



## CONSTRUCTING POETIC AUTHOR(ITY)S: RENAISSANCE, BARROCO AND ENLIGHTENMENT

### III. PARATEXTOS, EPÍSTOLES I HISTÒRIES DE LA LITERATURA

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The Author Concept in *Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura* by Joan Andrés

The study of literature in *Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura* (1782-1799), Joan Andrés' magnum opus, aims to offer up examples of model authors to serve as a reference points for future writers. Andrés assesses authors and literary works both critically and comparatively, from three different perspectives: time period, nation, and literary genre. His commentaries facilitate the establishment of a hierarchy of authors for each of these comparative frameworks and ultimately lay down universal models. The factors that determine an author's quality largely relate to their concept of literature, their recognition from other literary writers and critics, to classicist poetics, and the author's own sensitivity, which is partly innate. Andrés' assessment of writers incorporates an enlightenment understanding of the essential purpose of literature: of instruction and enjoyment. Adopting a canonical reading of Horace, Andrés demands that learning and entertainment be combined, nevertheless, his commentaries reveal his (diverging) interpretation: that pleasure is an indispensable tool in the process of obtaining instruction, which, in turn, becomes literature's main objective and is linked to the enlightenment idea of progress. At the same time, for Andrés, enjoyment is not just associated with fun, it is also linked to the effect of moving the audience, an idea which is certainly in keeping with the importance granted to the emotions and the audience in the literary theory of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The prestige afforded to writers from enlightenment critics and the influence they exerted on literary history are factors that also influence his assessment. Regarding classicist poetics, Andrés considers how knowledge of literary theory and models allows authors to identify the essential qualities of a work and its adaptation to its given genre. This last procedure

encompasses aspects such as theme choice, plot development, character type, and the specific purpose the work is supposed to fulfil. Notwithstanding the above, Andrés values authorial qualities capable of creating beauty and maintaining the audience's interest beyond the scope of neoclassical poetics.