other Italian states—at least, not all the time they appeared unthreatening. Once the political situation deteriorated amidst widespread unrest in 1830, the Vatican became less tolerant. It expelled those who were deemed dangerous, such as Louis-Napoleon. In the 1820s, however, Rome was a regular home for aristocratic refugees as they moved from safe haven to safe haven. The city thus found itself host to exiles and travellers who were not always as conservative or as defensive of the status quo as its rulers.

While elite women in exile society in Rome had no greater formal status than those in other European societies, the city presented social opportunities that were not always as easily available elsewhere. There were similarities with Paris, whose *salon* society has been described in detail by Kale. He has noted, for example, that, in contemporary Paris, being 'foreign' was an asset; this was also true of Rome. Women who did not come from local society were 'free to go anywhere and did not fit effortlessly into

exclusive coteries or long-established social groups; as a consequence they were better able to engineer unconventional encounters, bringing together people who would not otherwise meet'.<sup>16</sup> And this was a transnational community. At its core were Italian and French aristocrats opposed to the governments of their own native states, but two other groups played an active part in exile life: diplomats of the European great powers represented at Rome, and other travellers and visitors, many of them British.

The international character of the community is reflected in the source material for its activities. Queen Hortense left a memoir, though it deals primarily with the earlier, Napoleonic period of her life.<sup>17</sup> Joseph de Cléron, Comte d'Haussonville, was a diplomat serving at the French embassy in Rome, who later published recollections of his time in Rome.<sup>18</sup> The letters of Madame Récamier, a correspondent of the French ambassador in Rome—d'Haussonville's superior, the Viscomte de Chateaubriand—and the diaries of Valérie Masuyer, Hortense's secretary, provide further material.<sup>19</sup> British travellers and exiles have also left valuable records. As scholars have noted, in this period Rome was particularly beloved of the British.<sup>20</sup> Their community was large and its consequent place in exile society similarly so, especially during the winter months. 'The situation of Rome, between Tuscany and Naples', noted the British vice-consul Robert Smith in 1827, 'renders it a place of continual passage'.<sup>21</sup> With travel resuming in earnest after the Napoleonic Wars, Rome was an essential destination for a generation of British visitors schooled in the classics. After one ball, Chateaubriand joked that he had encountered 'all the English of the Earth', so many that 'je me croyais encore ambassadeur à Londres' [I thought myself ambassador to London once more].<sup>22</sup>

British visitors included young men on grand tours, middle-class families, aristocrats escaping the English weather, those in permanent exile and many others besides.<sup>23</sup> 'The local attractions', Smith recorded, 'induce numerous English families and individuals to make Rome, perhaps more than any other foreign city, their winter residence'.<sup>24</sup> It offered art, culture and architectural beauty, to the fascination of travellers. 'After having so long looked forward to this period', wrote Robert Trotter on his arrival, 'we could really scarcely believe that it had actually arrived and the whole seemed quite like a dream'.<sup>25</sup> He was among an army of British visitors. As Richard Burgess described in 1828, 'upwards of a thousand English are resident in Rome from six to eight months of the year'.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, it has been estimated that, by the early 1830s, 5000 English tourists visited Rome during the Christmas period alone.<sup>27</sup>

A number wrote about the social world in which they moved. Marguerite, Lady Blessington, wife of the Irish Earl of Blessington, left a detailed account of her life there.<sup>28</sup> Like Chateaubriand, she noted in November 1827 that 'Rome is filled with the English, and in every street the carriages, liveries, and faces, of my compatriots are so continually met, that one could fancy oneself at home, instead of being so far distant from it'.<sup>29</sup> One of those compatriots, Lord Fitzharris, who would become the third Earl of Malmesbury, was in Rome on his grand tour and later published memoirs which recalled those he encountered, including Hortense and Guiccioli. The diaries of another young English resident, Henry Fox, include detailed accounts of social life in the city.<sup>30</sup> Beyond these, a series of other disparate sources—including the letters of other residents, travel diaries, diplomatic records and newspapers—help us to construct a picture of this society.

Travellers, visitors and exiles interacted in a vibrant social life. Lady Blessington evidently thrived in it. She furnishes historians with a picture of the roles played by women

within Roman society, recording the daily routine of the upper classes in Rome. The ‘social’ part of their lives followed a regular pattern: early evening meals would be followed by the first part of the evening—the *prima sera*—which would be ‘devoted to paying or receiving visits’, before they would go on to balls, *soirées* or the theatre.<sup>31</sup> The elite would mingle inside and outside. One British visitor in 1831, Mountstuart Elphinstone, described the scene in the gardens of the Villa Borghese, where, in addition to open carriages, ‘exceedingly well dressed’ people on foot were ‘crowding the pathways’, reminding him of Greenwich Park back at home, ‘but there were more people of the upper and middle classes here’.<sup>32</sup>

During the *prima sera* and at the later activities, women would host and participate independently in this world. Even relatively minor aristocracy such as the Blessingtons might find themselves entertaining a foreign ambassador for dinner. As a matter of course, visitors would seek out their compatriots to establish themselves in expatriate society, pass on news from home, create new contacts and discover intelligence about them. By such methods were important connections made, as young men such as Fox and Fitzharris were to discover. For those such as Fitzharris, on their grand tour, the social activities were as important as the opportunities to view great cultural treasures. ‘Sociability’, Rosemary Sweet has noted, ‘was always a critical element of the Grand Tour: in terms of the tour’s educational value, it was essential in preparing the young man for an adult life of negotiating fashionable society’.<sup>33</sup>

More celebrated women of the elite would host formally at appointed times in their salon. Such occasions might well include discussion of politics. The presence of a significant number of exiles provided opportunities aplenty. These gatherings, presided over by well-connected and politically-aware noblewomen, had long been a staple of continental society, particularly in France’s vibrant political culture. Yet salons were far from unique to Paris. They flourished in Rome when aristocratic families transferred their lives there in exile or on tour. Salons there, as elsewhere, provided opportunities for meetings, the establishment of networks and the exchange of information.

There were a number of prominent *salonnières*. For example, Lady Blessington noted the events hosted by Catharina, ex-Queen of Westphalia, known by the 1820s as the Princess de Montfort, who ‘receives ... twice-a-week’. The Princess was the wife of Napoleon’s youngest brother, Jérôme, who had ruled Westphalia between 1807 and 1813. We do not know precisely what was discussed at her gatherings, but they certainly would have been fruitful for political networking, given that ‘her *soirees* are attended by all the foreigners of distinction, several of the Roman nobles, and the Ambassador of Russia and his attendants’.<sup>34</sup> As Kale has noted of Parisian salons, such occasions provided ‘a dense network of foreign and domestic contacts’, which gave *salonnières* ‘access to remarkably good intelligence on ministerial decisions and the intentions of foreign governments’.<sup>35</sup> There is every reason to suppose that Roman salons performed the same function, particularly given the transnational nature of society there. And at the de Montfort gatherings, it was the ex-Queen, not the ex-King, whose social cachet mattered, ‘the near connexion of the Princess de Montfort with the Emperor of Russia [she was his cousin] inducing every possible demonstration of respect to be paid to her and the Prince by his Ambassador’.<sup>36</sup>

Other salons included participants whose activities fit less straightforwardly into historiographical models. We have a clearer sense of the matters discussed at the occasions



hosted by Hortense. She too, recorded Lady Blessington, 'receives twice a week at her palace; and her parties, never large, are considered the most agreeable at Rome.'<sup>37</sup> Yet they were also places where radicals gathered. Fitzharris, who met Hortense in 1829, recalled how her house 'was the resort of all the Intransigents of both sexes in politics'.<sup>38</sup> He singled out the Princess Belgiojoso, a young Tuscan aristocrat set on revolution and openly conspiring to overthrow governments. Other guests at Hortense's were not so overtly engaged in politics. Guiccioli was a regular fixture at such soirees, balls and social occasions, who was 'much admired and liked', and Blessington noted that 'it is not to be wondered at, that her presence is much sought'.<sup>39</sup> Her description gives a useful indication of Guiccioli's social currency. She played an important role in facilitating connections, as will be explored further below.

As these recollections suggest, not only were such salons hosted by women; other aristocratic women played central parts in them. Belgiojoso was one. She arrived in Rome in the spring of 1829, having escaped a miserable marriage. As Susan Rutherford has outlined, married Italian women in this period often encountered difficulties 'not so much in the roles of wife and mother in themselves, but rather in the lack of choice women had in determining the boundaries of such roles'.<sup>40</sup> Rome offered Belgiojoso literal and metaphorical space to establish her own boundaries as an independent woman, and she embarked on a political journey as significant as her personal one. An Italian nationalist, she would establish a formidable reputation as a writer, publishing works on politics, history, theology and the rights of women. In Fitzharris's recollection, she 'led the female conspirators, and they were so little feared that, as long as they remained in the Pope's domains and could be watched, they were not molested'.<sup>41</sup> In fact, like Louis-Napoleon, her politics earned her expulsion after 1830. She went to France, and in Paris she would become a *salonnière* herself. Then, amidst the turbulence of 1848, she would return to Italy, first leading a troop of 160 soldiers during the revolution in Milan, and then overseeing medical care in the short-lived Roman republic. When that was overthrown, she escaped to Constantinople, there surviving an assassination attempt. She would die an august sponsor of the new Italian nation in 1871.<sup>42</sup>

Another link in the chain of independent women who helped bind together exile society was Jane, Lady Davy. Like her grander counterparts, she stimulated connections and the exchange of ideas. She was the wife of the scientist Sir Humphry Davy, had hosted an Edinburgh salon prior to their marriage in 1812, and travelled regularly on the continent, sometimes alone and sometimes in the company of her husband, whose frail health prompted him to seek out friendlier climes.<sup>43</sup> In the condescending phraseology of one of Guiccioli's biographers, Lady Davy 'operated a mild salon' in Rome.<sup>44</sup> She cultivated the company of those with whom she could hold stimulating conversation, and was a staple of the English-speaking community. When Henry Fox arrived in Rome in November 1824, her home was an immediate and obvious place to dine.<sup>45</sup> There, he could be introduced to other English expatriates and, in the person of Lady Davy, enjoy 'agreeable [*sic*] and lively' conversation.<sup>46</sup> The acerbic Fox rarely had a good word in his diary for anyone, but he paid striking tribute to Lady Davy's 'great cleverness and eloquence'.<sup>47</sup> Dining on one occasion at the Roman residence of British Cabinet minister Lord Harrowby, he was impressed by the way in which Davy 'made an unwilling conquest of the whole family, till then strongly prejudiced against her'.<sup>48</sup>



Rome offered a liberating environment for women like Lady Davy. In Britain, in Kathryn Gleadle's description, women were 'borderline citizens' whose political status was 'often fragile and contingent'.<sup>49</sup> By contrast, Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler have noted the opportunities offered by Italy, which 'became a utopian space for women'.<sup>50</sup> In Davy's case, the difference between her Roman freedom and her experience in England as a 'borderline citizen' is clear. After their own flight from Italy, Hortense and her secretary Masuyer met Davy again in May 1831, by which time she was back in London and finding it 'difficult ... to stay in her country'. The frustration of an intelligent, thoughtful woman with the niceties of English polite society is evident in Masuyer's notes. Lady Davy apparently criticised 'avec esprit' [with spirit] the tyranny of fashion 'sur des gens si raides, si méthodiques et si froidement fous' [on a people so stiff, so methodical and so coldly mad].<sup>51</sup>

The fact that Guiccioli, Hortense, Belgiojoso and Davy were all, for different reasons, separated from their husbands in Rome, is worth noting. Whatever their social roles, even if those were derived initially from their husbands' statuses, they were not acting on behalf of them. Peter Mandler, when considering the socio-political functions exercised by women in contemporary British society, has highlighted the 'difficult question' of measuring 'to what extent women were exercising them as surrogates for aristocratic men and to what extent as accepted actors in their own right'.<sup>52</sup> All four of these women in Rome, however, were undoubtedly actors in their own right. Their aims were very different: Hortense had a political dynasty to consider; Belgiojoso had governments to overthrow; Davy participated in and encouraged educated discourse; Guiccioli moved independently in society and cultivated connections within it. But all had profiles of their own and all determined their own activities. Those activities were, of course, limited and defined by class and social context, but not by spouses.

### **Teresa Guiccioli and Queen Hortense**

Women were at the heart of this social world, therefore, but how should we define their roles? Guiccioli was not (as far as we know) in any overt manner engaging with the conventional politics of government and authority. Yet she was engaged in social politics, not least by establishing connections within the exile and expatriate network. She was a desirable guest, being by all accounts articulate and personally charming; she also had an intangible 'star quality', derived in part from her association with Byron. As is clear from the accounts of Fitzharris, Fox and Blessington, the Countess moved frequently and freely among the principal figures in local society and thus had licence to introduce others into it. Her role is a more broadly applicable one: many political spaces, however local or international, generate such facilitators. When new arrivals appear in spaces, they require introductions and guidance, which are provided by those who are familiar with the spaces and have access to them. To state that is, at one level, to state the obvious—and yet the role is rarely explored by historians.

There were some similarities between Guiccioli and Hortense. Both were aristocrats, if of differing status within the range of their class, and both married, but in limited and infrequent contact with their husbands. Neither had any formal political role. There, however, the similarities end. Hortense was a Beauharnais and a Bonaparte; those factors alone meant that her every public and private act carried potential political

consequences. She was also the mother of two sons, the younger of whom lived with her, would survive her and would ultimately rule France; in that sense, as a mother, she might be categorised in Chalus's scale as a 'partner'. Her maternal role was clearly a central part of her identity. What d'Amelia has said of Mazzini's mother, Maria Drago, might equally be said of Louis-Napoleon and Hortense, who was 'supporting him during the long years of his exile, and encouraging him after the disappointments when his projects failed.'<sup>53</sup>

Yet Hortense's role was both broader and more subtle than that. She too played no overt political role—she knew the dangers of doing so—and she maintained every appearance of neutrality. At the same time, she ensured the survival and education of her sons and acted as a focal point around which, via her salon, political refugees gathered. No precise sense remains of her politics, beyond loyalty to the Bonaparte dynasty, but the very existence of her salon indicates her interests, and she provided a vital space for others to discuss theirs. We might therefore describe her as a political facilitator too, but of a rather different kind from Guiccioli, with more active political and dynastic interests, although she moved in the same informal environment. It was one in which she encouraged political discourse and connections, and in which Italian nationalists like Princess Belgiojoso openly plotted. Exploring the roles played by these two women requires historians to navigate their way around various tropes, some used by contemporaries, and some by subsequent accounts.

In Countess Guiccioli's case, one must also be aware that her male and female contemporaries had contrasting responses to her. It is noticeable that Lady Blessington's accounts of the Countess emphasise rather different characteristics from the young men she met, who saw her in a primarily sexual context. The Countess clearly had a striking presence, which brought her friends and made her a welcome guest. Despite the bravado and innuendo of contemporary male accounts, one can discern the qualities that gave her social advantage. Byron had waxed lyrical about the 'pretty fair-haired girl last year out of a convent', whom he thought 'a sort of Italian Caroline Lamb'.<sup>54</sup> The Countess had apparently surprised even Byron with her zest for their relationship. When he had 'done my duty—with the proper consummation', his new partner decided she 'was not content with what she had done—unless it was to be turned to the advantage of the public—and so she made an éclat [*sic*] which rather astonished even the Venetians'.<sup>55</sup> The word 'éclat' (in this context, a lustre or brilliance) summed up a charisma, which, according to Byron, 'electrified the Conversazioni' of Venetian society. It suggests a social ability for which the Countess has been given little credit by posterity. Lady Blessington gives us a better sense of what it consisted: 'her appearance is highly prepossessing, her manners remarkably distinguished, and her conversation *spirituelle* and interesting'.<sup>56</sup>

Guiccioli's impact on her acquaintances—male and female—gives some sense of how she brought social influence to bear. To maintain social position and foster useful acquaintances required a combination of linguistic abilities, cultural sophistication and adroit manners. Physical attractiveness was also an asset, as it was for men. Synthesising the evidence of different observers allows us to gain some sense of how this worked in practice. The Countess met Fitzharris in 1828, and was a celebrity after her liaison with Byron. Fitzharris's interest in her began at the Austrian Ambassador's Ball in Rome, where he was 'much struck' by a woman with 'brilliant complexion and blue eyes', whose face was 'full of animation, showing splendid teeth when she laughed,

which she was doing heartily when I remarked her'.<sup>57</sup> As his memoirs recounted, his interest grew when 'she rose from her chair' and, as he put it, the two became 'great friends'.<sup>58</sup> The almost certainly sexual nature of their relationship was obscured to allow for contemporary sensibilities, but, as Mori has described, a grand tour was often the opportunity for such liaisons: 'Knowledge of women was something that the tour was supposed to impart, though it had to be acquired with tact and discretion.'<sup>59</sup>

By the time Fitzharris encountered her, the Countess had met a number of other English aristocrats. Captain Gronow, one of the chroniclers of Regency society, saw her differently from Byron and Fitzharris, but in a similar frame of reference. Although 'her hair was golden, her eyes were blue, her complexion and teeth beautiful in the extreme', in Gronow's view 'she gave one more the idea of a healthy, rosy, jolly-looking milkmaid, than a heroine of romance.' In his recollection, 'She was "of the earth, earthy."<sup>60</sup> The earthy milkmaid, of course, fitted another stereotype. Guiccioli clearly had a significant physical presence, but Lady Blessington's diary provides us with a less sexualised perspective on it:

Her face is decidedly handsome, the features regular and well proportioned, her complexion delicately fair, her teeth very fine, and her hair of that rich golden tint, which is peculiar to the female pictures by Titian and Georgioni [*sic*]. Her countenance is very pleasing, its general character is pensive, but it can be lit up with animation and gaiety, when its expression is very agreeable ... her whole appearance reminds one very strikingly of the best portraits in the Venetian school.<sup>61</sup>

With beauty and celebrity, the Countess evidently had a notable impact on male and female contemporaries, which smoothed her path through the Roman social elite.

Her interaction with Henry Fox, with whom she also had a relationship, provides us with a further sense of the role she played within that elite. Fox was the son and heir of Whig grandee Lord Holland, and in more or less permanent exile from England. In 1827 he had gone abroad following a broken engagement. With his accounts, as with others, one needs to dig beneath the bravado. His descriptions of their liaison often tell us more about him than they do about the Countess, yet he also unwittingly recorded the breadth of her social connections. Guiccioli's social abilities made her a sought-after guest. Fox's diary gives a flavour of her range of contacts, which extended across polite society in Rome, from British travellers such as Fitzharris, through the ranks of the local aristocracy to other international visitors.<sup>62</sup> His entry for 30 April 1828 is a good example, recording his arrangements for the *prima sera*: 'In the evening to [Queen] Hortense. T[eresa]. G [uiccioli]. there. Gortchakoff making love, and acting or feeling jealous.'<sup>63</sup> Alexander Gorchakov, the Russian diplomat and future foreign minister, was typical of the Countess's casual acquaintances, and both Fox's and Fitzharris's recollections were testimony to the way in which she introduced such visitors to one another—including, in June 1829, the two diarists themselves.<sup>64</sup>

Such social currency required abilities well beyond her attractiveness to young upper-class men. Lady Blessington's account is again worth noting for the way in which it contrasts with the tone of the male recollections:

She is much admired, and liked, and merits to be so, for ... *La Contessa* Guiccioli is well educated and highly accomplished, she speaks her native language with remarkable purity, French with great fluency, and understands English perfectly. Her reading has been

extensive, her memory is retentive, and her imagination has been elevated by the study of the best poets of her own country and ours.<sup>65</sup>

The Countess's facility with language was clearly essential for the role she played. Fox recorded his surprise 'at her knowing so much of *Hamlet* by heart.'<sup>66</sup> Such reports suggest a cultural sophistication that would have been vital for engaging in discussion, not merely with other aristocratic interlocutors, but also with those in artistic and literary circles. The combination of her skills gave her the ability to move widely in exile society.

Through her, other connections were facilitated. Fitzharris's experience offers a useful example. By the time he arrived in Rome, Guiccioli was firmly embedded in its elite culture. As a consequence, their relationship opened a gateway for him into a wider world, as it had for Fox: 'She introduced me at Rome', he explained, 'to the Duchesse de St Leu (Queen Hortense).' The exiled queen, 'a most fascinating woman', he recounted, 'invited me to her evening parties' and introduced him to others in her circle.<sup>67</sup> Fox, too, regularly benefited from Guiccioli's connections. On a trip to see her in Florence, for instance, where she was staying in September 1828 with the Marchesa Sacrati, she welcomed him into their social circle. It included ex-King Louis and yet more Bonapartes and their acolytes.<sup>68</sup> The Countess, along with other women, facilitated access to the inner sanctums of a rarefied world. Women who moved in society in this way played a subtle role and left few clear records of it. That makes it difficult to explore the places occupied by them. Guiccioli was far from a conventional wife; indeed, in social terms, her husband was irrelevant. Neither was she a salon hostess, although she participated in salons, but she had prestige, access and contacts.

The Countess was part of a cosmopolitan world of exiles. It brought together those with different geographical and, to a degree, social origins. It flowed around Europe, pausing in places which allowed limited political diversity, such as Rome. Some of those exiles—insulated by both 'outsider' status and membership of an elite group—were less constrained by conventional social expectations, such as those relating to male authority. Many had objectives beyond immediate social necessities, as was the case with Hortense. In Roman society, she had a reputation as a friendly, welcoming hostess: 'Her manners are easy', recorded Fox, 'and almost familiar; she assumes no royalty airs and is very prévenante [considerate] to visitors.'<sup>69</sup> The combination of status and sociability put her at the centre of polite society. Exile networks criss-crossed on a tight social map. If the historian is to 'read' that map, the functions of the political facilitators require recognition.

The ex-Queen who welcomed visitors into her salons had her own political role and, indeed, a wider significance in European political history. It was to Hortense that Bonapartism owed its long-term survival as a political force. Without the groundwork put in by Hortense in her son's early life, it is difficult to imagine how a Bonaparte princeling would have acceded to a restored imperial throne in 1852. Before and after the family's Roman sojourn, she protected her sons: in 1815 she had led them in a perilous escape from France, and in 1830, after her eldest son died in a measles outbreak, she hid and nursed Louis-Napoleon while he was dangerously ill with the same disease and being hunted by the Austrians.<sup>70</sup> Her protection had important implications beyond the young man's own survival, given his subsequent leadership of the Bonapartist cause, and all that followed. In Rome, it was Hortense who defined the environment in which Louis-

Napoleon lived, socialised and was educated. Her own political role defies easy categorisation. Europe had noted the way in which she had supported her brother-in-law, Napoleon, on his return during the Hundred Days, but it is difficult to know how much we should read into that. Hortense never publicly espoused formal political positions, but simply belonging to the extended Bonaparte clan was a political situation; it meant immersion in family politics, which was by extension European politics.

Just as women like Guiccioli have been defined via the repetition of various tropes, so is Hortense. In her case, however, she cultivated a public image deliberately utilising such devices. It suited her to present herself as an aristocratic patroness and mother, activated by 'feminine' virtues, with no outward appearance of dabbling in politics; indeed, it was essential that she did so if she was to ensure her own survival and that of her sons. Consequently, she confined her published memoir in 1832 to entertaining and romantic escapades during her brother-in-law's reign as Emperor. One reviewer thought that the memoir's 'intellectual merits ... are not of the highest kind, but the most careless reader will discover in it grace, fancy, taste, and benevolent sentiment', which the reviewer regarded as 'the characteristics of an accomplished and amiable female.' The reviewer clearly thought that Hortense met the requirements of a Beauharnais: 'she exhibits all the amiable graces of the mother [Josephine]—all the chivalrous ardour of the brother [Eugene de Beauharnais]'.<sup>71</sup> Despite the condescension, the reviewer's admiration marked Hortense's success at securing herself within an aristocratic female paradigm: romantic, gracious, talented in the arts, an example of motherhood. At the same time, however, it entirely missed the point. The ex-Queen was a wily survivor and an effective player in European politics, which was a hostile environment for a Bonaparte after 1815.

Survival had not been straightforward. Despite a sometimes difficult relationship with Napoleon, Hortense had remained in Paris throughout the Hundred Days. She had fought to retain her elder son, Napoleon-Louis, whom ex-King Louis had demanded should join him in exile in Rome. She had defied the tribunals that had granted custody to him, and only surrendered the boy back to his father in straitened circumstances in late 1815. The protection of her sons was her principal concern. While the fate of the Empire hung in the balance before Waterloo, Hortense moved them out of the public eye as far as she could. They were the next male Bonaparte heirs after Napoleon's son and brothers. As the only ones still in France, however, they were particularly vulnerable in any change of regime. Such a change would come if the Emperor failed to defeat the British and Prussian armies in Belgium, which would enable the return of the exiled Louis XVIII. When news arrived of the Allied victory over Napoleon at Waterloo, Hortense prepared to escape from France.

This proved to be a shrewd tactic. After Waterloo, 'a wave of vengeance' was unleashed on those who had declared for Napoleon.<sup>72</sup> While the worst of the violence was in the south, the situation across France was precarious for those associated with the defeated Emperor. Rank was no protection against the so-called 'White Terror': Marshal Brune was murdered in Avignon and, notoriously, Marshal Ney would be executed by firing squad in Paris. Even when the government attempted in the winter of 1815 to pardon most Bonapartists, Napoleon's family was specifically excluded. In such circumstances, departure from France was not just prudent; it was imperative.<sup>73</sup> Hortense's later recollection of events in the summer of 1815 was dramatic, but there seems little reason to

doubt the substance, given the bloody reckonings in the south and her abiding determination to protect her sons. She described how they 'still remained hidden in the house I had hired. I thought of nothing but how to get them to a place of safety'.<sup>74</sup> The family had to make a very swift exit. With a trail of retainers, they made their way through the countryside. The place of safety she sought 'was only to be found abroad' and after a series of narrow scrapes they made it to Switzerland.<sup>75</sup>

There, they lived at Constance, in Baden, until the authorities grew too nervous of their controversial guests. There was widespread suspicion of Hortense. In October 1816, the Paris correspondent of *The Times* reported that she had 'managed the correspondence with Elba', where Napoleon had first been imprisoned in 1814, and was now 'carrying on a no less active correspondence with this capital from Switzerland', employing a servant 'to carry her letters and packets to the first frontier town in France'.<sup>76</sup> It seems unlikely that Hortense's ambitions in 1816 extended much beyond securing stability for her family, but it was widely suspected otherwise, and in 1817 she was asked to leave Baden. With a dash of romanticism, she described how she was 'once more a homeless wanderer, obliged, for all my reluctance, to trouble the different governments about my affairs, and to ask one of them to offer me a refuge'.<sup>77</sup> Fortunately, unlike most homeless wanderers, she was able to appeal to the King of Bavaria for help. Her brother Eugene was the son-in-law of King Maximilian I, who permitted the family to live for the time being in Augsburg. Meanwhile, Hortense obtained the Schloss Arenenberg, near Constance, in the hope that the victorious Allied governments would allow her to make her permanent residence there.

It is easy to be sceptical about the levels of hardship involved for such a well-connected refugee, but the extent of the family's dislocation and social precariousness was considerable. It was combined with the threat of international ostracism: only after six years of exile did the Allies consent to her long-term relocation to Arenenberg. Moreover, she had the duties of a single parent. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the relationship between mother and son seems to have been close, and Hortense took her maternal duties very seriously. In 1823, she brought 15 year-old Louis to be taught at Arenenberg, under her supervision. In her memoirs, written long before his political successes, she recorded that the 'most delightful' of her occupations in exile in Bavaria and Switzerland 'was the education of my younger son, who spent most of his time with me, while my elder boy was in Italy with his father'. Her chief concern, she wrote, was 'to form his character', a task for which she maintained that women were better suited: 'a man can teach many excellent things, a woman inspires them; her word penetrates more deeply: for as it springs from the heart it goes to the heart'.<sup>78</sup>

In Rome, she constructed a social situation which was also political. Her twice-weekly salon was popular amongst both the artistic and political refugee communities. It is tempting to speculate that one of the two salons was the safer, artistic one and the other more political, and that guests were funnelled to one or the other as appropriate. The Comte d'Haussonville's memoirs recall entirely innocent artistic gatherings which, when set alongside other accounts, suggest that such a representative of Bourbon France was not invited to the more subversive ones. 'Un vrai salon' [a true salon], d'Haussonville thought it, 'que je fréquentais assidûment' [which I frequented assiduously]. He painted an innocent picture of students and artists—'tout français' [all French]—in gatherings which he found 'infiniment plus gai que celui de l'ambassade'



[infinitely more cheerful than those at the embassy].<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, however ‘assidûment’ he attended, other evidence reveals a more explicitly political dimension to Hortense’s salons. The guests were certainly not ‘tout français’; neither did they restrict their conversation to art.

One non-French guest was Fitzharris, who recorded a rather different picture of Hortense’s gatherings. He recalled how she had cultivated a circle in which radicals were regular fixtures, and political change was openly discussed. He particularly noted the role played by what he called the ‘female conspirators’, Belgiojoso chief among them.<sup>80</sup> As European politics became more febrile, so Hortense’s salon expanded. Her secretary, Valerie de Masuyer, noted how, by 1830, ‘La Reine y retrouvera son cercle habituel d’artistes et de gens du monde’ [the Queen finds her usual circle of artists and fashionable people], but that their ranks were swollen by ‘de nombreux Français ennemis du gouvernement de Louis-Philippe’ [a number of enemies of the new Orleanist government in France] who ‘décidés à planter leur tente en pays romain.’ [decided to pitch their tent on Roman ground].<sup>81</sup> In addition to Princess Belgiojoso and, later, the opponents of Orleanism described by Valerie Masuyer, Fitzharris’s diary and notes recorded how Hortense welcomed other Italian revolutionaries. These included Count Carlo Pepoli, a poet who would lead an uprising in the Romagna, and General Guglielmo Pepe, who would defend Venice against Austrian siege in 1848.<sup>82</sup>

As an astute member of the Beauharnais and Bonaparte families—one who had long operated in the courts of Europe—Hortense can have had few illusions about the political proclivities of her guests. She invited them, she introduced them to one another, and she gave them space to discuss and to plot. She also provided her sons with opportunities to add to their political education and pursue their objectives, facilitating a series of connections in an informal political space. A good example of the links that were forged, and the unintended consequences of those interactions, was the creation of a lifelong and politically valuable friendship for Fitzharris. He and Hortense’s son Louis-Napoleon were almost exactly the same age. He later described the 21-year old prince as ‘a very good horseman and proficient at athletic games, being short, but very active and muscular. His face was grave and dark, but redeemed by a singularly bright smile.’ He appeared to be ‘a wild harum-scarum youth, or what the French would call *un crâne* [daringly or courageously], riding at full gallop down the streets to the peril of the public, fencing, and pistol-shooting’.<sup>83</sup> Throughout Louis-Napoleon’s early adulthood, during his years as a revolutionary and into his presidency of the Second Republic, he would maintain contact with the young Englishman he had met in Rome. That friendship would be mutually beneficial in 1852, when Fitzharris was installed at the British Foreign Office, and together they negotiated their way through the declaration of the French Second Empire.<sup>84</sup> Hortense’s salon thus proved to have a long political afterlife.

Hortense’s political role was not restricted to her own salons; other social occasions also presented opportunities. Lady Blessington recorded an encounter at ‘a very splendid *bal masqué* at the Duchess de Bracciano’s’, where a ‘female mask ... accosted me several times’. It only became clear to her who the masked woman was when ‘she approached leaning on the arm of the Duc de Laval-Montmorenci’.<sup>85</sup> The Duc was Chateaubriand’s predecessor as French ambassador to Rome, and revealed to Blessington that the masked woman was Hortense. In Blessington’s account, this reads as an amusing society anecdote, yet an encounter of this kind had rather more significance. The English diarist



described how Bracciano's masked balls 'furnish an opportunity for the Duchesse de St Leu and the Prince de Montfort [Jérôme Bonaparte] to mix in general society'. This seems unlikely to have been used purely for social purposes. Blessington went on:

The Duc de Laval seizes these, the only occasions afforded to him, to give his arm to the Duchesse de St Leu, and to enjoy as much of her conversation as he can; his position as ambassador of France here precluding from going to her house.<sup>86</sup>

It is, of course, quite possible that Laval was merely interested in social chit-chat with Hortense, but it stretches credulity. The French ambassador, an experienced diplomat, would have been well aware of the opportunity to gain whatever intelligence he could from conversing with Napoleon's sister-in-law. In turn, she was able to gain information from encounters of this kind. In May 1828, for instance, she brought friends the intelligence that Laval was to be replaced by Chateaubriand.<sup>87</sup> As Kale has noted, elite women brought particular skills to political discourse: 'The largely oral and semi-private culture of aristocratic sociability gave women the role of reading character in the tone and sincerity of speech, accompanied by telling gestures, meaningful references, and sometimes insights drawn from physiognomy.'<sup>88</sup> Social exchanges of these kind furnish more examples of the ways in which space could be utilised by an aristocratic elite for political ends, however obscured by diplomatic and social niceties. Women were at the heart of this space.

The lives and experiences of the women considered in this analysis varied significantly. Some, like Hortense, were at the grandest level of the aristocracy; others, such as Lady Blessington and Lady Davy, operated in a less exalted milieu. Guccioli moved across both. What they shared, however, was a determination to take an active part in the exile society they inhabited. The roles they performed were vital for the functioning of that society, introducing and integrating new arrivals, forging relationships and, in several cases, actively supporting, encouraging and facilitating informal political processes. Perhaps a better term than 'facilitator' could be found for them—perhaps categorisation is in itself unhelpful—but these women do not fit easily into categories defined by the existing historiography, and they are overlooked. They were not 'incorporated' wives, they were more than 'partners' and their husbands were absent or socially and politically irrelevant. They were not *salonnières*, apart from Hortense, who was an unconventional one with a role both broader and more politically ambiguous than that. They operated autonomously in an environment which was not that of conventional executive or legislative politics, and in itself we have yet fully to explore or define. The lack of congruence between their activities and the roles described in existing scholarship is one of the reasons why they fall between the historiographical cracks.

Perhaps inevitably, this assessment raises as many questions as it does answers. The nature and extent of the part played by women of the exile elite is not entirely clear; neither are the dimensions of the world in which they moved. It is precisely because of such ambiguities that such women can fade into the historical background, despite their contemporary prominence. As Glenda Sluga has pointed out, 'it is no simple matter to historicise the presence or absence of individual women, and women as a collective category, in diplomacy and international politics'.<sup>89</sup> This analysis gives an example of one particular society in a narrowly-defined period, with case-studies of two women

for whom we are fortunate enough to have a reasonable amount of source material. Consideration of this society, however, suggests that much more analysis and exploration is necessary if we are to gain a better sense both of the nature of the politics with which such women engaged and of their participation in it. Notwithstanding the unusual nature of Roman society in this period, it seems certain that, across Europe, women were playing a myriad of such subtle roles, for which historians have yet fully to account.

## Notes

1. See, e.g. Austin K. Gray, *Teresa: The Story of Byron's Last Mistress* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1948); Iris Origo, *The Last Attachment* (London: Jonathan Cape & John Murray, 1949); Alexander Larman, *Byron's Women* (London: Head of Zeus, 2016).
2. See, e.g. Françoise Wagnere, *La Reine Hortense* [Queen Hortense] (Paris: J.C.-Lattès, 1992); François Jarry, *Hortense de Beauharnais* (Paris: Giovanangeli, 2009). Of the English-language biographies, one of the more substantial is: Constance Wright, *Daughter to Napoleon: A Biography of Hortense, Queen of Holland* (London: Alvin Redman, 1962).
3. See, e.g. Alain Corbin, Jacqueline Lalouette and Michèle Riot-Sarcey, eds., *Femmes dans la Cité, 1815-1871* (Grâne: éditions Créaphis, 1997); Jolanta T. Pekacz, 'Conservative Tradition in Pre-Revolutionary France: Parisian Salon Women', *The Age of Revolution and Romanticism*, no. 25 (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stephen Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009); Sharon Worley, *Women's Literary Salons and Political Propaganda During the Napoleonic Era* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2009).
4. Kale, *French Salons*, 141.
5. Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c.1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).
6. Chalus, *Elite Women*, 54–70.
7. Kim Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). See also: *The Incorporated Wife*, eds. Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (London: Croom Helm in association with the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women, 1984).
8. See, e.g. Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c.1750-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Jennifer Davey, 'The Invisible Politician: Mary Derby and the Eastern Crisis', in *On the Fringes of Diplomacy: Influences on British Foreign Policy, 1800-1945*, eds. John Fisher and Antony Best (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 17–34; Jennifer Mori, 'How Women Make Diplomacy: The British Embassy in Paris, 1815-1841', *Journal of Women's History*, 27, no.4 (2015): 137–59; Jennifer Davey, *Mary, Countess of Derby and the Politics of Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
9. Marina d'Amelia, 'Between Two Eras: Challenges Facing Women in the Risorgimento', in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, eds. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 118.
10. Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 170.
11. Jennifer Davey, 'Crossing the Floor: Mary Derby, the Fifteenth Earl and the Liberals, 1878-1882', in *Conservatism and British Foreign Policy, 1820-1920: The Derbys and their World*, ed. Geoffrey Hicks (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 170.
12. Harry Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento, 1790-1870* (Harlow: Longman, 1983), 103.

13. See, e.g. J.N.D (John Norman Davidson) Kelly and Michael Walsh, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 308–10; John Julius Norwich, *The Popes* (London: Vintage, 2011), 377.
14. Kale, *French Salons*, 121.
15. Augustus J.C. Hare, ed., *The Life and Letters of Frances, Baroness Bunsen* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1879), 2 vols., Baroness Bunsen to Mrs Waddington, 6 March 1829, i. 325.
16. Kale, *French Salons*, 145.
17. Prince Napoleon, ed., *Memoirs of Queen Hortense* (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1928), 2 vols.
18. Comte d'Haussonville, *Ma Jeunesse [My Youth], 1814-1830, Souvenirs [Memories]* (Paris: unnamed publisher, 1885).
19. Amélie Lenormant, ed., *Souvenirs et Correspondance tirés de Madame Récamier [Memories and Correspondence of Madame Récamier]*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1860); Jean Bourguignon, ed., *Mémoires, Lettres et Papiers de Valerie Masuyer [Memoirs, Letters and Papers of Valerie Masuyer]* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1937).
20. See, e.g. Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c.1690-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
21. T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], FO 43/21, Robert Smith to George Canning, drafted and dated 23 April 1827, forwarded to Foreign Office, 30 September 1828, received 7 February 1829, n [o] f[oliation].
22. Lenormant, *Souvenirs et Correspondance*, Chateaubriand to Récamier, 15 November 1828, 260.
23. For further consideration of the Grand Tour, see, e.g. Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Clare Hornsby, ed., *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London: The British School at Rome, 2000); Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (London: HarperCollins, 2001); Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: the Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003); Lisa Colletta, ed., *The Legacy of the Grand Tour: New Essays on Travel, Literature, and Culture* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015). For more general assessments of nineteenth-century travel, see, e.g. John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and the Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915* (London: Aurum Press, 1997).
24. TNA, FO 43/21, Robert Smith to George Canning, drafted and dated 23 April 1827, forwarded to Foreign Office, 30 September 1828, received 7 February 1829, n.f.
25. B[ritish] L[ibrary], Mss. Eur 312, Journal of Robert Trotter, 21 May 1838, f. 100.
26. TNA, FO 43/21, Richard Burgess to the Foreign Secretary, 12 July 1828, n.f.
27. Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours*, 59.
28. Countess of Blessington, *The Idler in Italy* (Paris: A. & W. Galignani & Co., 1839).
29. *Ibid.*, 388.
30. Earl of Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister: An Autobiography* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884), 2 vols.; Earl of Ilchester, ed., *The Journal of the Hon. Edward Henry Fox (afterwards fourth and last Lord Holland), 1818-1830* (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1923).
31. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 388.
32. BL Mss. Eur/F88/11, Journal of Mountstuart Elphinstone, October 1831.
33. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 278.
34. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 392.
35. Kale, *French Salons*, 134.
36. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 392.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 33.
39. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 408.

40. Susan Rutherford, *Verdi, Opera, Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 144.
41. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 33.
42. There is a shortage of English-language accounts of Princess Belgiojoso. The most detailed is: Beth Archer Brombert, *Cristina: Portrait of a Princess* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978). See, also, H. Remsen Whitehouse, *A Revolutionary Princess: Christina [sic] Belgiojoso-Trivulzio, Her Life and Times, 1808-71* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906).
43. See, e.g. Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Humphry Davy: Life Beyond the Lamp* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004).
44. Gray, *Teresa*, 260.
45. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 1 November 1824, 196.
46. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1824, 198.
47. *Ibid.*, 3 December 1824, 201.
48. *Ibid.*, 202.
49. Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2009), 2.
50. Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler, eds., *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-century British women writers and artists in Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 4.
51. Bourguignon, *Mémoires, Lettres et Papiers*, 238.
52. Peter Mandler, 'From Almack's to Willis's: Aristocratic Women and Politics, 1815-1867', in *Women, Privilege and Power in British Politics, 1750 to the Present*, ed. Amanda Vickery (Stanford, CA, 2001), 155.
53. d'Amelia, 'Between Two Eras', 118.
54. Leslie A. Marchand, ed., *Byron's Letters and Journals* (London: John Murray, 1973-82), 12 vols., vi, Byron to John Cam Hobhouse, 6 April 1819, 107; *ibid.*, Byron to Douglas Kinnaird, 24 April 1819, 115.
55. Marchand, ed., *Byron's Letters*, vi, Byron to Douglas Kinnaird, 24 April 1819, 114.
56. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 408.
57. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 26.
58. *Ibid.*, 26-7.
59. Jennifer Mori, 'Hosting the Grand Tour: Civility, Enlightenment and Culture, c.1740-1790', in *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices*, eds. Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (Farnham, 2009), 127.
60. Christopher Hibbert, ed., *Captain Gronow: His Reminiscences of Regency and Victorian Life, 1810-1860* (London: Kyle Cathie, 1991), 190-91.
61. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 408.
62. See, e.g. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 202, 315, 295.
63. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 30 April 1828, 295.
64. *Ibid.*, 20 June 1829, 338.
65. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 408.
66. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 17 February 1828, 268.
67. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 33.
68. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 3-4 September 1828, 315-16.
69. *Ibid.*, 7 November 1827, 238.
70. For Louis-Napoleon's early life, see, e.g. J.M. (James Matthew) Thompson, *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965); James F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (London and New York: Longman, 1991); Fenton Bresler, *Napoleon III: A Life* (London: HarperCollins, 1999).
71. *The Times*, 28 April 1832.
72. Pamela Pilbeam, 'The "Impossible Restoration": The Left and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Legacies', in *Napoleon's Legacy: Problems of Government in Restoration Europe*, eds. David Laven and Lucy Riall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 183-97, 188.
73. For the 'White Terror', see: Daniel P. Resnick, *The White Terror and the Political Reaction after Waterloo*, Harvard Historical Studies, 77 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,

1966); Brian Fitzpatrick, *Catholic Royalism in the Department of the Gard, 1814-1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); James Roberts, *The Counter-Revolution in France, 1787-1830* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1990), 89; Robert Alexander, '“No, Minister”: French Restoration Rejection of Authoritarianism', in *Napoleon's Legacy*, eds. Laven and Riall, 29–47; Brian Fitzpatrick, 'The *Royaume du Midi* of 1815', in *Napoleon's Legacy*, eds. Laven and Riall, 167–81; Pilbeam, 'The “Impossible Restoration”', in Laven and Riall, *Napoleon's Legacy*, 183–97; Philip Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, rev. ed. (London: John Murray, 2005), 259.

74. Prince Napoleon, *Memoirs of Queen Hortense*, ii. 209.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *The Times*, 24 October 1816.
77. Prince Napoleon, *Memoirs of Queen Hortense*, ii. 247.
78. *Ibid.*, 253.
79. D’Haussenville, *Ma Jeunesse*, 196.
80. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 33.
81. Bourguignon, *Mémoires, Lettres et Papiers*, 3.
82. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 23. A typographical error lists Pepe as ‘Repè’. Notes in Malmesbury’s papers confirm the correct identity of the General: Hampshire Record Office, Malmesbury MS., 9M73/454, undated, n.f.
83. Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, i. 33.
84. For a detailed account of those negotiations, see: Geoffrey Hicks, *Peace, War and Party Politics: The Conservatives and Europe, 1846-59* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 116–33.
85. Blessington, *Idler in Italy*, 391.
86. *Ibid.*, 392.
87. Ilchester, *Journal of Henry Edward Fox*, 17 May 1828, 299.
88. Kale, *French Salons*, 135.
89. Glenda Sluga, 'Women, Diplomacy and International Politics, before and after the Congress of Vienna', in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500*, eds. Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 120.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my colleague Jennifer Davey, who offered me very useful advice on drafts of this article, and also to the reviewers, whose suggestions much improved it. Any errors that remain are, of course, my own.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

*Geoffrey Hicks* is Associate Professor in Modern British History, University of East Anglia. He has published widely on political history and foreign policy. Among his publications are *Peace, War and Party Politics: The Conservatives and Europe, 1846–59* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and (as lead editor) *Documents on Conservative Foreign Policy, 1852–1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). He is currently working on a biography of the third Earl of Malmesbury.