

## INTRODUCTION

In 1809, at the time of the first appearance of the *Quarterly Review*, each British political-literary journal was as a bell, some mighty, some minor, ringing out from the particular edifice to which it belonged – the church party, the university clique, the parliamentary interest. Supported as the *Quarterly Review* was by a set of liberal-conservative politicians and literary men, every article in it was as the tap of a bell sounding out to all who heard it the unmistakable chords of the Canningite faction and its sympathizers.<sup>1</sup> Whether finely or harshly struck depended upon the talent and intention of its writer, the hammer muted or the sound amplified by editor or publisher, in accordance with their temper or purpose.

Each reader of political-literary periodicals in the period of coverage was as acutely tuned to his or her prejudices as each reader of the present volume is today and could pick out from the intellectual cacophony nuances of ideological colour. At this distant point in time, because we lack the detail of experience and received impressions that constituted John Murray's and William Gifford's mental landscape, we hear only faint echoes of what were once clear tones and can therefore pick out only the grosser sounds of party propaganda. The historian's task, however, is to detect shades of pitch finer than the often puerile designations of 'right' and 'left', 'progressive' and 'reactionary', a task that is made easier when the source is amplified by voluminous and various evidence. A purpose of this volume, then, is to aid historians in interpreting the *Quarterly's* ideological colour by presenting fresh evidentiary detail.

The student of early periodicals who turns his or her attention to the *Quarterly Review* is richly rewarded by the fortunate preservation of thousands of letters and other documents. The *Quarterly* is the paper equivalent of a finely grained stratigraphic horizon; by it, the literary archaeologist can more surely interpret the past. As Donald Reiman pointed out some years ago, the student of the *Quarterly Review*, however, is rewarded by too much detail.<sup>2</sup> A reason why after the passage of almost two hundred years the history of this important journal had not yet been written was because there was too much information, unpublished and otherwise, to be tackled by any researcher with an eye on the

health of his or her academic career. Besides locating and digesting hundreds, indeed thousands, of unpublished letters scattered across dozens of repositories around the world, the scholar who wished to get close to the material would have to become familiar with yards of *Quarterly Review* volumes, over 15,000 pages published under the editorship of William Gifford alone. As the journal's articles were published unsigned, a necessary first step would be the application of bibliographical rigour to the identification of the *Quarterly's* authors. From there it would be necessary to trace the history of each writer's association with the journal, in most cases largely uninvestigated. With this preliminary work out of the way, the next step would be interpretation, then the writing of history itself, and then, lastly, the sharing of materials and opinions with a scholarly community. The reader who has followed me thus far will recognize that the present volume is the record of the process of historical investigation and interpretation just described. This book makes available to scholarship some of the primary materials I have collected over the years and expresses my views on the origins and early development of a significant historical artefact, the *Quarterly Review*.

### *A Note on Appendix A*

In the early nineteenth century it was customary for articles in literary-political journals to be published unsigned. Preliminary to writing a history of the *Quarterly Review*, it was therefore necessary to uncover authors' hidden identities. Discovering who wrote for the *Quarterly* has involved four major efforts. In the mid-nineteenth century, John Murray III, researching his company's archives in preparation for Samuel Smiles's *Memoir*, recorded author attributions in a bound manuscript Walter Graham dubbed the 'Register'. Hill Shine and Helen Chadwick Shine in the late 1940s used the 'Register' as the basis for *The Quarterly Review under Gifford: Identification of Contributors 1809–1824*. In extending coverage of the *Quarterly* into Coleridge's and Lockhart's years, and beyond, the editors of *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* Volume 1 (1966) also depended largely on Murray's 'Register'. Unfortunately, John Murray III did not, for the most part, document his author attributions. While the Shines made a start on compensating for Murray's lack of system, their results were uneven. The Shines' enduring contribution is their digest of secondary source references. I repeat several of their citations to works published before 1949.

Appendix A is a permanent record of my effort, begun some fifteen years ago, to employ scholarly rigour in the identification of writers for the *Quarterly Review* under Gifford and Coleridge. It is a revised edition of results first published in a series of articles in *Victorian Periodicals Review* and in the *QR Index* section of the *Quarterly Review Archive*, a 'Scholarly Resource' on the University of Maryland's *Romantic Circles* ([www.rc.umd.edu](http://www.rc.umd.edu)).<sup>3</sup> The material corrects

a number of author attributions, expands coverage to include articles published under Coleridge, and is presented in what I hope is a convenient and useful format.

Identifying anonymous authors is an analytical exercise fraught with pitfalls. Only a rigorous and methodical procedure can ensure reliable results. On the question of assigning authorship, I hold views similar to those of P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, Defoe scholars. Furbank and Owens state that ‘there is something unsatisfactory in works being attributed to an author ... on internal evidence alone. It is not till there is some scrap of external evidence present that internal evidence comes into its own.’<sup>4</sup> The editors of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* thought so, too, until they discovered that stylistic or internal evidence, when used by knowledgeable investigators, can yield excellent results. Still, in the absence of external evidence, regardless of how certain the individual scholar may be that he or she recognizes the mark of an author in a work, others have a right to be less than certain. Consequently, I agree with Furbank and Owens that, with rare exceptions, attributions based on internal evidence can at best be considered ‘probable’. In the early *Quarterly* the exception, to my mind, is Sir John Barrow, who by design left clear signs of his authorship.

Regarding format, for each number (issue) of the *Quarterly Review* published between the years 1809 and 1825, the following information is supplied:

- Volume, issue number, and title page date.
- Publication date as indicated on the title page.
- The number’s real publication date.<sup>5</sup>
- The article’s serial number.<sup>6</sup>
- The article number within the issue.
- The last name of the author under review. Multiple authors are indicated.
- The short title of the book under review. Multiple volumes are indicated.
- The article’s inclusive page numbers.
- The article’s author, his collaborators, sub-editors, and suppliers of information. Where the attribution is less than certain, I have indicated if it is ‘probable’ or merely ‘possible’, depending upon the strength of the evidence.
- Evidence of authorship. Keys to abbreviations employed in the evidence section appear at the head of the appendix and at the front of this book.