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*Ruskin, Venice, and Nineteenth-Century Cultural Travel*. Edited by Keith Hanley and Emma Sdegno. Venice: University of Ca' Foscari, 2010. xlviii + 471 pp. \$49.50. €26.00.

I was already deep in the *Stones*. . . . A strange, unexpected, and I believe, most true and excellent *Sermon* in *Stones*—as well as the best piece of schoolmastering in *Architectorics*; from which I hope to learn much in a great many ways. The spirit and purport of these critical studies of yours are a singular sign of the times to me, and a very gratifying one! Right good speed to you, and victorious arrival on the farther shore!

SO WROTE THOMAS CARLYLE TO HIS FRIEND JOHN RUSKIN ON 9 March 1851, praising the first volume of the *The Stones of Venice*. A century and a half later, Carlyle's words aptly describe *Ruskin, Venice and Nineteenth-Century Cultural Travel*, a collection of essays edited by Keith Hanley and Emma Sdegno. The publication of *Stones* in 1851 advertised Ruskin's interest in that city; but the roots of this fascination twined back to his adolescence and flowed through to his final continental journey of 1888. The lessons of Venice lasted him a lifetime.

When Ruskin first travelled to Venice at the age of 16 in 1835, he already had well-defined expectations concerning that city. As he would later recall, the passions that sparked his initial fame as a cultural figure—for J. M. W. Turner, as championed in *Modern Painters*, and for Venice, as celebrated and preserved in *The Stones of Venice*—were rooted in the 1830 edition of Samuel Rogers's *Italy* (*Works* 35: 29). Ruskin had received that volume of poetry, illustrated by Turner and others, as a thirteenth birthday present in 1832. Through that book, his appreciation of Italy, and specifically of Venice, initially

developed one step removed from the reality of Italy itself. His fascination with the city grew from looking at the etchings and reading the poems. Young Ruskin was thus “led . . . in many an after-dream through a beautiful country,” as Rogers himself describes the effects of the volume in his Preface (iii). Inspired by Rogers, Ruskin first visited Northern Italy in 1833. Not until 1835 did he visit Venice for the first time. Once there, his response was recollected and shared through the act of writing poetry:

The palaces shine paly through the dark,  
 Venice is like a monument, a tomb.  
 Dead voices sound along the sea; and hark,  
 Methinks, the distant battle's fitful boom! (*Works* 2: 440)

It is fitting, then, that this collection of academic essays—unusually—includes a poem as one of its critical responses. John Unrau’s “With Ruskin at St. Mark’s (Memories from two Working Visits)” begins: “Your words about these Stones / have brought me here time after time / these sixty-odd years” (149–50). These lines suggest what Carlyle and subsequent generations of scholars have noted: that Venice—as “strange[ly]” and “unexpected[ly]” mediated by Ruskin—has much to teach and warrants iterative journeys to it.

The essays collected here offer a good deal of new scholarship and one can “learn much in a great many ways” from them as they invite another return to Ruskin’s Venice. Most of the contributions were first presented as papers at the “Ruskin, Venice and Nineteenth-Century Cultural Travel” conference. Held in Venice in September 2008, this three-day event was co-hosted by the publisher of this volume—the Department of European and Postcolonial Studies of University of Ca’ Foscari Venice—and the AHRC-funded “John Ruskin, Cultural Travel and Popular Access” project at Lancaster University’s Ruskin Centre. The cosmopolitan makeup of that conference is evident here. The collection brings together twenty-six contributions by scholars representing a dozen nations and a wide range of disciplines—including literature, architecture, history, art history, visual and performing arts—and career points—from doctoral students to professors emeriti.

As the title suggests, many of the contributions are primarily concerned with Ruskin. Some, such as Laurence Rousillon-

Constanty's "Importing Italy: Ruskin, Italian Art and Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (109–27), balance discussion of Ruskin with other figures. Others make little mention of Ruskin, for example Kristian Moen's "'This Image Traced in the Camera Obscura of the Mind': Transforming Visions in Théophile Gautier's Venices" (287–303) makes just a passing reference to Ruskin in a footnote. Only one of the essays, Jeanne Clegg's "John Ruskin's Correspondence with Angelo Alessandri" (69–107), has been published previously; it first appeared in 1978 and is offered again here with updated appendices.

The volume is divided into four sections: the introductory materials by the editors (i–xlviii), followed by "Visiting Venetian Painting" (1–147), "Transporting Venetian Architecture" (148–268), and "Literary Travel with Ruskin" (269–444). Circling through the three sections are several main concepts, which criss-cross in a typically Ruskinian manoeuvre of near-repetition to build complex understanding: art and the affective, innovations in architectural studies, Venice and Chamonix, essays which make significant use of *The Stones of Venice* in formulating their argument, and Ruskin's influence on and by other cultural figures.

Much of Ruskin's mediation of Venice through the written word is focused on the subject of its art. The conference that sparked this collection opened in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco and was thus steeped in the work of Tintoretto, and Ruskin's mediation of it. The affective nature of this art is reflected in the collected essays. Anna Laura Lepschy's "Ruskin and Taine: Observing Tintoretto" (42–53) highlights the emotional response (Taine's "*moi sentant*" [50]) to the work of Tintoretto, which Ruskin and Hippolyte Taine cultivate. Similarly, Paul Tucker's "After Tintoretto: Ruskin's Venetian 'Picture-Work' in 1845 and Its Impact on His Art Critical Language" (3–21) considers Ruskin's ekphrastic endeavors, highlighting the ways that he brings religious works of art to sensual life—notably Tintoretto's *Baptism of Christ* and *Annunciation*. The focus on Ruskin's written oeuvre circles back to the production of the visual in "Ruskin and Visual Media" (225–50). Here, R. Martin Seddon explores the affective, didactic, and mnemonic uses Ruskin made of new media such as photography, particularly of architectural subjects.

Ruskin's experimental and innovative approaches, which resulted in "new knowledge in architecture" (184) is highlighted in "Travelling the Surface: John Ruskin and the Production of the New Theory of the Adorned 'Wall Veil'" (167–86) by Anuradha Chatterjee. Stephen Kite also traces and explains "the methodology of Ruskin's 'watching' of architecture, a process that intriguingly imbricates the tactics of artist, geologist, architect and natural scientist" (153). Like Chatterjee, Kite's "Ruskin's 'Careful Watchfulness': Drawing towards Venice—1845" (151–65) unpacks the originality of Ruskin's endeavors. Kite closes by arguing that Ruskin reads buildings such as the Foscari as though they "were a mountain face in Chamonix" (164). Anthony Ozturk similarly links man-made with topographical architecture in "Geo-Aesthetics: Venice and the Architecture of the Alps" (187–211). His essay too foregrounds the genius of Ruskin, linking the seemingly disparate threads of Romantic poetry, Tintoretto, Joshua Reynolds, Turner, and others to outline Ruskin's attempts to link past, present and future through his visionary geo-aesthetics of Venice and "the stones of Chamouni" (208). Ruskin himself made this link between Venice and Chamonix, declaring them his "two bournes on earth" (*Diaries* 1: 183). In "Ruskin and the Chamonix/Venice Chronotype," André Hélard uses this youthful statement—he points out that Ruskin was just twenty-two years old when he claimed these continental locations as his true homes—to consider the dual role these places played in shaping Ruskin's world view, leading to his later political economy. Picking up on the Ruskinian sense that place and self are linked, Richard Read, in "Contrasting Appetites in John Ruskin's and English 'Nurseries'" (423–24), considers such loci of self—"nurseries"—within Ruskin's dialogic descriptions in his chapter on St. Mark's in *Stones*, arguing that "these contrasts evoke architectural environments where human activity has formed 'nurseries' that shape human character" (423). Carmen Casaliggi is similarly interested in the ways in which location, identity, and ethics come together in Ruskin. In "From Venice to England: Tradition, Modernity and Commerce in *The Stones* and *The Harbours*" (381–97), she argues that the "preoccupations about the effects of human labour and industrialism" (389) evident in *The Harbours of England* (1855)

and later anglo-centric works are rooted in the earlier project of *Stones*. In making this argument, she notes that Ruskin's Venice began in a Romantic vein, but that "his Venice became . . . a way of life, which captured the Post-Romantic imaginations of other fellow writers such as Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Thomas Mann, amongst others" (384). The sense of such influence is the perhaps the strongest residual message of this collection. Most of the essays demonstrate Ruskin's influence on and by other important cultural figures.

The lasting influence of Ruskin on the work of Henry James is discussed by Roselli Mamoli Zorzi in "Against Palladio: Reading *The Stones of Venice* in the Train between Vicenza and Venice" (213–23). James is also dealt with in Joshua Parker's "Venice Unveiled" (305–22), which alludes to the treatment of Venice by a number of American writers and focuses on James's *The Wings of the Dove*. Just as Zorzi argues that James tried to free his perception of Venice from the influence of Ruskin, so in "Death in Venice—Exploring Ruskinian Themes in Proust's Depiction of Venice" (271–86), Anna Magdalena Elsner argues that Marcel "Proust had clearly distanced himself from an unequivocal adoration of Ruskin," yet Ruskin's "subtext" is woven into Proust's version of Venice (285). In addition to tracing Ruskin's mark on American and French authors, the collection also notes his influence on Polish novelist and travel-writer Maria Knopnicka in Olga Płaszczewska's "John Ruskin's Venice Seen by a Pole" (323–40). The influence of Ruskin on others is balanced by discussion of earlier writers' impact of Ruskin. For example, the influence of Byron is addressed in both "Regionalism and Ruskin in the Ottocento Artistic Narrative" by Laura Watts Sommer and "'Sailing to Byzantium': Ruskin's Imaginary Travel to Greece" by J. A. Hilton (129–45 and 361–79). David Sorensen's "'Shattered Majesty': Ruskin, Carlyle, and the Venetian Restoration of Frederick the Great" (341–59) traces a two-directional, mutual influence "[o]f the interweaving thoughts that Carlyle and Ruskin shared" (343).

There are some niggling problems with the final production: typographical errors and missing words, shifting font size. The note contributors do not include all of the writers and these notes are not in strictly alphabetical order. While the essays

are all in English, when texts from other languages are quoted, a translation is not always provided. There is no index and no composite bibliography for the volume as a whole. Despite these small problems, it must be said that, in an age of austerity, this collection of essays represents very good value for money. It is a substantial volume, yet a comfortable size to read while commuting. The paper is of a good quality. It is illustrated, including eighteen full-color pages of two plates each at the back of the volume. Although small, the images are very crisp and fine details are discernible. In short, it is an aesthetically pleasing volume—and aesthetics matter when discussing Ruskin.

Although the title of the collection suggests—and reflects—a fairly narrow focus, the breadth of arguments offered here, the multinational cast of authors, and the sheer number of figures alluded to and discussed make this a wide-ranging volume. The overarching theme that links them all is a sense of the importance of representation and mediation. Taken together, “the spirit and purport of these critical studies” offer a sign of *our* times.

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