

# The early musealization of writers' and artists' houses through guidebooks

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**Abstract:** *Writers' and artists' residences developed into museums only at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, when houses inhabited by Walpole, Rousseau and Petrarch as well as Canova's birthplace were turned into tourist destinations. This shift is apparent in the guidebooks to these mansions published in the decades between 1780 and 1840. In examining such booklets, this article highlights the long-term transformations of the phenomenon of the writers' and artists' house, and particularly the changing interaction of curators and visitors these texts allow to identify. In order to investigate this evolution in museological communication, this essay discusses the guidebooks to Horace Walpole's Twickenham villa (1784), Petrarch's country house in Arquà close to Padua (1797 and 1830), the villa and gardens designed by Melchiorre Cesarotti in Selvazzano also close to Padua (1810), Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "Les Charmettes" near Chambéry (1811) and Canova's studio/residence/museum in Possagno (1837).*

**Keywords:** House Museums, Guidebooks, Horace Walpole, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Francis Petrarch, Melchiorre Cesarotti, Antonio Canova.

The houses of illustrious individuals, particularly writers and artists, have been a destination for visitors since at least the early modern age, when travellers started to include such locations in their Grand Tour itineraries. Yet it was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that they assumed a museum-like character when, fueled by the appeal of genius combined with patriotic sentiments and historic interests, a romantic sensibility imbued them with a special aura (Guichard *et al.* 2009, Hendrix

2009, Nora 1997). This transformation was facilitated by the introduction of guidebooks on these locations, in the form of booklets conceived in order to frame these houses as memorial institutions as well as to guide visitors' experiences of the buildings. In turn, the existence of such booklets helped promote these locations as standard ingredients in the repertoire of guides designed for the emerging organised tourism market, beginning with John Murray's handbooks for travellers published

in the early 1840s. From the first volumes, dedicated to central and northern Italy, these handbooks encouraged readers to visit not only the workshops of living artists, where works of art could be purchased, but also historic residences that preserve the memory of the great figures of literature and the visual arts (Murray 1842, Murray 1843).<sup>1</sup>

The early guidebooks to such houses thus document a transition in both travel culture and museological practice. They are the outcome of a long-standing habit of admitting visitors to dwellings of writers and artists, a practice amply documented in other source materials, particularly travelogues such as the *Voyages historiques et littéraires en Italie pendant les années 1826–1828* by Valéry (1831–35) and Lord Byron's poem *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*.<sup>2</sup> But they also enable us to better understand in which ways these locations were organised to accomodate such visits, and how their owners and/or curators adapted their policies in response to growing public interest.

In order to follow this transition more closely, this essay discusses some of the most significant early guidebooks to houses of writers and artists dating from the 1770s through the 1830s.<sup>3</sup> These include locations that had been museums for many centuries, notably Petrarch's countryside retreat in Arquà near Padua, which had admitted admirers for almost 250 years when from 1790 onwards various aids including guidebooks were introduced to better accomodate such visits (Hendrix 2008).<sup>4</sup> But my main focus is on booklets that discuss a number of (semi-) museum-like structures created *ex novo* that immediately attracted large numbers of curious visitors, starting with the oldest and arguably best known specimen of such an early guidebook, the *Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole [...] at Strawberry-Hill near*

*Twickenham, Middlesex. With an Inventory of the Furniture, Pictures, Curiosities, &c.*, drafted in 1774 by Horace Walpole himself and published at his own expense ten years later (Walpole 1784/2010).

### STRAWBERRY HILL

As eclectic and hybrid as the villa to which it refers, Walpole's *Description* arose out of the need to satisfy an ever growing audience's curiosity for the writer's summer house, which the author himself had carefully designed, constructed and decorated in the three decades after he acquired the property in 1747 (fig. 1). As a result, the guidebook is both a catalogue and a celebration of this grandiose and highly idiosyncratic project. The text records the gradual transformation of an enterprise that began as a profoundly personal creative endeavour, inspired as it was by the unconventional predilections of a man whose literary imagination also left its mark on the peculiar and indeed extravagant stylistic choices informing the process of building and decorating the place.<sup>5</sup> This resulted in a structure that, because of its unconventional nature, immediately attracted wide public interest, to which Walpole responded by providing a practical guide for visitors that gave explanations, while also justifying his choices.<sup>6</sup> Initially intended only to inform staff members accompanying visitors around the house,<sup>7</sup> the finished guidebook turned out to be a rather elaborate handbook of over 100 pages, including detailed digressions on the history of the house, as well as twenty-six illustrations.

For Walpole himself, it also served as an incentive to continue expanding and indeed documenting his peculiar collections, eager as he was to save the gothic items he held so dear



Fig. 1. Paul Sandby, *Strawberry Hill House*, ca. 1769, watercolour, 39,2 x 75,7 cm, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (© public domain).

from dispersal or even destruction.<sup>8</sup> The text thus in fact became a *catalogue raisonnée* of a private collection conceived with museum-like purposes in mind, driven by the owner's/curator's desire to not only collect but also to preserve and present specific categories of objects to the general audience. Yet, irrespective of the author's declared objectives, the *Description* essentially constitutes a systematic guide for visitors to Walpole's villa, and its value lies above all in the basic information it provides about the museal arrangement devised and created by Walpole and presented to his guests. These detailed indications in fact proved invaluable in the recent restoration of

the villa (2003–10), which returned it to the overall system conceived by Walpole. As a result, it can still be visited today as it was in the late eighteenth century, albeit without its collection, dispersed after the owner's death.<sup>9</sup>

The practical approach adopted in the *Description* is evident in its structure, since the booklet is presented as an itinerary for visitors. The text instructs guests as to which direction to take, and explains what they see in the various spaces to be visited.

Entering by the great north gate, the first object that presents itself is a small oratory enclosed with iron rails [...]. On the right hand is a small garden called

the abbot's garden, parted off by an open screen, taken from the tomb of Roger Niger bishop of London in old St. Paul's. Passing on the left, by a small cloister, is the entrance to the house [...]. Over the door are three shields of Walpole, Shorter and Robsart. You first enter a small gloomy hall paved with hexagon tiles, and lighted by the two narrow windows of painted glass, representing St. John and St. Francis. This hall is united with the staircase, and both are hung with gothic paper, painted by one Tudor, from the screen of prince Arthur's tomb in the cathedral of Worcester. (Walpole 1784/2010:400–401).

While the narrative is structured following the visitor's perspective, the proposed itinerary, the illustrations of objects and the various comments reveal a constant urge for control by the author/curator, who proposes his personal interpretation of what guests are expected and indeed allowed to see. As such, the booklet is a reflection of the actual approach adopted in many carefully controlled guided visits to the house, a practice partly managed by the owner – in the case of illustrious guests or friends entitled to a complete visit – and partly by his servant who, upon presentation of a special ticket issued by Walpole (fig. 2), would accompany small groups of up to four people. In the latter case, however, a more restricted route was taken and visitors were supplied with the illustrated explanations provided in the *Description*.<sup>10</sup>

The information provided in the guidebook is both varied and concise, being clearly designed primarily to satisfy the spontaneous curiosity of visitors eager to receive some brief indications explaining where the objects they see come from, what characteristics they have and how they may be interpreted, as well as what particular association with the owner they have. In the presentation of some particular rooms, however, long lists of objects

belonging to the same category are given. Sometimes numbered, they take the form of genuine catalogues presenting captions for the large array of materials collected by Walpole in a more or less systematic manner. This is for example the case with the collection of portrait miniatures proudly displayed in the so-called Gallery (Walpole 1784/2010:470–493). The arrangement and decoration of the spaces as specified in the *Description* nonetheless follow criteria associated with Walpole's personal, very specific taste, particularly when it comes to his collection of objects.

Strawberry Hill House thus attracted visitors motivated by a curiosity for that unusual, and in many respects extravagant dwelling that might indeed be considered a materialised literary universe in its own right, equalling the highly acclaimed novel *The Castle of Otranto* conceived there in 1764. Not unlike that masterpiece of fiction, it is a milestone of artistic innovation which exerted an immediate and long-lasting influence on the history of taste, in fact initiating a widespread, and enduring preference for the (neo)gothic (McCarthy 1987, Wainwright 1989:70–107). Walpole's guide to the house therefore served not only as a practical tool but also as a manifesto designed to explain and commemorate his enterprise.

As such, it continues a more comprehensive tradition of guidebook-like texts early modern humanists had dedicated to the private homes they themselves had designed as locations where specific ideas on art and literature materialised. To explain the programmatic nature of such dwellings, often designated as “museums” to frame these houses as places dedicated to the worship of the muses, authors like Paolo Giovio, whose residence on Lake Como was built around 1540, had included in his *Musaei Iioviano Descriptio* a systematic description of the collection of portraits at

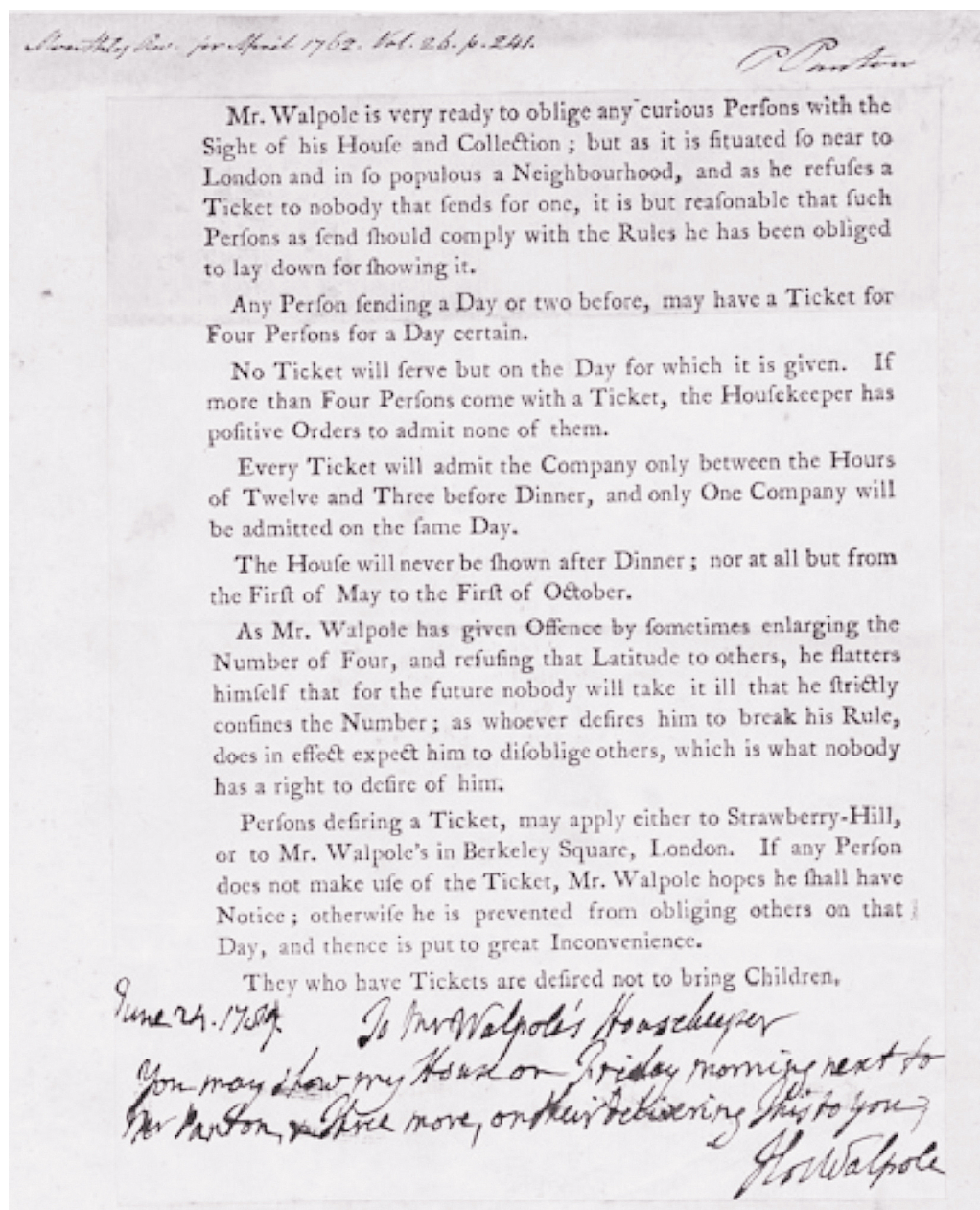


Fig. 2. Horace Walpole, Instructions for the visit of Strawberry Hill House, ca. 1780, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (© public domain).



its centre, thus offering a model for Walpole's *Description* of his Twickenham villa (Giovio 1546:lv.–3v.).<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the Dutch seventeenth-century author and statesman Constantijn Huygens had published an elaborate poem illustrating his project to build himself an ideal writers' retreat called Hofwijck ("away from court"). Conceived as a micro-universe, this suburban residence built in Voorburg near The Hague between 1639 and 1642 can still be visited today (Huygens 2008).

### PETRARCH'S HOUSE

The transition from private home to museum, as documented by the guide to Strawberry Hill shortly after the construction of the villa, can also be seen more or less simultaneously in the far older writers' retreat Francis Petrarch had created in the hamlet of Arquà. In this case, however, the transition was more complex, since it was preceded by a long proto-museological phase that had started in the early sixteenth century. The house, conceived by Petrarch himself as an ideal countryside retreat for a man of letters like himself, had served as a site of literary pilgrimage since the poet's death in 1374. While this practice had continued since then, some two centuries later the house was transformed into a site of memory for the poet and his work, when in 1547 an elaborate decorative project was installed, which by honouring the poet's memory, aimed at gratifying the expectations of the numerous visitors, who always had been well-received by the residents of the house (Hendrix 2008).

Yet it was only at the end of the eighteenth century, in the same years in which Walpole's Strawberry Hill project came into being, that this older arrangement was transformed into a house museum by the introduction of written

materials intended to accompany, facilitate and control the constant flow of visitors. In 1787 the Venetian patrician Girolamo Zulian rented the house with the explicit intention of restoring it and dedicating it exclusively to visits. As part of his museological project, Zulian set about regulating visitors' age-old habit of writing their signatures on the internal walls of the house by introducing a book in which they were encouraged to leave a comment or poem, along with their signature. The introduction of these so-called *Codici di Arquà* – which document visits to the house from May 1788 to the present day<sup>12</sup> – contributed greatly to formalising visits to the house and encouraging publications relating to the experience, including Ugo Foscolo's famous report as given in his semi-autobiographical *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (Foscolo 1802:15–25).<sup>13</sup> This is demonstrated by the fact that these visitor registers were published within a few years of their introduction in the house museum. The first volume, *Il Codice di Arquà*, was printed in 1810, assembling a selection of signatures and comments from 1787 to 1810. It was followed in 1827 by a collection of legible signatures on the walls, *La casa ed il sepolcro del Petrarca ad Arquà*.<sup>14</sup>

Further proof of the transformation of the house in Arquà into a museum structure within a context of growing organised tourism can be found in a number of publications that, from the 1790s, provided visitors with useful information for their visit, including historical and practical information and miscellaneous facts. In *Petrarca in Arquà*, for instance, Giovanni Battista Zaborra offers a "historic-scientific dissertation" designed to engage his contemporaries' interest in what he considers as one of the most beautiful places in the area, a predilection confirmed by Petrarch's decision to make it his place of residence (Zaborra

14 1797). In the almost hundred-page-long text – a rich, diligently collected historical record – the author does not conceal the fact that his erudite zeal derives from his passion for the poet and the places that preserve his memory. As a result, he offers detailed descriptions not only of Petrarch's house and the various spaces that could be visited, but also of the poet's tomb and other places in the immediate surroundings traditionally associated with him. He does not hesitate to point out interesting elements that have always played a key role in literary pilgrimages to Arquà, including anecdotes on the enbalméd cadaver of Petrarch's presumed cat on display in one of the rooms, as well as references to the safety measures adopted in order to avoid any further offences by pilgrims.

Along with the house, the tomb, and the Cat, his favourite house in Arquà still preserves his chair, a worm-eaten cabinet, worn away by the years and by the great wisdom of tourists from beyond the mountains, who would flock here, as they still do, to visit Petrarch's place of residence, and that cold marble, which encloses his inanimate remains, seeing these mysterious remains as an invaluable relic of his memory, and taking a few small particles away with them. They would be nothing but worn-out scraps by now had they not recently been nailed into the walls and protected with an iron cover; too universal was the avid desire to possess these pieces of furniture used by him (Zaborra 1797:XLV–XLVI).

The focus on the places and objects connected with Petrarch's memory is also enhanced by the decision to include a set of six engravings dedicated to the house and its furniture, which is presented as authentic, the poet's tomb and a fountain named after him, as well as a panoramic view of the place where the poet's residence is clearly indicated (fig. 3) and an image of the lake near the hamlet.<sup>15</sup> Despite



Fig. 3. Francesco Bellucco, *Panoramic view of Arquà with Petrarch's house indicated by an asterisk*, in Zaborra 1797 (© private collection).

its erudite character, Zaborra's work thus becomes a booklet for travellers, whom it explicitly encourages to visit the place and its natural context. This approach – somewhere between museum and landscape-centred – also characterises some later publications, from Giuseppe Barbieri's poetic epistle *Invito ad Arquà* published in 1824 (Barbieri 1824) to *Una visita ad Arquà*, a guidebook produced by the engraver Pietro Chevalier in 1830 and accompanied by an attractive set of eight lithographs featuring now familiar images (Chevalier 1830): the house and furniture, the tomb and fountain, the cat, the praetorian palace, as well as the lake and the panoramic view.

### LES CHARMETTES

The series of texts connected with visits to Petrarch's house in Arquà published between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrates the transformation of the building into a museum: a private residence becomes a house museum by the introduction of tools designed both to facilitate visits (the book of signatures) and to regulate and control tourists' behaviour (the measures taken to

protect the furniture). It also shows how this site of memory gradually is presented as part of a broader context, made of architectural and natural elements to be found in the surrounding landscape. The texts discussed here also prove that they are responses to a well-established practice, which they intend to encourage in order to attract even more visitors.

This same ambition also characterises what is perhaps the first guide to a residence of an illustrious man of letters in the Francophone world: *Notice sur les Charmettes, vallon des environs de Chambéry; à l'usage des voyageurs qui visitent la retraite de J.J. Rousseau*, published in 1811 by George-Marie Raymond (1811; cf. Védrine 2009). Having recently purchased the country house near Chambéry in 1810, where Rousseau had spent a particularly happy

period of his life around 1740 in the company of Mme De Warens (fig. 4), Raymond set about producing a useful tool to help the frequent visitors understand and fully appreciate the house. As such, the *Notice* not only describes how to reach the residence from Chambéry and which itinerary should be followed while visiting the interior of the house. It also illustrates and comments the various spaces, specifying how they were used by the illustrious couple and even pointing out changes made to the different rooms after Rousseau and Mme de Warens's stay.

We estimated that the many travellers that visit this secluded spot would welcome some precise instructions to help them recognise the elements they have come to see more easily, and bring them

Fig. 4. Pierre Lacour fils, *Les Charmettes*, 1825. In *Id.*, *Voyage à Rome fait en 1824 et 1825*, ms. Bibliothèque Municipale de Bordeaux, vol 1, c. 69 (© public domain).





back to mind [...] We will describe these further on; let us begin by guiding the reader there. I will follow the order of the places themselves here, this being the most appropriate and best-suited means of retracing the natural series of objects that will have caught the reader's eye (Raymond 1811:5–6, 11).

In this way, he repeats a strategy already seen in Walpole's *Description*, by including in his own explanations responses to queries evidently raised by actual visitors to the house. Similarly to the practice introduced in Petrarch's house in Arquà twenty years earlier, Raymond also asks visitors to leave their signatures in a register introduced for that purpose.

I have introduced a register in the house to keep a record of the names of the foreigners and travellers, who are generally delighted to have the opportunity to record the date of their trip in the places they have visited. In my absence, the farmers are responsible for presenting the register to the individuals whose curiosity they satisfy by opening up the house to them. I sincerely regret that this quite obvious idea was not implemented by the owners that preceded me (Raymond 1811:21).

Albeit still a private residence, the house is managed like a museum, a site where Rousseau's memory is closely guarded over and celebrated. This is evidenced not only by the use of the register of signatures but also by the policy of preserving the interiors so as to reflect the cohabitation of the author and his muse, based on the ample documentation given in Rousseau's writings. The text also organises the visit, which is structured around quotations from Rousseau's works relating to the house. As such, visitors are invited to identify with Rousseau's perspective and relive his own emotions about the residence.

However, by introducing Rousseau's testi-

mony as a guide for visitors, Raymond cannot avoid spatially expanding the experience of the visit, the surroundings of the house being central to the writer-philosopher's happy memories. Indeed, *Notice* offers visitors information that extends far beyond the house itself. It in fact goes so far as to explain elements of the landscape not described by Rousseau but deemed interesting by Raymond, who does not conceal his passion for this region yet feels obliged to justify these digressions:

Here we are, one might proclaim, far from Les Charmettes. Yet why find fault with details that are inextricably tied to the situation of the spectator? Is not everything his eyes behold part of this situation? (Raymond 1811:57)<sup>16</sup>

Referring to the "situation du spectateur" (the spectator's situation), Raymond reiterates that his *Notice* is centred on the visitor's perspective, an approach that also characterises Walpole's *Description*, as already noted. Raymond's guide thus seeks to accompany and direct the tourist's gaze, presenting a precise itinerary structured around an abundant flow of information and remarks rooted in the recollections of Rousseau. While this clearly reflects the author's own vision and preferences, it also testifies to a well-established practice of guiding visitors and of experienced interaction between visitors and the person accompanying them, not unlike what we have seen in the guidebooks to the houses of Walpole and Petrarch.

## LISTS, INVENTORIES, AND CATALOGUES

Just a few years later, this trend to fuse the visitor's and curator's perspectives dissipated. It made way for a more neutral approach restricted to offering visitors only descriptions without accompanying interpretations or

assessments, or even merely a record of what they would be able to see when visiting a specific place. This transition is emblematically illustrated by a book dedicated to various dwellings where Jean-Jacques Rousseau resided: *Vues de différentes habitations de J.J. Rousseau*, published in 1819, just a few years after Raymond's guide. Here, the editor, typographer Charles Philibert de Lasteyrie du Saillant, restricts himself to presenting a series of ten lithographs of the homes, including two of Les Charmettes. Restraining from any comments he gives only a few quotations, almost always from *Les Confessions*, in which Rousseau makes references that could be associated with the various abodes in question (Lasteyrie du Saillant 1819).<sup>17</sup>

Such an impersonal approach, limited to recording what is to be seen in specific locations, also characterises the two guides this essay intends to present by way of conclusion, since they mark the end of the transition examined here. In these texts, a recently created structure that combines private and public features is presented with the double intent of guiding visitors and framing the building as a site of commemoration. This is evident in the work Giuseppe Barbieri dedicated to the villa with adjoining garden that his master – the scholar and poet Melchiorre Cesarotti – had built between 1785 and 1805 near Padua, in the small hamlet of Selvazzano. Conceived and cultivated as a “vegetable poem”, in clear imitation of the model devised by Walpole a few years earlier for his villa in Twickenham, Cesarotti's structure is distinguished above all by the “philosophical” character accorded to the garden. This is achieved through the introduction of many inscriptions distributed throughout different parts of the villa as well as in the external area and garden (cf. Venturi 2002, Donà 2008).

In *Selvaggiano od iscrizioni ed abbellimenti letterari collocati nella villa dell'abate Cesarotti*, published in 1810, just a few years after Cesarotti's death as part of his complete works, Barbieri wished to honour his master's memory and document what he presents as an authentic contribution to his literary production (Barbieri 1810).<sup>18</sup> With great philological care, he therefore limits himself to recording Cesarotti's own designs.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, he also offers the user – whether they are visiting the garden or reading the text – useful information to identify the places as well as a few minor elements deemed necessary both for understanding which motives drove Cesarotti in planning the design and decoration of his villa and garden and for situating individual elements – from frescoes to inscriptions – in the places allocated to them.

The same approach also typifies a slightly later text, from 1837, which marks the conclusion of a similar project initiated in 1822 to transform a site of memory that originally served as the private residence of an illustrious individual – in this case, the sculptor Antonio Canova – into a museum meant to attract visitors. In a dynamic similar to the one described for Cesarotti, after his death Canova's heir and half-brother Giovanni Battista Sartori came up with the idea of collecting Canova's artistic heritage in the house in which he had been born, in Possagno, particularly the materials left in the studio in Rome that Sartori had closed in 1826 (cfr. Crova 2012, Cunial 2003). With the clear aim of honouring and preserving the memory of his illustrious relative for posterity, Sartori had the residence extended between 1831 and 1836, introducing a series of spaces in which to house the artist's unfinished or unsold works, as well as his large collection of plaster casts, creating a “Gallery” of considerable scale (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. *Gipsoteca Canoviana*, postcard ca. 1920 (© private collection).

Designed from the outset to be open to the public, Sartori produced a visitors' guide in 1837 – the booklet *Gypsotheca Canoviana eretta in Possagno*. In its forty-seven pages, the text presents a list of 195 objects on display for visitors to admire (Sartori Canova 1837). With no introductory or explanatory text, the booklet constitutes a simple inventory of the collection, but is however organised according to the spatial order in which the works are distributed across two “sections” of the Gallery. The descriptions, which are generally fairly rudimentary, take the form of captions, sometimes with a few notes on how the work was produced or commissioned.

14. One of the young Priestesses with torch, in the Monument to Archduchess Maria Cristina. Model.
15. Virtue with urn, in the same Monument. Model.
16. Beneficence, group in the same Monument. Plaster cast. No. 18. The model of this Monument was produced in 1803, and the marble was erected in 1805 in the Augustinian Church, Vienna.
17. Deposition from the Cross (Pietà). Model produced in 1822. The bronze casting produced by the sculptor Gaetano Ferrari in 1829 is situated in the Temple in Possagno.
18. Beneficence. Group in the Monument to Archduchess Maria Christina. Model.
19. Genius with Lion, in the same Monument. Model. See Note No. 16 (Sartori Canova 1837:8–9)

## CONCLUSIONS

The predominantly factual presentation of the collection on display in the site of memory dedicated to Canova suggests that around 1840, i.e. when organised tourism materialised as manifested in John Murray's guides, the transition this essay has sought to illustrate came to a close. As we have seen in the cases of Walpole, Petrarch and Rousseau, up to the 1810s visits to the homes of illustrious individuals remained inextricably linked to the private character of the buildings in question. This is borne out by itineraries and comments that highlight the intimate character of the rooms and the personal choices dominating their layout and decoration. Such an approach is also revealed by the characteristic attempt to bring the visitor's perspective closer to that of the illustrious individual concerned, directing the tourist's gaze according to the intentions of the person that chose to design the house in a specific way (Walpole), or following the personal experience of the place recorded in their writings (Petrarch, Rousseau).

Alongside this practice – based on guided, commented visits – the tendency to organise tourist visits to sites of memory in a more professional, less personal manner gained ground with the introduction of tools designed to regulate visitors' behaviour: registers in Petrarch's and Rousseau's houses; Walpole's

rules; and measures to protect the furniture in Petrarch's house. At the same time, the rhetoric centred on the tourist's perspective dwindled, being replaced with a museum philosophy restricted to offering visitors a neutral, purely explanatory catalogue of the items on display without obliging them to follow the route laid out by the person managing the building, as we have seen in the cases of Cesarotti and Canova.

The transition from private building to museum structure that characterizes the practice of the house museum dedicated to the memory of illustrious artists and writers between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, thus went hand in hand with a new perception of the status of the visitor and a different approach on the communication between curators and audiences. While around 1780 visitors were still considered primarily as welcome guests that appreciated and indeed expected being accompanied and instructed during their visit in order to immerse themselves in the intellectual and artistic universe of the illustrious personage commemorated, around 1830 they became seen as autonomous tourists capable of making their own choices when visiting a museum-house. To do so, they required guides offering objective information and abstaining from directing their gaze, as had been customary in the previous decades when such guides had first appeared.

## NOTES

1. The part dedicated to Rome, centred on a study trip undertaken in 1837–38 (Murray 1843:iii–iv), includes a section dedicated to “artists’ studios” (457–459) as well as another to “historical houses”, including the (presumed) residences of Raphael, Bernini, Zuccari, Poussin, and others. Besides a few rare exceptions, however, including

Ariosto's house in Ferrara, it should be noted that such residences had not yet become museums, and their interiors could therefore not be visited.

2. The Italian itinerary mentioned in Book IV of Byron's poem, published in 1818, includes a reference to a journey undertaken by the author in the spring of 1817. Byron's description of places associated with eminent individuals had a significant bearing on John Murray's tourist guides on Italy, published in the early 1840s; see Schaff 2009.
3. Translated into English by Victoria Weavil with funding by Research Council of Norway through the TRAUM – Transforming Author Museums project (project number 25125), this essay is based on a paper given in Italian on “La prima guidistica alle case di artisti e letterati (1780–1840)” at the 8th national conference of the Associazione Italiana di Studi Urbani, Naples, September 8, 2017, in a panel organised by Marco Folin on “Case d'artista: dal culto degli uomini illustri alle musealizzazioni otto-novecentesche”. A slightly different version translated into French, “Les guides de maisons d'écrivains et d'artistes: les débuts (1780–1840)”, was published in *Culture et Musées. Muséologie et recherches sur la culture* 34 (2019): 31–53.
4. A detailed description of the house in Arquà where Petrarch died in 1374 can be found as early as the mid-seventeenth century, in Chapter XIX: “Arquadae collis vicus, e Petrarchae domicilium”, in Tomasini 1650:116–130. As an isolated, exceptional example of the phenomenon of museum-like visits to the homes of illustrious individuals, it lies outside the scope of this essay.
5. Walpole asserts that: “I do not mean to defend by argument a small capricious house. It was built to please my own taste, and in some degree to realize my own visions. I have specified what it contains: could I describe the gay but tranquil scene where it stands, and add the beauty of the landscape to the romantic cast of the mansion, it would

- raise more pleasing sensations than a dry list of curiosities can excite: at least the prospect would recall the good humour of those who might be disposed to condemn the fantastic fabric, and to think it a very proper habitation of, as it was the scene that inspired, the author of the *Castle of Otranto*" (Walpole 1784/2010:398).
6. Visits to the villa were also governed by specific regulations devised by Walpole himself: see Chalcraft & Viscardi 2007:18–20.
  7. Walpole in the Preface: "It is not, however, intended for public sale, and originally was meant only to assist those who should visit the place" (Walpole 1784/2010:395). The first version of the guide drafted by Walpole in 1774 had a print run of only 100 copies, for private use. The version revised by the owner himself in 1784, with a print run of 200 copies – including 80 for individual use – was reprinted posthumously in Walpole 1798:393–515; cf. Chalcraft & Viscardi 2007.
  8. "A farther view succeeded; that of exhibiting specimens of Gothic architecture, as collected from standards in cathedrals and chapel-tombs, and showing how they may be applied to chimney-pieces, ceilings, windows, balustrades, loggias, &c. The general disuse of Gothic architecture, and the decay and alterations so frequently made in churches, give prints a chance of being the sole preservatives of that style" (Walpole 1784/2010:395).
  9. Walpole's collection was the subject of an exhibition at the Yale Centre for British Art (2009–10) and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (2010); cf. Snodin 2010. On the sale of the collection in 1842, cf. id.:260–274.
  10. On the management of the visits to the villa and the itineraries proposed and/or permitted, cf. Chalcraft & Viscardi 2007:15–21, 51.
  11. Destroyed as early as 1615, the "Museum" of Giovio was short-lived; cf. Minonzio 2007:77.
  12. Originals in Padua, Biblioteca Civica, C.P. Album 1–35. In the publication of the first manuscript, the editor refers to books containing even older signatures that have now been lost, and of which no trace remains: *Codice* 1810:i–ii.
  13. Foscolo visited Petrarch's Arquà house while staying in the region during the summer of 1796. The report given in a letter included in his semi-autobiographical novel is dated November 20, 1797. On this episode, cfr. Colombo 2005.
  14. *Codice* 1810:x–xii (notes on the introduction of the registers), xiii–xvi (notes on the house). Successive publications of the books of signatures in Caldani 1827 and Macola 1874.
  15. The drawings and engravings are by Francesco Bellucco.
  16. The part dedicated to the description of the house in *Notice* is limited to pp. 18–24, while the section relating to the surrounding area is far longer (25–68). The latter also includes some detailed digressions on the town of Chambéry (57–68) and the thermal baths far away in Aix (45–47).
  17. Introducing the ten images of the houses, the booklet includes a lithography with the portrait of Rousseau. The booklet is one of the first products developed using the new lithography technique, introduced in France by Lasteurie himself.
  18. The text was republished in Barbieri 1876, and again in Donà 2008:515–529.
  19. In some parts of the text (cf. e.g. Donà 2008:517), Barbieri notes that his work is based on a comparison of the inscriptions recorded in loco and the drafts identified in Cesarotti's manuscripts, which he edited.

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