

A painting of a man in a wide-brimmed hat looking out over a landscape with ancient ruins.

JOURNEY TO ITALY: Nationhood and Freedom

October 19, 2021

OFFICE HOURS THIS WEEK:

- I'm available ONLY:
 - Wednesday evening 8-10, Beijing time
 - Thursday evening 8-10, Beijing time
 - Friday evening 9-10, Beijing time
- You must schedule Office Hours for Thursday or Friday by 11pm Wednesday evening, Beijing time, as I will be mostly away from my computer afterwards.



Representing Vesuvius

Discussion Questions

- The ruins of Pompeii were discovered in the early 1700s and Vesuvius was active across the century. According to your reading of the Goethe excerpt, what educational experience might Grand Tourists and later travelers have sought to attain through a visit to the active volcano and its ancient ruins?
- How is Felicia Hemans' poetic description of Vesuvius and Pompeii similar to / different from Goethe's?
- How is Angelica Kauffman's depiction of Vesuvius (Pliny the Younger and His Mother) and Pompeii similar to / different from Michael Wutky's (The Summit of Vesuvius Erupting)?



Nationhood and Freedom

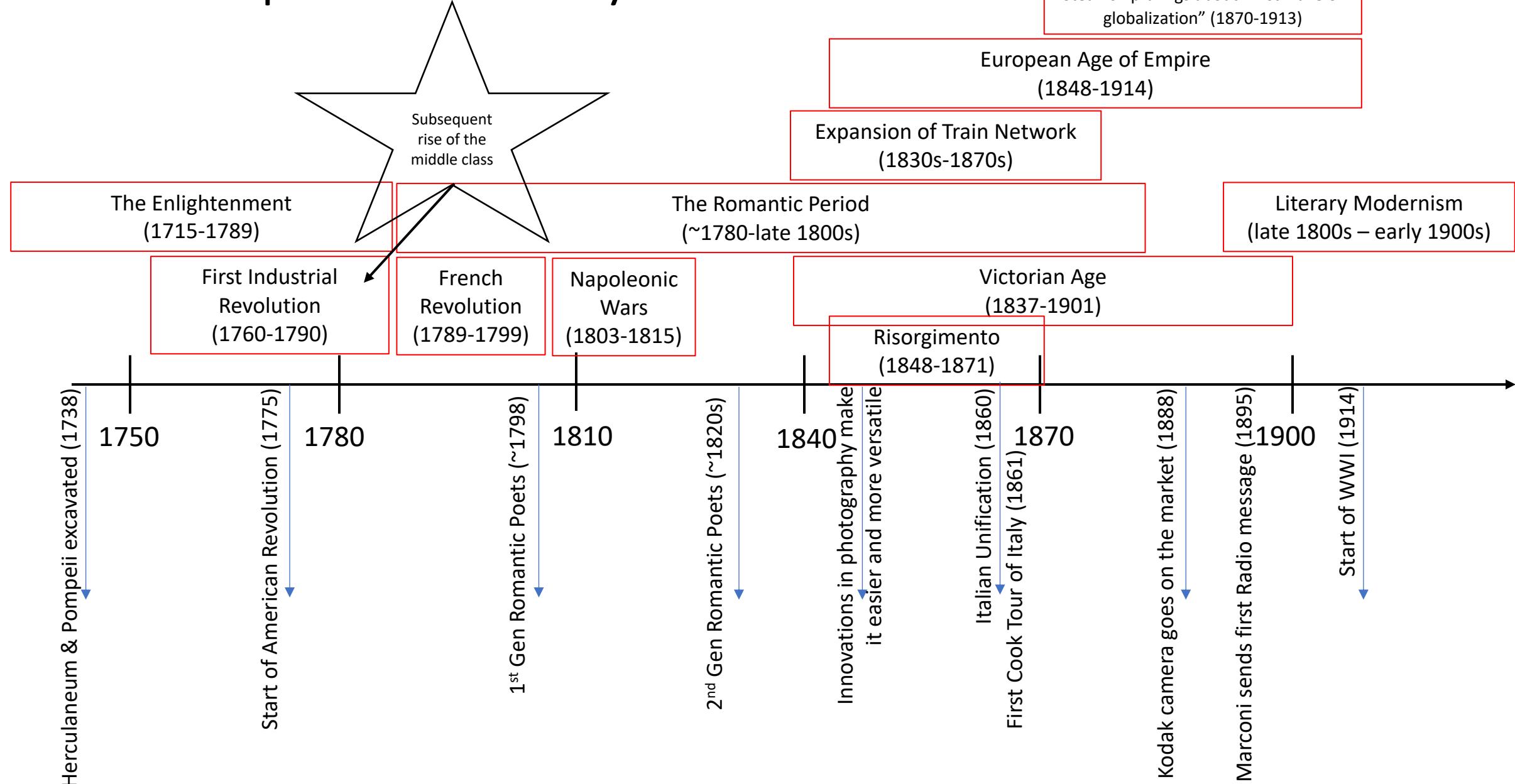


Petrarch, Canzone 128 “Italy”

- Canzone (or "Song") 128 comes from a collection of Petrarchan poems known as the *Canzoniere* ("Songbook") or the *Rime Sparse* ("Scattered Rhymes")
- He's writing from Parma
- Critical of Italian nobility
- His disgust with constant warfare and foreign rulers
- Who is he speaking to?
- What/who does he cite to incite a desire for freedom?



European History Timeline



Byron, Shelley, Leopardi and Barrett Browning's Italy

- After Petrarch's time, Italy continued to suffer various wars by (mainly foreign) powers for control of its land
- By the time of Napoleon, it was divided much as it had been for centuries: foreign control from Naples down, Papal States in the center, a few autonomous states, protectorates of the Papal States, in the center and in Venice, and the House of Savoy ruling in the Northwest.
- Map of Italy in 1796 ->



Byron, Shelley, Leopardi and Barrett Browning's Italy

- Republic of Venice
 - The Papal States and the Republic of Venice were the only parts of Italy to remain, legally and practically, independent from foreign European rule from the 1500s.
 - It lasted from 697 AD until 1797 AD.
 - Napoleon was waging war on non-democratic states in Europe, and he was creating alliances with non-democratic rulers in order to get that done.
 - The Republic of Venice (ruled for 1,100 years by a non-heir-based Doge, not a king) was officially neutral in the Napoleonic wars.
 - However, in April 1797 Napoleon threatened to declare war on Venice should it not democratize.
 - Why? He had secretly made a treaty with Austria to exchange their lands in the Netherlands for Venice. So, Venice was handed over to Austrian rule.
 - It moved to French control in 1805.
 - It returned to Austrian control in 1815 and remained there until 1866, the last piece of land to cede to Italy after its war for independence and declaration of nationhood in 1860.



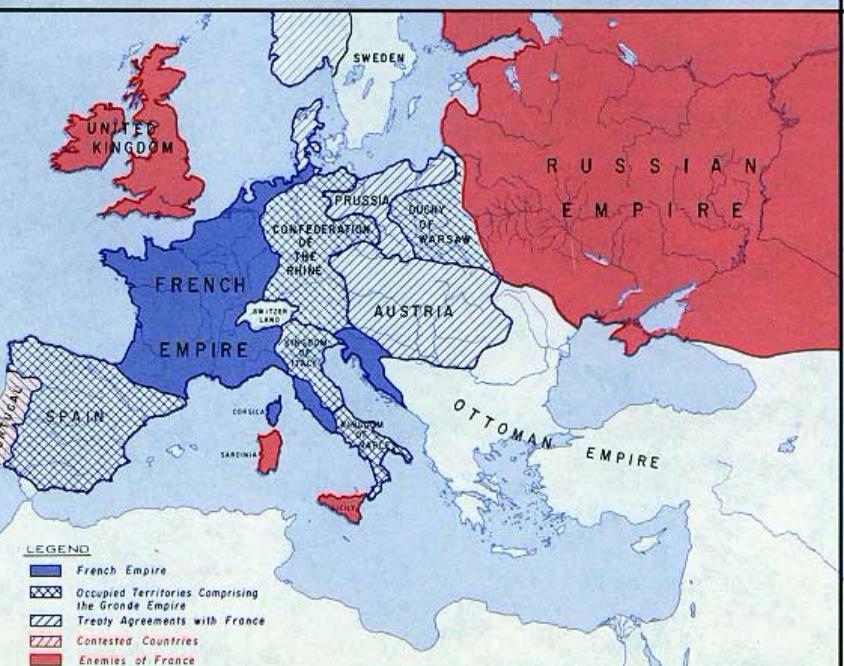
Byron, Shelley, Leopardi and Barrett Browning's Italy

- Kingdom of Sicily, established in 1282, ruled by a variety of foreign rulers, from the originating Normans, to the Holy Roman Emperor (Hohenstaufen), the Habsburgs, the Spanish Bourbons
 - When Napoleon arrived it was ruled by the son of the King of Spain
- Spain was supported by England in the war against Napoleon. However, in 1799 Napoleon conquered Naples and the court fled to their second capital in Palermo, Sicily.
- Ferdinand was restored to power in 1815 and the regime remained in power until the uprising that began the Italian Risorgimento (war for independence), in Sicily, against the Bourbons on 11 May 1860.
- Giuseppe Garibaldi with his 1,000 Redshirts marched from Sicily up the peninsula, fighting and declaring Italy independent from foreign powers.



EUROPE

*UNDER NAPOLEON
1810*



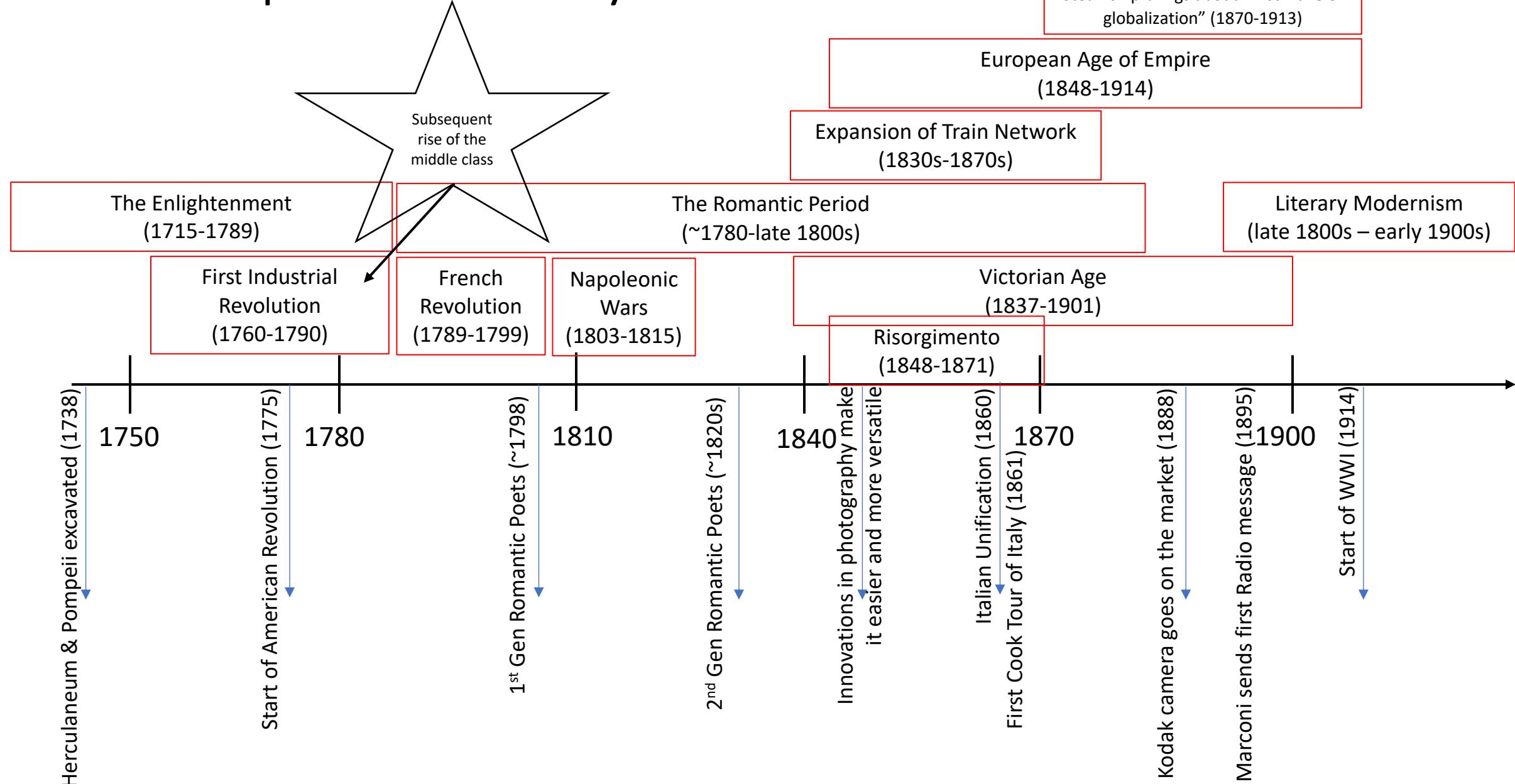
*UNDER THE MONARCHS
1815*



"Italian States" is used to simplify the complex situation.
Map below is a simplified version of Italy in 1815 after the Restoration.



European History Timeline



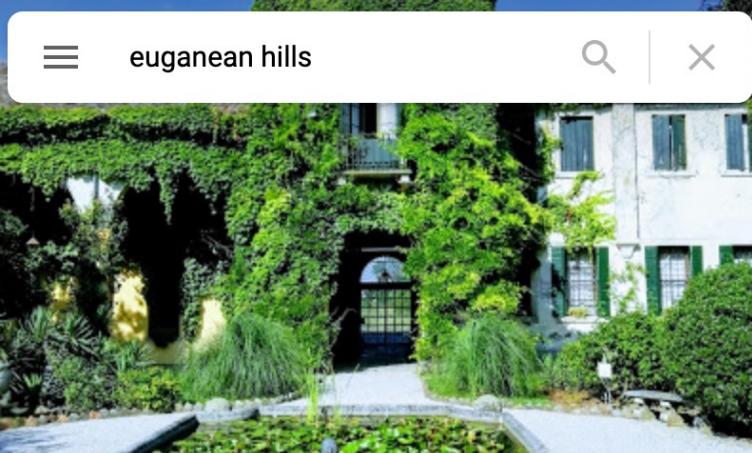
Lord Byron, “Ode to Venice”, 1818

- An Ode was a very popular style of poetry for Romantic poets.
- The Poetry Foundation defines it as “A formal, often ceremonious lyric poem that addresses and often celebrates a person, place, thing, or idea.”
- Of Romantic odes, the Poetry Foundation says: “The odes of the English Romantic poets vary in stanza form. They often address an intense emotion at the onset of a personal crisis (see Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s [“Dejection: An Ode,”](#) or celebrate an object or image that leads to revelation (see John Keats’s [“Ode on a Grecian Urn,”](#) [“Ode to a Nightingale,”](#) and [“To Autumn”](#)).”

Lord Byron, “Ode to Venice”, 1818

- ALL TOGETHER
 - What is happening in Byron’s ode?
 - What does it celebrate? Is there an intense emotion? A revelation?
- IN GROUPS
 - What is the threat to the nation, or specifically, the individual within the nation, according to Byron?
 - Where does Byron look for a promise for the future and answer to the tyranny he sees in Europe?
 - Is Byron doing anything we have seen before? (Symbolism we have seen? Themes we have seen? Etc.)

Shelley, “Lines Written among the Euganean Hills”, 1819



euganean hills



Euganean Hills

Colli Euganei

4.5 ★★★★★ (115)

Mountain peak



Directions



Save



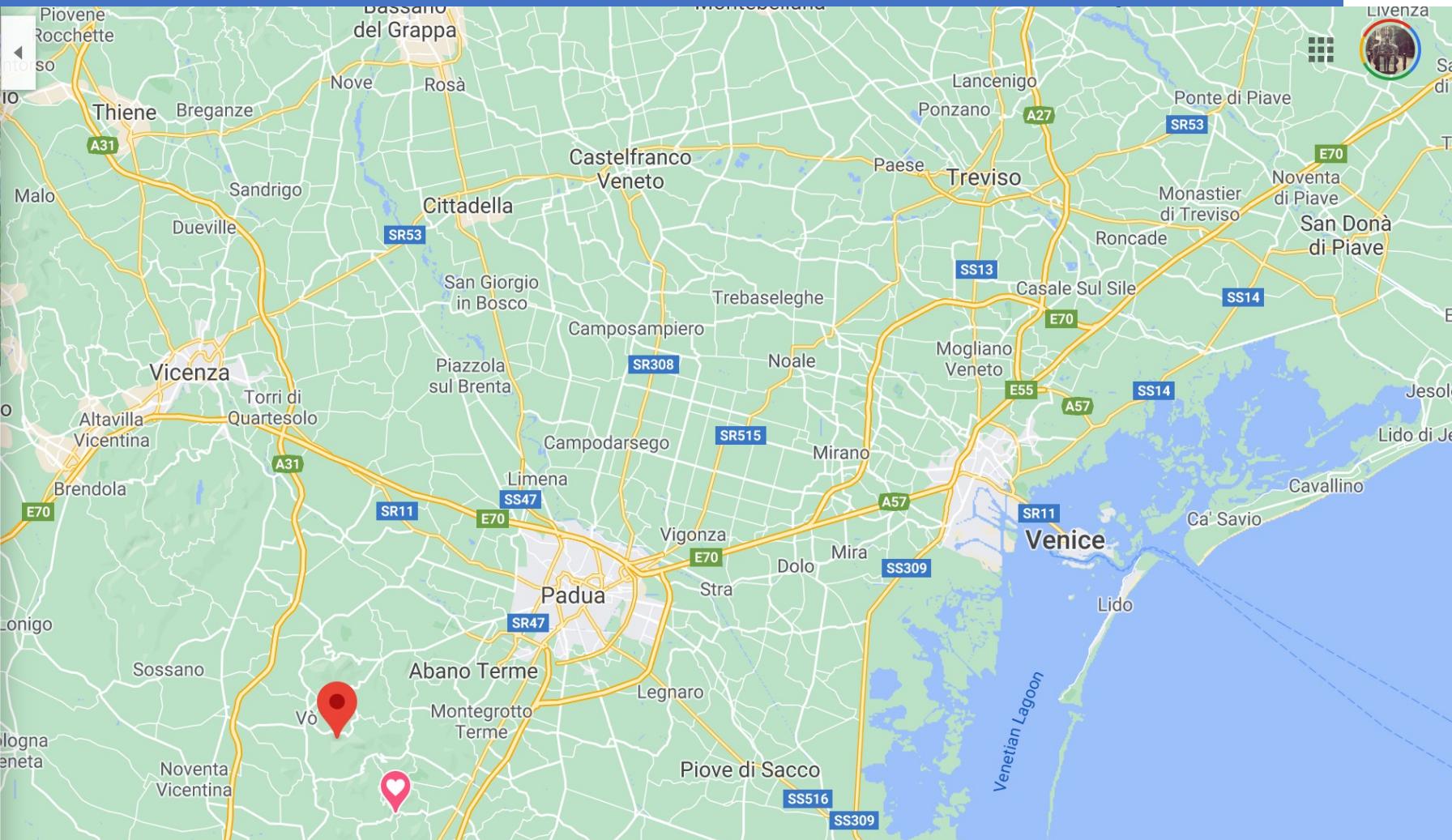
Nearby



Send to your phone



Share



Hot springs, hiking trails, dining & more offered in lush surrounds dotted by volcanic peaks.

Shelley, “Lines Written among the Euganean Hills”, 1819

- ALL TOGETHER
 - What is happening in this poem?
 - What is the central metaphor that is developed in the first stanza and returned to afterwards?
- IN GROUPS
 - How does Shelley’s poem engage with both Petrarch’s medieval concerns for Italy and Byron’s concerns for the nation and contemporary conceptions of ‘freedom’?
 - Shelley mentions Petrarch in the poem but he is not the great poet of whom Shelley alludes in that section. To whom does Shelley speak when he says “So thou art / Mighty spirit: so shall be / The City that did refuge thee.” (P. 3, ll. 5-6).
 - What role does the past (the past of Italy, of Venice) play in these poems?
 - Is Shelley doing anything we have seen before? (Symbolism we have seen? Themes we have seen? Etc.)

Reading Questions

- Petrarch's father was exiled from Florence and Petrarch, himself, was born into exile. He wandered Tuscany and beyond for his entire life, feeling homeless (as he said, without 'patria'). Exile, along with Laura, solitude and passing time, is a recurrent theme in his poetry and other writing.
 - In sestina 80, he refers to exile. To what do you think he is referring?
 - In sonnet 94, what does exile refer to?
- What in this sestina and in the following Petrarchan sonnets is reminiscent of other poems we have read?
- Why did I include the frontmatter to Goethe's *Italian Journey*?
- In his elegy to the poet John Keats, Shelley instructs his listeners to head to his grave, at the protestant graveyard near the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome. Ironically, Percy Shelley, himself, will be buried there the following year (as will Antonio Gramsci in 1937). What role does Rome play in his elegy?
- In *Julian and Maddalo*, Count Maddalo is a fictional Lord Byron, while Julian is Percy Shelley, himself, and the Maniac is Torquato Tasso, an Italian Renaissance poet who was a supreme tragic heroic figure for writers like Goethe, Byron, and Shelley.
 - Line 57 , "Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!" mingles our two keywords for this class. What do you make of the fact that Shelley rewrites his exile co-star, Byron, as an Italian count?
 - How do you think this claim of Italy as a paradise can be situated in the context of the conversation between Maddalo and Julian?
- Petrarch, Shelley, and Byron all set themselves up as lone wandering poets flung across the Italian landscape. Leopardi's wandering is imagined in Asia, what do you make of this? How is his shepherd's wandering similar to and different from the British Romantics' imagery, setting, and themes?
- Christina Rossetti was an Italian born in exile in England. How does her treatment of Italy differ from those who seek refuge there?