
The eleven contributors to this collection propose as their point of departure that all of Lamartine’s writing may be understood as autobiographical: a blunt generalization that leads to some interesting corollaries. One expects to find expressions of self in the lyricism of the Romantic poet, the itineraries of the travel writer, or the political memoirs of the statesman. Less obvious are layers of personal meaning or veiled references to the self in Lamartine’s literary criticism, for instance, or in his third-person Histoire des Girondins. In highlighting Lamartine’s autobiographical representations across a variety of genres, Nicolas Courtinat’s preface also calls into question the motivations behind Lamartine’s reworked, overly “poetized” (14) or otherwise self-serving constructions of the self.

Though the collection offers no explicit organizational scheme, the first few essays hang loosely together by their focus on Lamartine’s poetic œuvre and by their critical debt to Starobinski, Barthes, and Bachelard. Pierre Loubier argues that Lamartine’s elegies, though intimate, are paradoxically impersonal, the narcissistic self-contemplation of the poet also implies an objectivized, hence divided, self (in Lamartine’s own, more concise words, “Chanter n’est pas vivre,” 31). Dominique Kunz Westerhoff explores relationships between the self and the recurring image of the lake throughout Lamartine’s œuvre, tracing a complicated ebb and flow of senses, sensibilité and memory that recalls eighteenth-century philosophy while also emblematizing a new Romantic lyricism. Clélia Anfray studies Lamartine’s lifelong appreciation of Torquato Tasso, highlighting ways in which autobiography colors Lamartine’s perceptions of the sixteenth-century poet. Olivier Catel argues that the image of Lamartine’s birthplace of Milly is central to his œuvre and to his sense of self, uniting recuperative memory, poetic creation, and universalizing archetype. Marie-Renée Morin’s essay on Lamartine’s
1844 trip to Naples has the added interest of including in its entirety a previously unpublished narrative in which Lamartine describes a visit to the ruins of Pompeii with his nieces. Morin characterizes this short text as a prose poem, possibly blending autobiographic fact, fiction, and the contemporary vogue for scenes from Pompeii, together with key Lamartian themes of vitality in the midst of death and the posterity of artists, including Lamartine himself.

The collection's second half focuses on Lamartine's memoirs, both political and personal. Barbara Dimopoulou analyzes narrative techniques that Lamartine uses in the Christ-like self-portrait that he creates in the *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848*, a hybrid work that combines autobiography with national history. In a similar vein, Dominique Dupart studies Lamartine's self-justification and self-promotion in *Trois mois au pouvoir* (1848), a text written between the passé immédiat of the provisional government and the futur proche of the December presidential elections; subtly revised transcriptions of Lamartine's legendary speeches are carefully explored here. Lamartine's *Confidences* (1849) quickly followed his disastrous bid for the presidency, marking a return to private life that was paradoxically made public, as Aurélie Loiseleur observes in a cogent analysis of overlapping issues of publicity and privacy in Lamartine's "confidential" memoirs. Laurent Darbellay focuses on *Graziella*, originally published in *Les Confidences*: an episode that blends novel, travel narrative, and autobiography. As Darbellay argues, *Graziella's* multi-layered references to painting, sculpture, and literature all tend to reinforce the image of Lamartine as artist. Finally, Christian Croisille traces some of the major changes that Lamartine made to his mother's journal before publishing *Le Manuscrit de ma mère* (1871), which Croisille justly characterizes as a continuation of Lamartine's autobiographical series.

Lamartine's methods of constructing and revising his public image on paper invite comparison with other Romantic men of letters—Hugo, Chateaubriand—who cultivated their own singularity through strikingly similar means. On these grounds, this volume has much to interest dix-neuviémistes, particularly those focusing on 1848 and its aftermath.

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