“NEW LAMPS FOR OLD ONES”

ENGLISH RESPONSES TO THE RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS IN ITALY, ca. 1860-1890

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of De Montfort University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 1997
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the following for the help they have given during the research and preparation of this thesis:

The Leverhulme Trust; Dr Janet Myles, Professor Vincent Shacklock, Professor Peter Swallow, of De Montfort University; Dr Daniela Lamberini, Gianluca Belli, and colleagues at the University of Florence.

The following, in large ways and small, have generously given their time in discussion, in answering my enquiries, and in helping me to locate further sources of information:

Professor Amedeo Bellini of the Politecnico di Milano; Dr Maurizio Bossi of the Centro Romantico del Gabinetto Vieusseux, Florence; Luciano Cheles of the University of Lancaster; Miss Cecily Greenhill of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; Dr. Neil Jackson of the University of Nottingham.

Thanks also to the following:

Dr Jaynie Anderson; Kathryn Beckett of the Fitzwilliam Museum; David Carter of the National Gallery; Mrs J.E. Cooban, University of London; Mr James Dearden of the Ruskin Galleries, Bembridge; Dr Michael Doran of the Courtauld Institute; Dr Richard Holder of the Victorian Society; Margaret Lanoue of the Schaffer Library, Union College, Schenectady, NY; Angela Mace and staff at the British Architectural Library;
Nicholas R. Mays of News International; Dr Peter McNiven of the John Rylands Library; Ms Julie Milne and Ms Rachel Moffatt of Sheffield City Council Libraries and Information Service; Mr Bernard Nurse of the Society of Antiquaries; Richard W. Oram of the Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Texas; Robert E. Parks, Taylor Curator of Autograph Manuscripts at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; Dr Serena Pesenti; Dr Pino Piccone at San Gimignano; Mrs. Barbara Thompson of the Witt Library; Mr. Paul Tucker.

Thanks also to Chris Watts for technical assistance, and I owe a special debt to Heidi Flores, of Florence, and to Serafino and Lina Del Testa, of Volterra, whose kindesses have enabled me to work comfortably and swiftly while in Italy.

David Mason, June 1997.
ABSTRACT

‘New Lamps for Old Ones:’ English responses to the restoration of monuments in Italy, ca. 1860-1890.

The following study sets out in pursuit of two fundamental objectives: the first, to provide an analytical account of English attitudes to the restoration and preservation of Italy’s Medieval heritage during the specified period; and the second, to record accurately the most sustained efforts to campaign against the destruction of Italian Medieval architecture - namely the protests of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings between 1879 and 1886.

With the publication of John Ruskin’s *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849, English culture embarked on a new and radical project. Its aim was to redress the balance, so often seen to be against the proper preservation of architectural monuments, in favour of a more restrained, cautious approach to the repair of ancient buildings. The fundamental tenets of this philosophy - that Medieval art was unique in character and expressive value and could not be ‘faked,’ that Medieval Art could teach modern civilisation much about humility, vitality and faith, and that ancient masonry possessed an alluringly poetic visual potency which should not be sacrificed in the name of archaeology - had developed, in part, out of the contemplation of Italian architecture in the first half of the century.
When the newly-unified kingdom of Italy set about restoring its patrimony, English sensibilities were shaken, and high-minded protests ensued. This study examines a selection of case studies in Florence, Venice, Milan, Ravenna, San Gimignano and Padua, in order to determine the strength of these campaigns, to clarify their origins and character in the artistic climate of the time, and to measure the Italian response. It offers an insight into the turbulent and sometimes antagonistic nature of the English love affair with Italy, while exploring also certain key preoccupations of the young nation of Italy, which was still learning to handle its colossal public inheritance as well as its own cultural destiny.

As this study shows, amid the controversies which developed, important lessons for the future of conservation in Europe as a whole were learned.
A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS AND CITATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

Abbreviations

The following rubrics have been used to denote manuscript sources, and certain secondary sources cited frequently in the text:

ASCF Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze
ASCSG Archivio Storico del Comune di San Gimignano
ASCP Archivio Storico di Padova
ASPAB Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
BM British Museum
DBI Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (46 vols., in progress), Milan, Treccani 1960-.
ULCI University of London, Courtauld Institute
Manuscript sources.

Material in the Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings relating to Italy is not catalogued in any logical fashion. Most of the manuscripts are not numbered or filed in any order, but conserved in labelled file boxes and envelopes of various kinds. The system I use for references is as follows: names of correspondents, date (if given), followed by the rubric ASPAB, and the heading (in italics) on the box/envelope in which the manuscript is conserved. For Venice Files I have used the general rubric *Venice St. Mark's*. This refers to files bearing the date 1879 only.

Newspapers

Some of the material cited in the text has been taken from newspaper cuttings, most often those kept in the Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, where they are inserted in the relevant file. The dates on some of these cuttings are inaccurate. Where it has been possible to verify them I have done so, giving a full bibliographical citation, with page number. In some cases, chiefly rare Italian newspapers, it has not been possible to do this, and I indicate in the footnotes the file in which the cutting may be found, with the date/provenance noted on the cutting itself (except where there is an obvious error in this respect).

Some Italian newspapers of the nineteenth century were printed without page numbers, but as they were chiefly broadsheets of just a few pages, the reader should have little difficulty locating the cited text.
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PART I
CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In this thesis my aim is to offer an interpretation of Victorian culture and its attitude to the past through analysis of parallel sets of ideas, motives and actions which, with the rise of a mature conservationist lobby at the core of the English artistic and literary class, may be seen to converge upon a given objective - the architectural monuments of Medieval Italy in the late nineteenth century.

Any attempt to penetrate the Victorian reading of architectural history must take into account the rise and fortunes of the conservation (perhaps more aptly described by the term 'anti-restoration') movement. Madsen, Dellheim, Briggs and others have shown how the movement had its roots in the Romantic traditions of the Medieval Revival, in the resurgence of church building under the aegis of the Ecclesiological movement, and in the development of a philosophy of conservation, beginning around 1850, which was a response to over-zealous restorations carried out by the Ecclesiologists. According to this account, Ruskin's writings on art are seen to

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1 The term conservation, which I shall use from time to time in this study, I use to designate the axiom 'repair, not restoration.' The basis of this principle I shall consider in Part II, Chapter 1, where I discuss English attitudes to the restoration of St Mark's, Venice. The term preservation, which I also use, is used in an inclusive sense. By it I mean to designate any set of ideas, principles or methodologies aimed at lengthening the life of a monument, whether by repair or by restoration.

2 The term restoration I use to denote 'repair by reconstruction,' 'repair by imitation,' or 'unité de style' (the French phrase). It is the classic mid-nineteenth century approach as exemplified by the Ecclesiologists. It involved the use of archaeological techniques to determine the original character, style or construction of a monument prior to its partial reconstruction in accordance with scientific principle.
inaugurate a revised conception of the language and philosophy of restoration, and a rejection of its fundamental tenets.3

The Gothic Revival, characterised by a resurgence of building in variants of the Medieval Gothic styles in new building practice, is identical with a corresponding awakening with regard to the civilisation of Medieval Europe, its morality and its institutions. In this process of artistic rediscovery, Italy was to be a continual source of reference. Yet, in spite of a correlation which has often been suggested by scholars between the Medieval Revival in art and literature, and the beginnings of what would develop into a consistent, intellectual revolution against the practice of 'restoration,' no serious attempt has been made to analyse the three-way relationship between Medievalism, the principles of conservation devised by Ruskin and developed by the 'anti-scrape,' lobby, and the place of Italy in the nineteenth-century historical imagination. That such a three-way relationship existed is evident in the more than casual interest which English travellers in Italy showed in the restoration of Italian monuments. Madsen has pointed out how Ruskin's views on restoration were conditioned by what he saw in Italy and France;4 I will give additional examples in my thesis, showing that the theory of restoration in nineteenth-century England was


deeply influenced by the English experience of continental practices in art and architecture. My intention is to show that the anti-restoration movement in the 1880s, through the activities of its leading exponent, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), was no less affected by this interest, and that the SPAB explored and refined its attitudes to historic preservation in the context of events taking place in Italy.

This thesis, therefore, aims to bring together under the same glass three Victorian passions - the Middle Ages, Italy, and the values of 'conservation-not-restoration;' to analyse the nature of their interrelationship, and to do so with the specific intention of bringing more sharply into focus the special character of English conservation theory.

The term 'anti-scrape,' coined by William Morris and his supporters as a nickname for the SPAB, is an interesting one. Its reference to the removal of historic surfaces is of profound relevance to some of the arguments I wish to develop in this thesis. Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and Philip Webb were the Society’s founders, together with the painters Henry Wallis, George Price Boyce, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Poynter, the Cambridge scholar Sidney Colvin, and the journalist and critic F.G. Stephens. They came together in March 1877 in response to Morris’ own call for an association “to keep watch on old monuments,” an appeal which Morris made in a written attack on the restorations at Tewkesbury Abbey proposed by George Gilbert Scott.  

society as it became known condemned the destructive effects of restoration, for which the process of scraping, peeling or chiselling away the richly textured exterior surface became a metaphor.

A study of the incursion of the English conservation movement in Italy presents a unique opportunity to question some basic assumptions about anti-scrape. It is my intention to investigate the notion that the rise of the conservation idea in nineteenth-century architecture should be seen purely in terms of a reaction to the excesses of restoration. According to this perspective, the SPAB in particular is credited with having successfully applied two fundamental innovations: firstly, the principle of reparation, or repair, rather than of restoration to previously existing forms; secondly, the "principle of equivalence," or respect for architecture of all periods, which challenged the selective prejudice of restoration (the "principle of preference") as practised by most of the pro-Gothic church restorers, who showed little sympathy for post-Medieval alterations to buildings of the Middle Ages, and often a decided tendency to favour one species of Gothic over the others. With the establishment of these two canons was heralded the idea of the monument as a relic or residue of historical change, as 'memorial' or 'document,' rather than as example of a type, or style, of architecture which must be cleansed of inappropriate additions and alterations in order for its full meaning to be recovered.

But the problem of architectural preservation is not only a question of the interpretation of historical architecture as testimony or text, recording the process of

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6 This is the thesis put forward by Madsen, whose terminology I recapitulate. *op.cit.* pp. 37, 70-71.
historical change. The philosophy of anti-scrape was characterised by something more than this. I would like to consider how closely the rise of that specific form of preservationism, in the late nineteenth century, associated with Morris and SPAB, is linked to a trend in art criticism which exalts the 'imperfect' in art, that is to say, the naturalistic and picturesque properties of architecture - its surface texture, colouration, and the sundry optical manifestations of antiquity, but also its sincerity - the sense in which Medieval architecture was seen to be a product of an undisciplined intellect, a primitive spiritual energy. The position of Italy in the anti-restoration movement's consciousness suggests itself as the optimum starting point for such an excursus. Italian art, initially painting and sculpture, and subsequently architecture, stimulated one of the century's most radical reappraisals of the concept of artistic beauty. This aesthetic revolution, in which imagination and feeling were valued more highly than technical skill in art, and which saw the Gothic, and especially the Gothic ornament of Venice and Pisa, for all its strangeness and imperfection, as a consummate realisation of the artist's moral sincerity, his love of labour and of creation, reached its zenith in Ruskin's *On the Nature of Gothic* and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. The same movement was responsible in part for nourishing the taste for primitive painting promoted by the Pre-Raphaelites and their patrons. It is my intention to interpret the early episodes of the modern history of architectural conservation in Britain in a broader context - to consider how the anti-restoration movement represents, in essence, a further manifestation of that cult of the primitive which is so characteristic

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of the Victorian spirit of revolt against academicism. Restoration, to the Victorian
mind, meant the re-instatement of lost forms by imitation. The thrust of anti-
restoration philosophy was the inverse of this, the principle of 'repair-not-restoration.'
The relationship between this principle, originating in a Ruskinian celebration of the
aesthetico-moral supremacy of imperfection, and the notion of art as an outgrowth of
freely-expressed desires, of a will to change, in which the creative artist breaks free
from the degrading, repetitive and mechanical actions of copying, is self-evidently
one to be explored. I would like to ponder how far the experience of Italy, and of
Italian architecture, might have stimulated this trend.

This is a key issue, one which is central to understanding the scope and character of
the English protests, especially those against the restoration of the Basilica of St
Mark, in Venice. But it is not the sole aim of this study to uncover these relationships.
In addition to reconsidering the character of anti-scrape ideology through examination
of the application of anti-scrape principles to the question of foreign restorations, I
wish to construct a full account of the manners and methods of the protesters - to
consider, so to speak, the anti-restorationists' Italian campaigns as an episode in
international relations. I wish, indeed, not only to describe these episodes, but to
evaluate their success. As I will show, the Italian campaigns of the SPAB belong to a
long tradition of English interest in Italian art; they formed part of a calculated
strategy designed to advance a certain body of ethical principles on a wider scale. I
wish, therefore, to analyse the campaigns not only from an English standpoint, but

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On architecture as an agent of "moral revolution" from Ledoux and Blondel to Pugin and Ruskin in
nineteenth-century historiography, see: Stanton, op.cit.
from an Italian one as well, and to determine in what way those principles, and perhaps more importantly, the manner of their conveyance, made an impact on the development of Italian ideas about conservation and restoration.

The implications of such a study may be wide-reaching, realigning the history of the conservation movement during one of its critical phases with broader issues of artistic taste, and locating the study of conservation history within the context of nineteenth-century cultural history.

Within this broad field of aims, are located a specific series of goals:

1. to indicate where the movement for the conservation of architecture in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century is most closely involved with the Victorian discovery of Medieval Italy, paying particular attention to the broader culture of art historical research and collectorship;

2. to construct as accurately as possible an account of the work of the SPAB in selected areas of Italy during the most intense phase of foreign operations, i.e. from 1877-ca.1886;

3. to determine the impact on the English art establishment, the English community in Italy, and on the British press, of the restoration of (chiefly) Medieval and Quattrocento architecture in Italy, both before the first SPAB protest, during the 1877-86 period, and in the immediate aftermath;

4. to examine the motives behind the involvement of English preservationists in Italian cases, and to identify the scope of their campaigns;
5. to consider the methods and means employed by the English protesters, and to evaluate their effectiveness;

6. to indicate how attitudes to Italian restoration evolved over the period and to show where the English experience of Italian restoration made an impression on the continuing debate in England;

7. to investigate the key personalities, their roles, backgrounds and influence;

8. to provide an annotated digest of written documentary sources (newspaper and periodical articles, manuscript letters, reports, accounts) which deal specifically with the themes treated in the text, which may serve as a resource for future scholarship in the cultural history of the Victorian period, as well as in the history of architectural restoration.

METHODOLOGY & SOURCES

Primary Sources

The proposed study will incorporate a systematic analysis of such records as exist of the Italian campaigns of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, held in the archive of the Society at 37 Spital Square, London. By scrutinising the exchange of correspondence between the Society (chiefly its secretaries Newman Marks, W. Thackeray Turner and Thomas Wise) and its correspondents in Italy it is possible to identify both the individual buildings which inspired the most interest and to trace the methods and phases of activity by which the Society made its representations, and to whom they were made, and, to a degree, with what results. In this way it is possible to construct a partial commentary on the Society’s foreign work for the period indicated. The files which I have consulted in the archive by no means constitute a
complete record; I have been frustrated by a deficiency of material in respect of certain cities or monuments where I hoped to find more. However, these records form an important source, and I have used them as a framework within which to develop my thesis.

As sources of first-hand testimony, the Italian files at the SPAB archive are of a heterogeneous character, comprising letters, newspaper cuttings, notes, reports and ephemera pertaining to something like 15 cases in at least 8 cities. In addition, there are references to at least 16 other Medieval monuments or sites for which documents are scarce or non existent, but which suggest that the Society or its members were very aware of the breadth and extent of restoration work throughout Italy. This thesis must necessarily be selective in its evaluation of such a quantity of material; I will deal with only the most important examples in a series of case studies, and reproduce in the appendices some of the most important unpublished documents. However, I will make reference to other cases which I consider it inappropriate or unnecessary to go into in detail. The rationale for the case studies is set out below.

A second important source, suggested in fact by the number of press cuttings in the SPAB archive itself, is that of the press. The Victorian press, notably The Times, provided a vital forum for public discussion and the editors of daily newspapers and periodical publications alike contributed in no small way to raising public awareness of the restoration issue, offering criticism and condemnation where appropriate. Feelings on the issue ran high not only in questions of British architectural monuments, but also those of Italy during an epoch in which Italian art was seen to
embody, in one form or another, the higher ideals of civilisation. I have attempted to conduct as thorough a search as possible into the role of newspapers in sustaining the arguments surrounding individual works of restoration in Italy, and to study the various positions adopted by newspaper journalists and by those interested parties who, by virtue of their participation in open public debate, played a part in the process of criticism. Not to be excluded from this survey is the frequent participation in the debate of the professional and artistic press - journals such as The Architect, The Builder, Athenaeum, The Academy, and others, and to a lesser extent the contribution of a wide variety of writers in the pages of the periodical press, the literary and artistic reviews and magazines which occasionally joined in the polemic. In this way, the question of anti-restoration in an Anglo-Italian context may be seen to be a question of broad concern among certain social and professional classes, and not confined to the activities of a single small pressure group.

It is also necessary to take account of the testimony of visitors and travellers to Italy, and, crucially, of members of the expatriate community in residence there. Sometimes this kind of testimony is the only other source of information which the SPAB, which had access through the interests and social status of many of its supporters to the artistic and intellectual communities in Italy, had at its disposal, since there are relatively few examples of intercourse with Italian correspondents. Even where no direct link exists between the observer and the protester, the observation remains an important component in that body of impressions which built up about the nature of restoration in Italy from the 1840s and 1850s onwards.
Other bodies of correspondence in English manuscript collections have yielded important indications in this respect. I have found the following especially useful: papers of the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's, in the British Museum; some of the letters addressed to John Ruskin from Italian correspondents; the correspondence of Philip Webb and Giacomo Boni, at the Courtauld Institute in London; the Hunt/Fairfax Murray/Ruskin microform collection at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

These diverse sources provide the essential primary substance of the work, and analysis of their content is central to my methodology. The challenge is not to misrepresent these documentary facts by setting them within a framework of received ideas and criticism of the evolution of conservation, and to avoid the temptation to classify in accordance with systems of interpretation borrowed from other disciplines. The history of conservation theory is a new area of research, and its methodologies are evolving. Using this material, I intend to construct an analytical account of English attitudes to the historic Medieval architecture of Italy, and to discuss issues connected with its restoration or conservation.

As mentioned above, it is the aim of this study not merely to comment on the fortunes of conservation theory in Britain and Italy at the time, but also to investigate the intercourse between attitudes to the conservation of historic monuments and the influence of Italian art among the artistic and literary classes of English society, and to look for common points of reference in these discourses. To achieve this I will be following the progress of ideas about the artistic history of Italy and the close
correlation which can frequently be detected between these ideas and the questions of
repair or restoration which they entail. For this purpose, one is obliged to range over a
broad contextual field which includes art historiography, collectorship and the rise of
the art museum, the idea of historic architecture and its relevance to painting - it is no
accident that, of the 100 or so members of the Committee of the SPAB in 1881, over
a third were painters - Pre-Raphaelitism, the artistic and literary press, and Italian
travel.

These spheres of cultural activity are, as will be demonstrated, largely inseparable
from the study of conservation in its late nineteenth-century context. One might add
that they are also inseparable components in Italophile research and scholarship, and
that it is through these kinds of activity that the historical civilization of Italy obtained
its privileged status within the gallery of Victorian artistic renascences. Through the
exploration of these and other spheres of cultural production, I will develop certain
key themes.

It will be necessary to judge the methods of the English and the reactions of the
Italians against the background of a pre-existing culture of restoration in Italy which
must be, if not explored in depth, at least accurately represented in so far as it is
relevant to the case studies and the issues presented therein. In order to achieve this, it
is necessary to take into account the response of the Italian press and the community
of professional architects and public servants who were collectively the target of the
protests, to those representations from the English interlopers. Such an analysis will,
however, be of limited value if isolated from the general context. The question
therefore, is how to create a concise frame of reference through which to view the restoration controversy in Italy? This can be achieved in several ways. Rather than preparing a separate chapter dealing with the rise of anti-restoration in Italy, my approach will be to outline salient themes through analysis of the prevailing issues surrounding the individual case studies. This study does not purport to provide a detailed account of the rise of anti-restoration feeling in Italy, but rather to sketch a broad panorama of events and attitudes against which the culture and scholarship of British interlopers may be evaluated. I will illustrate a cross-section of opinions on restoration during the 1860s and 1870s, the years after Unification in which ideas of preservation and national heritage are subject to critical debate, not least because of a heightened awareness of nationhood, at least among members of the intellectual elite: firstly, those of the theorists - architects, antiquaries and historians, contemporaries in Italy of Edward Freeman, George Edmund Street, George Gilbert Scott, John James Stevenson in Britain - who, at roughly the same time or shortly after, began to elaborate their own theses as to how and how not to restore an ancient building; secondly, the views expressed in the press which, though in its character and interests was markedly different from that of Britain, remains an important instrument by which to gauge critical responses to changing cultural expectations; thirdly, the attitude of academies of art and learned societies, which possessed a far more wide-reaching influence over policy and procedure and, on the whole, carried an authority superior to that of the individual critic or historian; and fourthly, the attitudes of government and municipal institutions.
An outline of these attitudes, and commentary on the transformations which they experience on exposure to a radical and alien ideology, in the context of the problems suggested by a given case study, seems to me to be the best way to remark on the short-term effects of the protest campaign. Investigation of the issues raised, meanwhile, presents an opportunity to show how Italian and British preservation theories were fundamentally different in their range and detail, and to compare and discuss these differences in order to reach informed conclusions as to the successes and failures of the English intervention in Italian restoration.

On the question of Italian documentary sources, some primary material can be gleaned from archival collections in Britain, some of which I have referred to. The archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings contains only a few, but very important, documents written in response to appeals made by the Secretary in either the English or the Italian press, or, more speculatively, considerations by Italian academics who, for one reason or another, were touched by the events which surrounded these more formal exchanges. The most important of these will be found in Appendix A. Where necessary I give a translation into English.

Of considerable value are the references to restoration and the English in the Italian press. The English art and architectural press was not in the habit of taking gleanings from professional journals abroad, as was sometimes the practice in European countries. However, the authority and influence of journals such as The Builder, The Architect, The Academy, and The Athenaeum, was considerable. The English daily press became the foremost arena for protest and counter-protest, especially during the
St Mark’s affair, when frequent exchanges of fire took place between English residents of the city and the beleaguered Italians who made it their duty to defend the city and its authorities against allegations. None of the subsequent attacks of the English on Florentine or other Italian restorations created quite the same turmoil. But for a clearer impression of Italian responses to these attacks one has to look to the Italian press, where discontentment with the English inquisitors was most frequently aired. In the main, these are found in only a handful of journals and newspapers. The unification of the Italian nation brought about a phenomenal explosion of printed newspapers and magazines - many hundreds were published, often to be read only within one small province or metropolitan area, between 1865 and 1879. Some survived for only days, others went on to become national institutions. During the period in question, the vast majority of these papers were highly politicised, leaning to the right or the left, on the side of republicanism or on the side of constitutional monarchy, radical or liberal-conservative, catholic or secular. Periodicals were far fewer, though the periodical press was growing; but there was, in Italy, none of the variety, breadth and proven integrity which characterised the magazines and reviews which were read in clubs and drawing rooms of Britain. Blackwoods Magazine was founded in 1817; Quarterly Review in 1809, when Italy was still held in the iron grip of Napoleon Bonaparte. The literary-artistic weekly, Athenaeum, first rolled off the press in 1828. It would be impossible to conduct an exhaustive survey of the Italian press at the time of the English protests in the 1880s. I have therefore tended to focus on those publications which show a marked or consistent interest in the restoration issue: of the regional dailies, for instance, La Nazione (Florence); La Gazzetta di Venezia and L’Adriatico (Venice); Il Pungolo and La Perseveranza (Milan); and Il
Rinnovamento (Venice) fall into this class, though complete series of these can be almost impossible to locate in local library holdings which are often incomplete. Of the weekly and monthly publications, *Il Politecnico* and *Arte e Storia* have yielded the most information. *Fanfulla della Domenica*, a weekly literary-artistic review published in Rome, has been serviceable, as has *Nuova Antologia delle Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*. These are, on the whole, modern publications, belonging very much to the Risorgimento, and steeped in a tradition of political discourse. They sometimes show a surprising disinterest in matters of mere artistic import.

**RATIONALE FOR TIME SCALE AND CASE STUDIES**

I have set down as a specific objective my intention to provide as complete a survey as possible of the operations of the SPAB and its partisans in Italy from 1877 to ca.1886. The focus of this rather narrow time frame requires some explanation. 1877 was the year in which the SPAB was founded, in London, by William Morris together with Philip Webb and Edward Burne-Jones. It is therefore the year in which protestations against the destruction being wrought on architectural monuments of the Middle Ages are first delivered in a formal capacity as part of a sustained effort to convey the values and virtues of 'repair not restoration' to a wider world. With the campaigns against the restoration of St Mark's Basilica in Venice in 1879, the SPAB and others influenced by its anti-restoration programme began to extend their operations overseas. The problems and challenges of this adventure are, as I have made clear, my special interest in this thesis.
Examples are to be found of English interest in the conservation of Italian art before this, and I will discuss some of these in the following chapter. However, they lack the philosophical base which anti-scrape, as a coherent revolutionary force, delivered. It is my aim, after all, to comment on the theoretical character of the SPAB approach to historic preservation through an analysis of its Italian campaigns, and I must necessarily focus on events which took place after 1877.

During the first ten years of its existence the SPAB secured its role as a leading critic of bad restoration practice in England. It scored some notable propaganda successes, notably Tewkesbury and Canterbury, but it was slow to establish a serious following at first. The attempt to launch this new, radical ideology in Europe was therefore an ambitious idea. Why do it? Not, I suspect, in order to recruit more members at home: there was considerable publicity surrounding the St Mark's protest in 1879-80, but the Society added only about forty new names to its membership list. It still had fewer than 500 members in 1890. According to Marino, the foreign dimension of the SPAB's work was a natural development of the notion that historic monuments belong to everyone, and their preservation is not merely a national but an international issue. It was a moral imperative, courageously pursued. This is an hypothesis with which I am bound to agree, on the basis of documentary evidence, but I will show that the motive behind these foreign campaigns by the fledgling SPAB runs deeper than this, encompassing the hopes, ambitions but also doubts, ambiguities and

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9 For a discussion of the theoretical propositions of anti-scrape, and their innovative character, see section 2 of my chapter on Venice, where I explore the intellectual content of the SPAB Memorial to the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction, of November 1879.

inconsistencies of the early SPAB. By 1886, as I will show, this crusading spirit was on the wane. I believe three factors brought about a slow diffusion of anxiety at the Society about its foreign campaigns: firstly, the difficulties of such an enterprise in terms of communication and intelligence; secondly the securing of formal relations with anti-scraper sympathisers abroad, leading to a re-definition of the Society’s duties; and thirdly the crystallisation of support for anti-restoration into active private societies, in France, Belgium, Italy and elsewhere. These factors will be illustrated more fully in the course of my assessment of the successes and failings of the protest campaigns themselves, and in my concluding remarks I will recapitulate on their significance.

The year 1886 was by no means a cut-off point: the Society continued to campaign against restorations at Venice (especially in connection with St Mark’s) in 1886, 1898, 1901-2, 1905-6 and 1929-32; at Rome and Orvieto in 1887; at Pisa in 1891. A special sensitivity remained towards Italian cities. Thus, in the closing decades of the century, it became involved in the protests against the destruction of Florence city centre, a campaign embarked upon by an Anglo-Italian pressure group which was in many ways the heir of the SPAB in Florence, the Society for the Preservation of Old Florence, and an episode which brought back into the public consciousness all the old suspicions and presumptions, and more. But it is not my mission to explore these episodes, which all have their origins in the early campaigns at Florence, Venice, Ravenna, and San Gimignano. Space and time will not allow, and they must be unravelled in a subsequent study.
CASE STUDIES

The selection of case studies is based on the following criteria:

i) the availability of relevant documentary material in the SPAB archive in connection with the city or monument in question;

ii) the significance of the city or building in question within the context of English Victorian culture. This is based on an assessment of the extent to which the case in question figures as an important focus for a range of social, cultural and historical interests: Grand-Tourism; the Medieval Revival; poetry; painting; architecture and architectural history;

iii) the need to consider examples of varying character - historic cities, modern cities, small towns, monuments of varying ages and types, technical problems of differing scale and complexion - in order to offer a sufficiently wide-ranging analysis.

I have chosen to focus on examples at Venice (St Mark’s Basilica), Padua (Arena Chapel), Ravenna (Baptistery), Florence (The Bigallo and the Ponte/Mercato Vecchio), San Gimignano (Palazzo del Comune), and Milan (Santa Maria delle Grazie).

Venice.

The protests against the restoration of the west façade of St Mark’s Basilica in Venice represent the first and most concerted campaign launched by the anti-scrape sympathisers against Italian restoration. An extensive body of work has already been produced on John Ruskin and his role in catapulting the Venice restorations into the English press, covering the events leading up to the fierce battle which dominated the
pages of *The Times* in the winter of 1879-80 (see below). The controversies themselves, based on a thorough examination of surviving documents, have not been properly evaluated. Since the Venice case is crucial to understanding some of the motives which inspired subsequent attacks, and since the arguments it induced are fundamental to the history of preservation theory, I propose to consider certain aspects of the controversy which have not, on the whole been sufficiently clearly addressed.

The St Mark’s campaign set the mood for subsequent exchanges; it created a setting in which the protagonists quickly established their positions as claimants to the rightful and honoured legacy of the Basilica of St Mark. Its outcome and mode of execution are themes which recur in later years, and its lessons - not always well-learned - provide something of a foundation without which no study of this kind could proceed.

It is for these reasons that I consider indispensable a chapter which deals with the Venice and St Mark’s debate in three essential aspects.

In this chapter, after summarising the main features of the St Mark’s episode with reference to the sources listed below, I propose to:

i) assess the methodology deployed in the campaign for the preservation of St Mark’s, with special reference to four factors: the suspension of works by the newly formed Ministry of Public Instruction May 1879; the role of Count Alvise Pietro Zorzi as an ambassador for the St Mark’s preservation movement after July 1880; the changing attitudes towards the perception of architectural character which were beginning to manifest themselves in architectural criticism and historiography in a Venetian context; and the relationship between these perceptions and the theoretical discourses of anti-restorationism;
ii) present a picture of the attitude to Venetian antiquities which prevailed in Venice and in Italy as a whole, among Italian commentators, with reference to press, learned societies, leading architectural theorists and other observers, and to comment on Italian responses to the English intervention;

iii) identify the central, recurrent themes which emerged in the English attitude to restoration in Italy at the time of the St Mark's controversy, and to establish the significance of the St Mark's adventure as a decisive moment in the dissemination of anti-restoration principles in Europe.

Florence and Tuscany

As this study will demonstrate, Florence became a focus for many of the ideals and fantasies of Victorian scholarship. During the classic phase of Grand-Tourism - the era of Berkeley, Gibbon and Goethe, Florence had been little more than a stopover on the route to Rome. But with the advent of railways and the arrival of the middle-class 'tourist,' coincided a renewed interest in the city and its illustrious past. British authors had begun to turn their attention to Florentine history and art. Though less rich in authentic Medieval monuments than Pisa or Venice it nonetheless was privileged to be seen as the cradle of a set of values which were of profound interest to Victorian culture. As a resort of poets and painters, Florence was second only to Rome in the 1850s, while its favourable climate encouraged the growth of an English

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colony which was to exercise considerable influence over the culture of Florence in the second half of the nineteenth century.

As a case study, there are numerous aspects of restoration at Florence (and Tuscany) which satisfy the criteria: the restorations of the Loggia del Bigallo, 1881-2; the restoration of the Church of Santa Trinità, 1881-6; the restorations to the Palazzo Comunale at San Gimignano; the demolition and redevelopment of the Mercato Vecchio, Florence. I shall look at these in turn with a view to assessing critically the relevance of the form and content of the English protest, and determining its special character in relation to the St Mark’s affair. I shall consider also the roles of three important figures. Gentilini has rightly remarked that further studies of Charles Fairfax Murray and J. R. Spencer Stanhope would be particularly desirable; both made important contributions as collectors to the study of the Italian Renaissance, made some impact on the contemporary cultural life of Italy, and were closely involved with the SPAB.12 To them I would add W.J. Stillman. Stillman’s contacts with the Pre-Raphaelite circle and William Morris were equally strong and, like Stanhope and Murray, his contribution to the foreign restoration debate was, in my view, as substantial as theirs. This thesis is an opportunity to enhance knowledge of these characters.

To sum up, this section will aim:

i) to determine the role and influence of expatriate connoisseurs and art scholars in Florence as *agents provocateurs* in the anti-restoration controversy, and also to investigate the background and interests of key individuals within this community;

ii) to determine the extent of the Florentine anti-restoration movement, or of the diffusion of anti-restoration principles in Florence, before and during the events of 1881. This will enable a judgement to be reached as to whether the English correctly interpreted the problems of historic restoration in a Florentine context;

iii) to consider the reaction to the demolition and reconstruction of Florence’s historic core between 1881 and about 1887 in relation to three factors of direct relevance to the British in Tuscany: the re-planning of Florence after 1860 and the role of the speculator; the rise of Florence as a health resort; the ‘image’ of Florence in the nineteenth-century English historical imagination.

**Milan**

The growth of Milan as an industrial centre and the inevitable pressure of commercial expansion on historic fabric provide a different set of conditions. The role of Milan in the English cultural imagination is stronger than might be suspected, and the threat posed to monuments such as the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie (which I shall use here as a principal case study) during redevelopment and modernisation of the city were themes which had parallels in the demolition and re-planning of London. Yet the SPAB seems to have been only slightly interested in Milanese monuments threatened with restoration or destruction. As a case study in the context of this thesis, the real interest of Milan lies in two factors: firstly, the perception of its
historic character - the city, though visited by many lovers of art from Northern Europe, did not offer the painterly spectacle of Venice or the rich expatriate culture of Florence; secondly, the relations between the SPAB and the Milanese antiquaries who were most affected by the destruction of the architectural records of the city's past. In terms of individual buildings, the case that suggests itself as the most fertile field for the exploration of these issues is that of the restoration of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie.

In this study, I propose to analyse the following issues:

i) the precise fortunes of Milan, as an architectural and urban entity, in the English historical imagination and, in consequence, the extent of interest on the part of the British anti-restorationists in the loss of its historic aspect;

ii) the special relationship between the architect Tito Vespasiano Paravicini and the English anti-restoration movement, both in Italy and in England, and the question of an 'Italian SPAB';

iii) English attitudes to the restorations of Milanese churches, particularly those proposed at Santa Maria delle Grazie in 1880, considered in the context of architectural historiography and also as a problem of restoration ethics.

Rome

One aspect of Italian restoration in the nineteenth century which will not be dealt with in this thesis is that which relates to the English interest in the transformation and reconstruction of the antiquities of Rome, both as a result of archaeological excavations taking place in the city, most extensively after 1871, and as a
The antiquities of the Italian Middle Ages and Early Renaissance were not the only monuments to be affected by restoration works during the mid- to late nineteenth century. There are a number of reasons why a comparison of attitudes in England to the restoration of Roman remains as against the alteration of the authentic character of the Medieval monuments would be instructive in the context of the work which is here proposed: firstly, it was a characteristic of restoration theory in England during the 1850s and 1860s to mark a clear differentiation between the character of ancient architecture and that of the Middle Ages. Edward Augustus Freeman, in a pamphlet of 1853, divided monuments into “those which are legitimate objects of restoration” and those which are to be “preserved from further injury,” asserting that most architectural remains are of the former class, “while nearly all antiquities of other sorts come under the latter.” George Gilbert Scott also recognised a fundamental difference between “mere antiquities,” and ruined buildings of later periods, in which the Ruskin principle of “sustenation” must hold sway.13 In Britain, the feeling that ancient antiquities formed a separate class of monument, and interference with them was prohibited, is evident in early legislative measures to protect prehistoric and Roman remains.14

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The manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings did not sustain this approach. In its appeal for “Protection in the place of Restoration” for all historic buildings, the manifesto rejects a priori both the principle of restoration and the scientific system of architectural-historical research which imposes such artificial systems of classification. Thus, as a philosophical system, it is not adapted to deal with a problem which, in Rome, was of considerable import during the closing decades of the nineteenth century - the rediscovery, consolidation and mise en valeur of the Servian Wall, the Baths of Constantine, and the Forum, to name just three of the ancient sites uncovered during building works in the historic core of the ‘Terza Roma.’

Clearly, such a complex set of issues, raising questions about the adaptability of the SPAB ideology to prevailing cultural and historical conditions in southern Europe, would form a thesis in themselves. For the moment, they must be reserved for a subsequent investigation.

However, Rome itself, as a cultural and artistic centre, was in other ways closely connected with the English protest movement. Anxiety over the “Haussmannisation”\(^\text{15}\) of Rome, over the isolation of monuments like the Pantheon from the dense strata of constructions which had enveloped them, and over the re-use and adaptation of existing structures for modern purposes, played a part in raising awareness as to the condition of monuments in Italy generally. Where these instances point to issues which are broadly consistent with the aims and objectives of this

\(^{15}\text{The Architect vol. 5, 4 Feb. 1871. p.60.}\)
thesis, they will be afforded due attention within the structure of the thesis. It is well 
worth pointing out that the SPAB, though generally confining its protests to Medieval 
buildings, was stimulated to respond in certain cases to the damage of restoration to 
Roman remains, though these issues generally were more likely to be taken up by 
Archaeological Societies. The presence of senior British archaeologists in Rome (such 
as J.H. Middleton and John Henry Parker) during the most active phase of 
archaeological excavation work in the city, would make an interesting subject for 
inquiry, but one which clearly falls outside the scope of the present work.

HISTORIOGRAPHY & OTHER WORK IN THE FIELD

I have made reference to the comparatively new character of research in conservation 
history. There are several works dealing with the British conservation movement to 
which I would particularly like to draw the reader’s attention, since they provide 
either an approach to the subject which has informed my own in a number of positive 
ways, or else because they represent pioneering texts which are invaluable to the 
conservation historian. Though my own work focuses on Italian buildings, there is 
clearly much to be gained from a preliminary survey of developing attitudes to 
historical architecture and its preservation in England during the years preceding 
1879.

The pioneering studies on the rise of the SPAB, though now twenty years old, are 
Madsen’s Restoration and Anti-Restoration. A study in English Restoration 
Philosophy (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1975) and Pevsner’s essay ‘Scrape and Anti-
To Madsen may be attributed the view which regards Ruskin as having provided an "ideological foundation for the next generation to build on when a completely new outlook on restoration gradually met with approval."\(^{16}\) This revolution in attitudes he relates to a cultural shift in which increasing scepticism, shown first by Street and others towards French restoration practice, and later also towards the operations of Scott and Street himself, brings about a reassessment of the rôle and duty of the architect, a greater emphasis on architecture’s psychological appeal, and growing sympathy for the eclectic and multivalent character of buildings. Longevity itself becomes one of the monument’s most essential properties - the recognition and appreciation of the dignity of age. Hence the phrase anti-scrape, coined in reference to the traditional practice of stripping away the richly informative and evocative imprint of time by physically removing the outer surface of walls and ornament in order to renew a building’s appearance.

As mentioned earlier, it is Madsen also who characterises the anti-scrape phenomenon as one based on the “principle of equivalence” (respect for architecture of all periods, an idea associated with Street but dating back to Carter and Cottingham)\(^{17}\), on the idea of monument as historic document (derived, according to Madsen, from Ruskin), and on ‘repair rather than restoration’ (an idea associated with Scott as well as Ruskin). Pevsner’s account makes additional reference to the sense in which the success of anti-scrape may be seen as a triumph over the utilitarianist doctrine which subordinates buildings to the vicissitudes of changing and evolving patterns of use,

\(^{16}\) *Op.cit.* p.50
\(^{17}\) See note 3.
and ends with a clarion call to modern day architects to respect the fabric in the
condition and form in which history presents it to us.

Recent studies of the growth of the SPAB and anti-scrape in England have tended to
concur on these essential properties, and origins, of the anti-restoration school of
thought. Miele has suggested some aspects of the SPAB manifesto may have been
motivated by expedient - the need to gently persuade offending architects rather than
alienate them, leading to a more cautious document than might have been drawn up,
but points also to the close correlation between Ruskin’s notion of restoration as the
dangerous speculations of a rationalistic world view, and the manifesto’s negation of
historicism in architectural research, factors associated with what, in Ruskin, he
defines as a “metaphysical attitude toward architectural remains,” and in reference to
the SPAB, the influence of “a picturesque conception of architecture.”

Marino, basing herself on Madsen’s history, has emphasised the rise of the SPAB, and
William Morris’ writings on conservation, as a socio-political phenomenon
expressing a growing sense of collective responsibility for the tutelage of the past and
its records, tending to displace the indifference of the middle classes during the phase
of high capitalism.

English interest in Italian restoration before the SPAB has excited little interest.
Fraser, however, has put forward a recent hypothesis: that enthusiasm for the

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18 Mason & Shacklock op. cit.; Dellheim, op. cit.
20 Marino, op. cit.
preservation of Italian fresco painting in the 1850s (I shall discuss this issue in the next chapter) is associated with a sympathy, held by many English visitors to Italy in the 1850s, with the causes of Italian liberty; that “to preserve this art of the past ... was to support the revolution.”

While it is true that English support for the Risorgimento was considerable, I see the interest in the condition of Italian frescoes, which prefigured the activities of the SPAB, in a different light. My chapter on Padua and Ravenna will go into this in more detail. My assertion is that serious interest in the preservation of Italy’s cultural heritage, seen as a moral duty of European society, came later, and in response to an art form which, by its nature is neither moveable nor saleable (the fact that frescoes were attached to walls did not prevent them being removed in the same way as a painting on panel or canvas), and cannot therefore be subordinated to the forces of ownership and consumption - architecture.

Venice

As stated above, there are ample studies in English and in Italian of the St Mark’s preservation campaign of 1879, and particularly of Ruskin’s involvement (or rather lack of involvement) in it. Stimulus for these investigations has perhaps filtered down from scholars seeking to present a clearer picture of Ruskin as a theorist of art.

For source material, these authors have focused to a greater or lesser extent on

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21 Fraser, op. cit. p.95.
23 The question of Ruskin’s significance as a theorist of anti-restoration has been more tenaciously pursued among Italian than among English scholars: Cf: Di Stefano, R. John Ruskin, interprete dell’architettura e del restauro, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1969; Rocchi G. ‘John Ruskin e le origini della moderna teoria del restauro’ Restauro, nn.13-14, Naples, 1974. pp.35-6.
Ruskin’s own writings and the circumstances of his special personal interest in St Mark’s, or on the writings of his contemporaries Zorzi, Boito, and Saccardo. The events surrounding the participation of the SPAB, the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark’s, and other pressure groups were precisely documented in contemporary press accounts, and these formed the backbone of many of these studies in the same way that they will provide the essential documentary structure of my own investigation.

A brief but most interesting study by Sharp has focused on Morris’ personal involvement in the St Mark’s and other Italian protests, describing how the campaign techniques were modified in the light of unforeseen hostility, and including extracts from some of the correspondence. The fundamental assumptions however, centring on Morris’ contribution somewhat to the exclusion of Henry Wallis, Zorzi, Street and others, seems to me to be too simplistic.24

On Venice generally, and the culture of restoration which pervaded in the city, there are fewer accounts, and none in English. One notable study of Venetian architectural culture at the turn of the century is Romanelli, G. *Venezia Ottocento* (Rome, Officina Edizioni, 1977). Gianfranco Pertot’s account *Venezia Restaurata* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1988) is a more wide ranging review of restoration in nineteenth-century Venice, but is much weaker on detail.

Florence

Surprisingly, given the stature of Florence in the English imagination, few studies have been made of the impact of English preservationism on Florentine restoration. This may be because the effects are less easily identified. The key studies are in Italian. Marco Dezzi Bardeschi’s study examines the restoration of the Florentine church of Santa Trinità by Castellazzi in the 1880s as a case study in restoration criticism which pitted the Italian schools of restoration thought, drawing on precepts largely derived from contemporary French practice, against a new strand of anti-restorationism represented by the SPAB, and supported by the English artistic/literary press. In the ensuing contest of ideologies which the author sketches out are present those themes which it is my intention to develop in this research: the part played by the Italian press, either in support of or in opposition to the restoration itself; and the effects of the English campaign on Italian ‘sensibilities.’

In a similar vein, Donatella Lorenzi’s essay considers how Castellazzi’s proposals to repair and reinstate certain original features into the fabric of the thirteenth-century Loggia del Bigallo were opposed by the architects Poggi and De Fabris, representing the conservation committee of the provincial government. Lorenzi goes on to reconsider Castellazzi’s methodology, presenting it not as an example of the eclectic revivalism which underscores many of the more excessive restorations of the nineteenth century, but as a carefully crafted, broadly respectful, even conservative approach which, however, contrasts with the extreme preservationism of the English.

whose views on this particular case are referred in a documentary appendix. 26 Although both these studies are limited in scope, and treat the respective cases in isolation as far as the SPAB foreign campaigns are concerned, the methodology - in which emphasis is placed on the analysis of documentary evidence relating to a specific case rather than speculative generalisations of a broader nature - is one which has influenced and informed my own approach.

I must draw attention to a scholarly publication of particular merit (and to which I have already referred in a footnote), L’Idea di Firenze, the papers of a conference held at Florence in 1986. It comprises a multi-disciplinary account of English, French, German, Russian, and American culture in Florence in the nineteenth century. This collection of essays has abundantly demonstrated the complexities of the subject, and, even in the narrow context of Florence, has uncovered much new material in connection with European cultural history. 27 Though it deals with mural painting rather than architecture, and in spite of its brevity, Christina Giannini’s contribution invites greater investigation into how precisely the foreign community in Florence influenced the revival, and recovery, of Medieval art and the subtle interaction between collectorship, art-historical inquiry, and public sensitivity towards the value and meaning of Italian cultural monuments across Europe.

The question of the English participation in the debate surrounding the demolition of the Mercato Vecchio is familiar to scholars of the expatriate community in Florence in

26 Lorenzi, Donatella ‘Giuseppe Castellazzi e il Restauro della Loggia del Bigallo’ Quaderni di Storia dell’Architettura e Restauro dell’Università degli Studi di Firenze n. 3, Jan.-July 1990, pp.37-50.
the last century. It has not, however, been treated in depth. Pier Francesco Listri's absorbing volume on Florence and European tourism reproduces the letter of protest written by a group of English artists to The Times on the threatened destruction of the city in 1898, and attempts to represent the episode as a vignette in the history of the growth of tourism in Florence, but again it is only a sketch. It is an episode which deserves much more detailed analysis. In spite of the temptation to take on this task, I fear it would make the present thesis unmanageably long. The events in question, though related to those I shall be describing, in any case fall outside my time-frame.

Other recommended studies of a broader nature, treating Anglo-Italian culture in the nineteenth century in many of its varied manifestations, but commendable for their conciseness, include: Jeanne Clegg and Paul Tucker's excellent catalogue to the 1992 exhibition at Sheffield Ruskin and Tuscany (London, Ruskin Gallery/Guild of St George in association with Lund Humphries, 1993); John Fleming's series 'Art Dealing in the Risorgimento' in the Burlington Magazine, volumes 115 (1973, pp.4-16) and 121 (1979, pp.492-508); The Victorian Vision of Italy 1825-75 (Leicester, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, 1968); and Berresford's introduction to L'eterno ritorno: l'influenza Italiana sull'arte Inglese dell'ottocento (Recanati, Progetti Mostre Novi, Rome, 1987, pp.9-12). These, together with L'idea di Firenze, would form the basis of any future study on the subject.

Milan

My assessment of the restoration and re-planning of nineteenth-century Milan has been greatly facilitated by several important recent publications: Gian Paolo Treccani [ed.] *Del restauro in Lombardia. Procedure, Istituzioni, Archivi 1861-1892* (Milan, Guerini, 1992); Mozzarelli, R. & Pavoni, A. *Milano fin de siècle* ([Atti del convegno di studi, Milan, 24-26 May 1990] Milan, Fondazione Bagatti Valsecchi, 1991) and Rozzi, R. [ed.] *Il Milano del Piano Beruto* (2 vols., Milan, Guerini e Associati, 1992). On the subject of the architect Paravicini, upon whom this study is obliged to reflect at length on account of his peculiarly strong connection with the SPAB, Professor Bellini’s studies have been a crucial starting point (I give a list of these in my Bibliobiography of Paravicini). Bellini touches on the importance of SPAB in the Milanese context, considering those areas in which Paravicini’s theoretical and practical research compares with that of Morris. A quantity of documents is preserved at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, in the Fondo Paravicini, but the archive contains scarcely even a reference to the SPAB, though it is rich in material relating to his career as an architect and historiographer of the architecture of Lombardy. I have located several fragments of correspondence in connection with Paravicini which enable Bellini’s work to be considerably expanded upon.

The question of English attitudes to Milan as a repository of important architectural monuments has not been addressed, and I have drawn entirely on primary sources, though considerably indebted, for bibliographical orientation, to authors such as J. R. Hale and Attilio Brilli, who have made the British traveller in Italy the subject of their
scholarship. I have found the Collezione Olschki at the Centro Romantico del
Gabinetto Vieusseux in Florence a useful source of first-hand testimony.

STRUCTURE

I will set out the thesis in three parts. Part I comprises two chapters: chapter 1, the
present introduction, and chapter 2, a broad survey of the cultural and historical
context against which my analysis must be interpreted. In this I will explore the
literary and historiographical trends which are characteristic of the English 'cult' of
Italy, from the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. I shall consider the influence
of Romanticism on architectural criticism, and will dwell on John Ruskin's
perceptions of Italian architecture. I will consider also developments in the criticism
of the visual arts, the impact of 'Primitive,' or Early Italian, Schools of painting on
English artists and writers, and the growth of interest in the physical condition of
historic art works of that period. I will include references to the condition of Italian
churches in the 1850s, and the concerns of the Society of Antiquaries and others about
the treatment of monuments by the Italian authorities. In the course of this broad-
ranging discussion I will introduce two key themes: firstly, the special character of
English criticism in respect of the restoration of works of art, which, as I will show,
led some English observers to adopt a very specific position in relation to works of
restoration in Italy; secondly, the problems emanating from an increasing
commercialisation of the art industry in Italy, which created conflict between the
interests of the new Italian State and those of visiting collectors, entrepreneurs and
tourists seeking to benefit materially from the growing enthusiasm for Italian art of
the Middle Ages and Renaissance. I will conclude with a brief glance at the strength of Anglo-Italian culture circa 1880, as a prelude to the case studies that will follow in Part II.

The case studies in Part II will be assembled in a broadly chronological arrangement, and constitute the raw material of my account. I aim to chart the efforts of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in its campaigns against the restoration of numerous Italian buildings, and this will provide the substance of my disquisition. Within this framework, however, I will seek to explore in greater detail the two key themes I have mentioned above: the character of English restoration criticism, and the problems of English collecting and connoisseurship in Italy.

Case study number one, St Mark's, Venice, will be the largest of the case studies, and the one in which key problems are identified and themes elaborated. It will comprise two sections: a descriptive account; and an analytical inquiry. I will explore both the facts relating to the St Mark's case, and the issues which are suggested by it, in relation to the principal themes with which I am concerned. The chief objects of interest in section I are: the SPAB Memorial to the Ministry of Public Instruction; the reactions of the English and Italian press to the St Mark's campaign; and the different style of the protest after May 1880. The main issues I will cover in section 2 are: interpretation of the theoretical character of the 1879 Memorial to the Ministry of Public Instruction (chiefly in relation to contemporary English restoration theory); and the interpretation of Italian responses to English interference through further
consideration of the theme of foreign collectorship and its effects on the national psyche.

Case study number two, focusing on examples of restorations undertaken at Padua and Ravenna during the same period, will also pursue the issues raised through analysis of the SPAB and the complex relationships the Society began to form in order to improve the effectiveness of its campaigns. Here again the Society's activities provide a framework through which to explore in greater depth the difficult legacy of English art scholarship in Italy and its negative effects.

Case study number three is a lengthy survey of the involvement of the SPAB in Tuscany, where it participated in campaigns to save the Loggia del Bigallo, in Florence, the Palazzo del Comune, at San Gimignano, and the Ponte Vecchio/Mercato Vecchio, in Florence, from restoration. In the course of this case study I shall set out in greater detail the characteristics of Italian restoration theory in the 1860s and 1870s. I will look at the rebuilding of Florence after 1866 and the response of the English press, before going on to consider the impact of the SPAB campaigns among the Florentines. I will continue to explore, in the course of the chapter certain central themes, in particular the effects of English commerce on the relations between Florence and England, and the consequences of these. But in the main, I will reflect increasingly on the way the campaigns were prosecuted in each case by the SPAB, recording how new personalities and enhanced experience of Italian restoration helped the Society to improve its operations in Italy.
In the fourth study, I will consider the position of Milan in the consciousness of visiting architects, artists & travellers. I will look closely at the culture of restoration and renewal with reference to one particular case - the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. I will then go on to consider the last of the key personalities whose roles I wish to analyse - the architect T.V. Paravicini. I will examine his views on restoration, and especially on the restoration of Santa Maria delle Grazie, and I will look at his relations with the SPAB and the influence of Morris and his theories on Paravicini’s work.

At the end of the case studies I will offer some conclusions, attempting to bring together the main themes I will have discussed, accounting for the decline of involvement after ca. 1886, and commenting upon the success, or otherwise, of the SPAB and its attempt to broadcast its repair-not-restoration message in Italy.

Part III will be a general discussion and conclusion.

Part IV of the study will comprise appendices and a bibliobiographical digest.
CHAPTER 2

THE CULT OF ITALY

Medieval Italy and the Age of the Grand Tour

To attempt to trace the full extent to which, in the arts, science, politics, literature, and culture, Medieval Italy was to achieve such a privileged position in the Victorian imagination would be a colossal undertaking, well beyond the scope of a limited introductory chapter such as this. As various authors have suggested, Italy had been the inspirational force in at least three major movements in Britannic culture. In all of these, we can see that an interest in the culture and literature of the Middle Ages was a common integer, forming a continuous link between one rediscovery and the next: the late fourteenth century in England witnessed the development and popularization of a lyrical poetic genre derived from Dante and Petrarch, a movement of which Chaucer, who was barely twenty when Dante died, was the chief exponent; in the Elizabethan and Stuart ages the discovery of courtly customs and manners of the early Renaissance was to become a major influence on the English aristocracy, contributing to the emergence of a fashion for Italian language and speech, while according to Milton, Evelyn and others an appreciation of the lyric, epic and dramatic qualities of the literature of Boccaccio, Petrarch and Ariosto, was essential to the education of a gentleman; ultimately, in the late eighteenth century, there began to permeate a mood of growing curiosity about Medieval
civilization, its social structure, and especially its religion, which, in the age of the Grand Tour, was at least partially stimulated by the experience of Italy.¹

One thinks of the Grand Tour as predominantly an exploration of the classical heritage of Western Europe, an excavation - intellectual as well as physical - of the legacy of Greece and Rome, and it is at first glance not obvious to see how an appreciation of Italy's Medieval past fits in with the concerns of a culture so deeply immersed in its nostalgia for antiquity. Addison, Berkeley, Boswell, Gibbon, Macaulay, Lord Burlington, Sir William Hamilton, are just some of those who were drawn to the epic associations of Italy's classical heritage, with inestimable consequences for the history of taste. But many of the learned Italophiles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided not only an inestimable body of erudite scholarship in connection with antiquity, but helped also to shape the perceptions and impressions of subsequent generations who, in their tours of the peninsula after the Napoleonic wars, would consolidate the foundations of a cult of Italy which had always been somewhat generic. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the resurgence of interest - never quite absent in the history of English literature - in the Medieval vernacular poets in the second half of the eighteenth century. As Hale has remarked, one of the first translations of Dante into English, by Henry Boyd, was printed in 1785;² we might refer at this point also to William Hayley's translations from Dante's _Divina Commedia_ which appeared in _An Essay on Epic Poetry_ in 1782, and to the 1775

² Hale, _op.cit_. p.56.
translation of de Sade's *La Vie de Petrarque* by Mrs Susannah Dobson (Dublin, John Beatty), a volume which ran to six editions between 1775 and 1805. Another point of reference, also discussed by Hale, would be the growth of the study of the the revival of art - of what we know as the Renaissance. This historical phenomenon had been, in the seventeenth century, pinpointed as having occurred after the fall of Constantinople to the Saracens in 1453, but it was a view that was being progressively challenged by those, including Henry Boyd, who traced the revival further back to the thirteenth century, or even as far as the Crusades.¹ One might even go so far as to cite the taste for picturesque greco-italianate landscapes popularised by Claude and Poussin as, albeit through pagan iconography, signalling a disposition to regard these mediterranean lands as loci of untouched innocence and naturalness - a form of reverie which would, in another time and another age, alight upon a different topos, that of Medieval social organisation and spiritual discipline, in pursuit of similar ideals. In these and other respects the age of the Grand Tour p:.saged a movement which, in the nineteenth-century Romantic experience of Italy, was to have a profound effect on the Victorian psyche.⁴

The Romantic poets Byron, Shelley, Keats and Coleridge were profoundly affected by their experiences of Medieval Italy, and by the form and sentiment of the *Divina Commedia*. Dante embodied seductive ideals: for Byron, Dante was the poet of liberty, a

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patriot and exile whose life experiences paralleled his own; for Shelley his works embodied an ideal of tenderness and Platonic love second only to Homer. The ideals of courtly love and chivalry in the later narratives of Ariosto and Tasso, sixteenth-century interpretations of Medieval life, were also to be a major influence, especially on Sir Walter Scott, while Keats is said to have taught himself Italian by reading *Orlando Furioso*.

Jeanne Clegg has shown, in her introduction to *Ruskin in Venice*, how Venice exercised a particularly powerful influence on the English Romantic imagination. There were those, like Wordsworth, who associated the city with cherished ideals of liberty and democracy at the time of the Republic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Others, notably William Beckford, responded to the city as a magical, luminescent other-world, which paralysed the visitor in a condition of helpless rapture and enchantment. This is a response epitomized in Beckford’s travel journal *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, privately published in 1783. In 1781 John Moore's *View of Society and Manners in Italy* was published. This very popular volume was a kind of 'poetical' history, mingling fact and romance in an evocative reconstruction of the rise and decline of the Republic. In the works of Byron and Shelley, we find these Romantic and

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6 The original was destroyed in the fire at Fonthill Abbey, but reappeared in a new form, *Italy: with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (2 vols.), London, Richard Bentley, 1834. This, according to Clegg, was one of the works which was influential on the young Ruskin. Cf: Clegg, Jeanne. *Ruskin and Venice*, London, Junction Books, 1981. pp.22-3.
mythologising tendencies still more finely developed, notably in the fourth Canto of Byron's *Childe Harold*, and in his *Ode to Venice*.\(^7\)

Thus Italy, through the experience of travel and through literary scholarship, evoked cherished ideals of civilization, culture and history while simultaneously satisfying a hunger for bathos, strangeness and sentimentality. In summing up the effect of this kaleidoscope of impressions of Italy, one may consider the words of Brand:

"For much of the literature of that Romantic generation, Italy was considered an appropriate setting - partly owing to Byron and Shelley; partly following a long tradition; and partly because the country was thought to possess qualities which especially appealed to contemporaries as romantic."\(^8\)

**Travel and the Romantic inheritance**

The poet Samuel Rogers arguably did more than most to popularise the romantic image of Italy, and his most influential work embodies subtle changes in consciousness which were beginning to develop at the dawn of the Victorian age. In his poem *Italy*, the product of his own Grand Tour of 1814-15 - recording a journey, via Venice and Florence, to the classical sites of Rome, Pompeii and Paestum - the poet was alive to the evocative character of Italian streets, monuments and landscape. At Arqua he was moved

"... to wander where

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\(^7\) Ibid. pp.23-9. Clegg's analysis, which focuses on writers who influenced Ruskin's perceptions of Italy, makes some interesting points in connection with the tendency, in Byron and Shelley, to see Venice's glorious past in stark contrast to its present depravity. This polarising trend, which Ruskin also exemplifies, must be seen as central to the English response to Italy which was rarely focused on its present life but rather on the dream of its historical past.

\(^8\) Brand, *op.cit.* p.172.
Petrarch had wandered, to explore and sit
Where in his peasant dress he loved to sit,
Musing, reciting - on some rock moss-grown,
Or the fantastic root of some old beech.\(^9\)

At Bergamo, again with Petrarch in his mind's eye, he imagined a ragged minstrel in Petrarch's time

"...in the bannered hall
Tuning his harp to tales of chivalry..."\(^{10}\)

In Naples, Florence and elsewhere his poem reads as romantic and imaginative history, pregnant with the recollection of heroic deeds, legends of great men, with elegiac musings upon the tomb of Caius Cestius, or Pompeii, or the fields near Florence where Cimabue walked. Recollections of the Age of Chivalry mingle with thoughts upon the ruins of antiquity, folk-tales and Wordsworthian passages on the beauty of the natural scene. Rogers' poem has been described as "Baedeker" lyric, as "the poetic expression of the feelings of the ordinary man in the presence of the reality of tourism.\(^{11}\) Rogers' synthesis of Italian experience was also (the Baedeker tag again seems apt) a literary evocation based not only on the ancient authors, but equally borrowing from Pulci, Machiavelli, Ariosto, Dryden, Milton, Evelyn and Gray in its complex references which act as way-markers in a voyage of discovery across a cultural landscape rich in memory.

\(^{10}\) Ibid. p.37.
and association. It is at once a work of poetry, a travel companion, and a discourse on Italian history and character. As such it stands at some mid-point between the lofty sentiments of pure Romanticism and the more prosaic reality of mass-market continental travel, with its guide books and its literary romances in historical Italian settings, in which the 'Idea of Italy' is progressively moulded into shapes which both reflect and fulfill complex intellectual fantasies.¹²

Guide books geared towards commercial tourism - those which contained practical information for travellers as well as enumerating the principal cultural and artistic attractions, began to appear in numbers in the 1840s. Perhaps the most popular, and most influential, were the Murray handbooks, produced by the London publishing firm of John Murray. The *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy, Part I: comprising the continental states and island of Sardinia, Lombardy and Venice*, and its companion volume *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy, Part 2: Parma, Piacenza, Modena, Florence, Pisa, Lucca and Tuscany as far as the Val d'Arno*, were first published in London in 1842, with further editions in 1846, 1847, 1854, 1856 and 1858. The Murray guides were more useful than earlier travel guides, such as Mariana Starke's *Travels*¹³ and

¹² The first complete edition of *Italy* came out in 1822 (London, Longman); the first illustrated version appeared in 1830; *Poems*, the first edition of Rogers' complete poetical works, including *Italy*, was published in 1834 (2 vols., London, Cadell & Moxon). The 1830 edition was perhaps the single most important work on Italy produced in the nineteenth century in terms of measuring the change in values which the popularization of Italy and all things Italian had engendered. It contained engravings by Turner and Stothard and was responsible for introducing the teenage Ruskin to the unique magic of Italy. See: *Works*: XXVI. p.97; XXXV. p.93. See also: Giddey, *op.cit.* p.105; Artom Treves, G. *The Golden Ring: Anglo Florentines 1847-1862*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1956. p.3, note 1. ¹³ Starke, Mariana. *Travels on the Continent*, London, John Murray, 1820.
Joseph Forsyth's Remarks, in that they combined scholarship with essential practical information.

They were, in many ways, a hybrid species: practical almanack; potted history; and part-guide to connoisseurship for the knowledge-hungry bourgeois aesthete eager to sample a slice of Italy. They were selective in their judgements, championing, as one recent author has put it, "the principle of describing not what may be seen, but what ought to be seen." At the same time the Murray guides appealed to the Victorian popular imagination, predisposed as it was towards literary-historical interpretations of the Medieval past. They also satisfied the more serious scholar, being mostly edited by the critic and art historian Sir Francis Palgrave, who was a keen Medieval revivalist; they incorporated a continually reviewed reading list which drew attention to the best current editions of Vasari's Lives of the Artists, and the latest scholarly publications - or lack of them.

14 Forsyth, Joseph. Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters during an excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803, London, John Murray, 1813. A second edition was issued by the same publisher in 1816, a third (2 vols.) in 1824, and a fourth in 1835. This and John Chetwoode Eustace's volume A Tour through Italy exhibiting a view of its scenery, its antiquities, and its monuments ... with an account of the present state of its cities and towns and occasional observations on the recent spoliations of the French (London, J. Mawman, 1813), which ran to seven editions between 1813 and 1841, were the most important of a genre of post-Napoleonic tourists' guides and the principal companion on any Italian tour until the cheaper, portable guides such as the Murray Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy began to roll off the press in 1842.


Popular fiction with an Italian flavour reached something of a zenith in the immediate post-Risorgimento period. This was a time in which the infant State's cultural attractions came within easier reach of the middle-class traveller, who no longer had the inconvenience of endless frontier crossings, or the danger of civil unrest to contend with. The new railways were already revolutionising transport to and around Italy by the late 1850s, and package tours like those of Thomas Cook began in the 1860s. Literature of the period which drew its inspiration from Italy ranged from, at one end of the spectrum, Charles Lever's *The Dodd Family Abroad*, a tongue-in-cheek account of the habits and manners of the English tourists, first published in 1854, with a second edition in 1859. Another Charles - Charles Dickens - made something of an impression with his *Pictures from Italy*, a volume of personal observations of Italian travel (London, Bradbury & Evans, and Leipzig, Tauchnitz, 1846). At the other end of the scale, 'Italian' romances, especially if set in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, maintained a steady popularity; George Eliot's *Romola* appeared piece-by-piece in *Cornhill Magazine* between July 1862 and August 1863, and was published in book form that year by Tauchnitz of Leipzig, and again in 1865 (with illustrations by Sir Frederic Leighton), 1871 and 1880. The genre was by no means new - Bulwer Lytton's *Rienzi* of 1835 was still popular, not least because the subject matter appealed to the same romantic Victorian enthusiasm for Italian liberty epitomised by Elizabeth Barret Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows*; Mary Shelley's *Valperga* of 1823, and the even earlier novels of Ann Radcliffe belong to the same tradition of literary-historical genre writing - but the increased numbers of travellers

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choosing to visit Florence, either for culture or for health, gave these works an additional dimension of interest.

The literary-Romantic tradition and its influence on the tourist culture of the 1850s and 1860s created a predisposition to regard Medieval Italy as the foundation of certain cherished fantasies, and it was in the works of art, monuments and remains of Medieval Italy that these dreamings coalesced. As will be made clear, it is this dream of Italy, as much as any social or scientific interest in its architectural forms, which underlies the efforts of William Morris, Henry Wallis and their followers.

**Christian Architecture**

An interest in Medieval architecture had been gathering momentum in England since the middle of the eighteenth century. First there had been the gothick fancies of Walpole and Stukeley, and then, in 1771, Richard Gough's tenure as President of the Society of Antiquaries, a phase of especially productive research into this little known area. Gough's *Topographical Antiquities* of 1768 had drawn attention to the poor condition and scarcity of research into Gothic architecture. Through the activities of antiquaries such as Gough, James Bentham, John Britton and Thomas Stothard, English Medieval art gradually became a subject of serious study, especially after 1800 and the publication of such important works as Britton's *Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* [1805-14] and Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* [1810].

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In attempting to penetrate the Victorian mind and the perceptions of Italy which are at the heart of our analysis, we might usefully consider an aspect of the relationship between the English Romantic literary tradition and the growth of interest, promoted by such institutions as the Royal Society of Antiquaries and sustained in the works of these and other authors, in Medieval monuments. The following example is pertinent in that it enables us to focus on how Romantic literature might have contributed to delivering a changed sensibility towards Italian architecture. It concerns the impressions of a young poet, an associate of Byron and Shelley, James Henry Leigh Hunt, on visiting the Baptistery at Pisa in 1821, where he recorded a sequence of reflections which illustrate a receptiveness towards the power of Christian architectural expression which we might regard as characterizing the cultivated nineteenth-century Italophile as distinct from the Grand Tourist. The description refers to the popular early guide book by Forsyth, mentioned above. To Hunt, Forsyth's indifference to the ritual function of Gothic, and his taste for stereometrical purity, made him an unsuitable teacher:

"The Baptistery is a large rotunda, richly carved, and appropriated solely to the purpose after which it was christened. It is in a mixed style and was built in the twelfth century. Forsyth, who is deep in arches and polygons, objects to the crowd of unnecessary columns; to the 'hideous tunnel which conceals the fine swell of the cupola;' and to the appropriation of so large an edifice to a christening. The 'tunnel' may deserve his 'wrath;' but his architectural learning sometimes behaves as ill as the tunnel. It obscures his better taste. A christening, in the eyes of a good Catholic, is at least as important an object as a rotunda; and there is a religious sentiment in the profusion with which ornament is heaped upon edifices of this nature. It forms a beauty of itself,

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19 See note 14. Both Forsyth and Eustace focused heavily on antiquities and on Palladio, inevitably paying scant regard to the primitive style referred to by Forsyth as 'Lombard' (op.cit. p.9), predominant at Pisa.

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and gives even mediocrity a sort of abundance of intention that looks like the wealth of genius. The materials take leave of their materiality, and crowd together into a worship of their own. It is no longer 'let everything' only 'that has breath praise the Lord;' but let everything else praise him, and take meaning and life accordingly. Let column obscure column, as in a multitude of men; let arch strain upon arch, as if to ascend to heaven; let there be infinite details, conglomerations, mysteries, lights, darknesses; and let the birth of a new soul be celebrated in the midst of all.\textsuperscript{20}

Just as Rogers' \textit{Italy} was a crucial event in the dissemination of a generic, touristic vision of Italy, so Hunt's descriptions of Pisa capture an instance in the history of architectural appreciation which, from the point of view of the present thesis, belongs to an epoch in which the serene paradigm of classical aesthetics is being dismantled. It points to a re-definition of architecture as expression rather than harmonics - a kind of neo-Christian \textit{architecture parlante}. It subscribes to a notion of architecture as an outgrowth of human spirituality, an embodiment of the supernaturality of faith. In the final reference to the birth of a new soul, we find a curiously pertinent allusion - this realisation of architecture's spiritual energy is, in historical terms, the moment at which Medieval architecture itself is reborn not as an object of cold, intellectual scrutiny, but as a life-metaphor, as a manifestation of divinity.

In this respect, no study of Anglo-Italian artistic culture could omit to mention John Ruskin. Ruskin's \textit{Seven Lamps of Architecture}, published in 1849, is on one very

important level, a discourse on precisely this - the metaphorical function of Gothic architecture, which in Ruskin's case stands for natural beauty, moral truth, and human vitality in accordance with almighty law.

Amid the mouldering gothic marbles of Lucca, Pisa and Venice Ruskin found half-buried fragments of an architectural poetry which drew him deeper into contemplation of the life of the past, its candour, and its spiritual greatness; and from the cheap and tawdry handiwork of modern times he recoiled with shame and rage, recognising nothing less than the sophistry of the mob and the vaingloriousness of a new barbarian age.

Through publications which drew on his observations on the modern state of Italian art, Ruskin conducted a powerful assault on the practice of restoration. Repair by imitation, the reproduction of missing features with scientific exactitude was, he felt, an act of improbity that contravened the moral standards of true art. He equated truth in architecture with an honest expression of the creative spirit. He deplored falsehood and deceit, whether in terms of the materials used or the amount of labour expended. He distrusted modern society, and exalted the moral and spiritual sincerity of Medieval civilization, cherished values which were under attack from the pseudo-copyism of the restorer. An ancient building demolished was infinitely preferable to an ancient building restored, in which no trace of its former life remains.²¹

²¹ Ruskin's most important utterances on the evil of restoration can be found in chapter six of The Seven Lamps of Architecture and in Modern Painters [1852]. For the latter, see: Works: III. pp.203-7.
Restoration and Italian churches

In English restoration practice circa 1850 Ruskin’s ultra-conservative ideology had yet to make its impact. The diverse opinions which had been expressed on the subject had been summed up by E.A.Freeman in his 1846 essay, *Principles of Church Restoration*. They ranged from the ‘conservative,’ to the ‘destructive,’ with the ‘eclectic’ camp lying somewhere in between. ‘Conservative’ restoration - very much a minority view - subscribed to the notion that no historic church should in any way be subject to improvement. The ‘destructive’ School, following in the radical tradition of cathedral remodelling exemplified over fifty years before at Hereford, Salisbury and Durham by James Wyatt, was still practised, even in the midst of a revived interest in Medieval architecture, by those who sought to remove incongruous, post-Medieval additions thereby recovering a purer, more authentic specimen of the architecture of the Middle Ages. The Cambridge Camden Movement, and the periodical *The Ecclesiologist*, battled on behalf of the ‘eclectic’ School, which advocated a mixture of conservation of the old and insertion of new works to meet functional requirements. It was in the midst of a discernible shift in favour of more flexible solutions to restoration problems, exemplified by the powerful Ecclesiology movement, that Ruskin’s forceful defence of the conservative principle was launched. It introduced several theoretical concepts which, if not quite new, were certainly more convincingly expressed than ever before: it questioned the ‘principle of preference,’22 which had allowed architects to conduct restorations to earlier forms on the basis of stylistic preference - a principle which had been notably

employed in the Ecclesiologists’ restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Cambridge in 1841, it suggested an approach to architectural historiography which linked the history of building with a much wider panoply of human spiritual and material endeavour, responding to historic structures as palimpsests, elaborate chronicles of human industry, morality, and society; it condemned the inferior, imitative nature of contemporary art and design, calling for a return to expression, craftsmanship and wholesome artistic principles underpinned by faith and the love of Nature. It was a creed which called into question the very act of restoration itself.

It must be borne in mind that Ruskin’s anti-restorationism had been informed by his observations of restoration works in France and Italy. This - the 1840s and 1850s - is the phase which co-incides historically with the popularization of Italy as a tourist destination. The same factors which made Italy more accessible to the tourist also facilitated the study of Italian architecture and, through the study of architectural development in the Middle Ages, a concern for the condition and repair of the original works evolved, in much the same way as it had in England and France in the late eighteenth century, out of a systematic effort to record, analyse and understand these architectural specimens in an historical context. In considering the response of English travellers to the condition and repair of Italian monuments, one must reflect on the fact that Italian Gothic Revivalism lacked the assertiveness of the French variety, so strongly

underpinned by the reassertion of the Catholic heritage under Chateaubriand, Rio, and later by the radicalism of Victor Hugo. Italy played no significant part in the exchange of ideas which took place between Britain and France, like the cross-fertilization which occurred between the *Annales Archéologiques* and the *Ecclesiologist*.24 Understanding of Italy’s architectural monuments, long neglected under the Habsburg rulers and their satellites in the Italian peninsula, was patchy, because although the mysterious, primitive and exotic art of this forgotten terra nova of cultural riches had provided abundant material for scholarly research since the end of the Napoleonic wars, interest in Italian Medieval architecture developed slowly and in complex and diverse directions.

At first, Medieval and Romanesque buildings in Italy inspired a handful of enterprising English, French and German scholars, chiefly as specimens to be analysed in pursuit of the genealogical origins of European Gothic, and not as a blueprint for social idealism, as Gothic architecture became in the minds of Ruskin’s followers. Cresy and Taylor’s survey of the Piazza dei Miracoli at Pisa was published in 1829; Henry Gally Knight’s studies *Saracenic and Norman Remains to illustrate ‘the Normans in Sicily,’* and *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy* (2 vols.), both published by John Murray, appeared in 1840 and 1844 respectively.25 Perhaps the most influential study was J-B.L.G Seroux


25 To expand a little on the origins of the English study of Italian Gothic at the beginning of the century, which was under way at the same time as Cotman’s researches into French Gothic and Rickman’s comparative studies of English Medieval architecture: Robert Smirke, in 1806, had published engravings of Italian Gothic monuments in *Archaeologia* (vol. 15 pp.363-6 & 373-9); ‘Remarks on the Gothic ornaments of the Duomo, Battistero and Campo Santo of Pisa,’ by Arthur Taylor F.S.A. appeared in the same periodical in 1822 (vol. 20 pp.537- 44); in 1817 E. Cresy and G.L.Taylor began to collect data for their *Architecture of the Middle Ages in Italy Illustrated by views, plans, elevations, sections and details of the*
D'Agincourt's six-volume *Histoire de l'Art par ses Monuments depuis sa décadence au 4ème siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au 16ème* (6 vols., Paris, Treuttel et Würtz, 1811-23), cataloguing for the first time the rise and decline of art from antiquity, through the Dark Ages, to the revival in the age Brunelleschi. The volumes, dealing with architecture, sculpture and painting, carefully reproduced examples of carving, design and decoration from periods in history scarcely examined, let alone understood, such as specimens of Lombard Romanesque and eleventh-century Roman monuments like San Paolo fuori le Mura, and the work helped to shape a new outlook upon the rise and fall of civilisation itself, on the historical, and on the social character of art.26

Robert Willis drew on D'Agincourt for the compilation of his *Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages, especially of Italy* (Cambridge, J.J. Deighton, 1835), a book which is thought to have influenced Ruskin.27 A few Italian studies found their way into the library of the Society of Antiquaries, including the second edition of Leopoldo Cicognara's *Le Fabbriche e Monumenti più cospicue di Venezia* [1815-20] (2 vols., Venice, 1840). James Fergusson's *Handbook of Architecture*, which attempted to deal

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comprehensively with a wide range of building types, periods and geographical areas, and which also relied heavily on D'Agincourt, was published in 1855.  

Not until Ruskin's seminal *On the Nature of Gothic* and *The Stones of Venice*, however, were Pisan thirteenth-century and Venetian architecture placed more firmly at the centre of the cult of the Medieval, and the author's passionate condemnation of restorations at Pisa in *Modern Painters* provides an obvious instance of the phenomenon which I have set out to examine in the following chapters. On the whole, however, restorations and demolitions of Medieval buildings in the 1840s, aside from those on which Ruskin commented, were neither sufficiently well understood in the context of European Gothic, nor sufficiently accessible to the researcher.

Inevitably, given the intensifying restoration debate in England, and the fact that Medieval Italian architecture was still a largely unexplored territory, the attention of architecturally-minded travellers was more readily focused on the prospects for a revival of Pointed architecture in Italy, as well as the condition of its churches, the mode of restoration employed, fashions in church decoration and furnishing, and the antiquarian study of religious architecture. It is in the 1840s that the first tentative interest in Italian restoration is shown. In 1846 a writer in the *Ecclesiologist* commented disapprovingly on

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28 *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture, being a concise and popular account of the different styles of architecture prevailing in all ages and countries*, London, John Murray, 1855. Studies of North Italian architecture were few and far between before the 1840s. See part II chapter 4.

works of restoration recently carried out, after a fire, to the church of San Paolo fuori le Mura, in Rome, by the architect Poletti:

"Few things can be more discouraging than a visit to this Basilica. The whole work is Pagan in feeling...was there no-one in Rome to lift a voice for Christian antiquity?"\(^{30}\)

As this observation shows, the effects of the Catholic revival in England and France on Italian art were marginal, and the restoring spirit of the Ecclesiologists had no counterpart there. However, the same journal had praised, the previous year, Antolini's restorations of San Francesco at Bologna, a church formerly used as a customs station and now restored to worship:

"...great credit is due to all concerned for this attempt. It is one of great importance, being, perhaps, the first movement in Italy towards a revival of the Pointed style."\(^{31}\)

The clergyman and antiquary Benjamin Webb, a founder member of the Cambridge Camden movement, made a short tour of Lombardy and the Veneto in 1847, and recorded his impressions of northern cities.\(^{32}\) A few churches he was delighted to find in good repair, but most were not: Lodi Cathedral he found to be "most lamentably modernised;"\(^ {33}\) San Sebastiano at Mantua was desecrated and used as a store;\(^ {34}\) Como Cathedral had a disappointing "sham front;"\(^ {35}\) the Church of Sanfedele had been

\(^{33}\) Ibid. p.230.
\(^{34}\) Ibid. p.237.
\(^{35}\) Ibid. p.196.
"hopelessly modernised;"\textsuperscript{36} and the whole city of Padua was "in wretched repair, and with every look of neglect and desolation."\textsuperscript{37}

By the late 1850s, however, the destructive effects of the revival of interest in Christian architecture - namely the damage wrought upon ancient fabric by over-zealous restorers, were being seriously considered. George Edmund Street was formulating his views on restoration, and his impressions of the conduct of Italian workmen in historic churches were influential in setting the tone for subsequent denunciations of foreign restorers. Street's tour of Italy in 1853 inevitably led him into consideration of the condition of churches in Italy and the quality of Italian restoration. Pursuing his quest for virgin specimens of the North Italian Gothic style, Street barely even bothered with buildings which had been most seriously affected by restoration, such as the Cathedral at Vercelli - "modernised and, I believe, not worth visiting."\textsuperscript{38}

When, in 1857, he returned to the specific subject of restoration in an article in the \textit{Ecclesiologist}, he reflected on the hapless Cathedral of Torcello, where he had been shocked to find workmen

\begin{quote}
"knocking down large portions of the great mosaic in the apse, throwing down and working immense logs of timber on the noble marble pavements;"
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.} p.197.  
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.} p.264.  
he felt sure the Palazzo Segredo at Venice would be caked in plaster and paint in the manner of the Fondaco dei Turchi (the latter would endure a far more horrific restoration at the hands of the architect Federico Berchet between 1861 and 1869); and he found San Francesco at Bologna already gravely disfigured by modern restorations.39 This last observation is an indication of how things had changed since the Ecclesiologist warmly congratulated the restorers of San Francesco on introducing the revived Pointed style into Italy.

The first signs of a properly pro-active, interventionist approach on the part of English historians and critics emerge in the 1860s, the decade which saw the restoration-versus-conservation issue become an increasingly important topic of debate in the architectural profession. In the hectic aftermath of national unification in 1861 the fledgeling Italian State passed a law in 1866, sanctioning the disinheriance of many of Italy’s religious institutions. The Decree for the Suppression of Religious Corporations provided for the disposal of the material assets of, among others, the Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino. The reaction to this horrible prospect is really where the present story begins. The British representative in Rome raised the alarm when he wrote to Earl Clarendon of the Foreign Office, on 12 June 1866, telling him about the new Bill which the Chamber of Deputies seemed about to ratify. On 21 June Clarendon received from the Society of Antiquaries a petition requesting him to communicate to the Italian Government, through the English minister at Florence, the Antiquaries’ objections to an Act

which consigns to one common destruction the gold and the dross, the wheat and the tares, the good and the bad.\textsuperscript{40}

The Marquess of Camden, acting as President of the Committee of the Institute of Archaeology, also wrote to Clarendon enclosing a Memorial which had been addressed to Camden by his members on 21 June, to the same effect.\textsuperscript{41} On July 4 1866 Clarendon received notices that these protests had been communicated to the Italian minister, though it was already too late to do anything to halt the resolution of the Chamber of Deputies in Rome.\textsuperscript{42}

These are essential considerations: if one accepts that there was a sense in which the Gothic Revival in architecture was nourished and sustained by European travel, then it follows that the restoration debate which was kindled in the pages of the Ecclesiologist and by the likes of Street and E.A Freeman drew upon the same experiences. The attempts made by the SPAB and others to influence restoration practice in Italy in the 1880s were certainly in part derived from this tradition, while the example of the Society of Antiquaries provided both a model and a precedent for the SPAB methodology.

\textsuperscript{40} President & Council of the Society of Antiquaries [Earl Stanhope] to Earl Clarendon [Received 21 June 1866] in: Correspondence respecting the Suppression of Ecclesiastical Corporations in Italy, presented to the House of Commons by command of Her Majesty in pursuance of their Address, July 31,1866. pp.1-2, in: Parliamentary Papers vol.76, 1866. p.411.

\textsuperscript{41} Marquess of Camden to Clarendon, 24 June 1866, Ibid. pp.3-4.

\textsuperscript{42} Gladstone himself, who visited the threatened monastery in 1866, together with his son and several of his ministers while on a visit to Italy, played no small part in the affair. See: Stirling, A.W.M. The Richmond Papers, London, Heinemann, 1926. pp.221-30.
However, this aspect provides only an incomplete background to the events I wish to investigate. There is another dimension to the English participation in the restoration debate in Italy, and its roots will be found not in the discipline of architectural scholarship, but in the realm of painting.

**Medieval Painting and Connoisseurship**

The reappraisal of Early Italian painting - Bellini, Botticelli, Giotto, and others - during the 1820s and 1830s, led to a radical transformation in historiography, aesthetics, and taste. As has been remarked by Venturi, the English 'gothic' novels of Beckford and Walpole played an important role in the rediscovery of so-called 'primitive' values, that is, the values associated with a barbarian dark-age which was thought to have subsumed the classical tradition. The transference in art criticism from objective canons of taste to subjective ones began with the English Romantic poets, and with the German philosophers of *Sturm und Drang*, such as Herder, Hamann, and Goethe. It is through them that the concept of a 'culture' of the Middle Ages begins to emerge. To the Romantic spirit, the appeal of Medieval civilization lay partly in its suggestion of collective human fulfilment through spiritual endeavour, faith and passion - a 'dream of order,' and partly in the intensity of its modes of expression which, though unsophisticated, seemed to embody an essential, authentic naturalness which was far removed from Academic formalism.

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44 The phrase is borrowed from: Chandler, Alice. *A Dream of Order: the Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London, Routledge, 1970), which deals with the idea of the Medieval in the imagination of writers from Scott to Carlyle, Ruskin and Disraeli.
Among those who, as critics, teachers, and historians of art, exalted the works of Trecento painters, was Alexis François Rio, whose *De la Poésie Chrétienne* was one of the most influential treatises on the superior virtue of Medieval art. Rio was schooled in the French Catholic tradition of Chateaubriand and Montalembert, a tradition which responded to a deeply self-conscious sense of national identity, in which the Middle Ages were looked upon with a growing sense of nostalgia. Earlier, in 1829, his compatriot Paillot de Montabert had denigrated Raphael and his contemporaries as exponents of a decadent art, and proclaimed Giotto and his generation as the true spiritual leaders.

Among Italians there emerged at the same time a re-awakening in respect of the nation's Catholic Medieval heritage. Cicognara's ground-breaking treatise on sculpture *Storia della Scultura dal suo Risorgimento in Italia fino al Secolo di Napoleone per servire di distinzione dalle opere di Winckelmann e D'Agincourt* (3 vols., Venice, Picotti, 1813-16), provided one of the first comprehensive, detailed accounts of the history of sculpture ever published. This work, like those of D'Agincourt and Rio, considered the history of the visual arts in a social context, as the outward expression of cultural progress. It also, for the first time, constructed a narrative from which Medieval artists were not excluded.

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46 Venturi, op.cit. p.272.
the study of painting interest in the Italian Primitives shown by the likes of Tommaso Minardi was already traceable, through later editions of Luigi Lanzi's *Storia Pittorica della Italia*, to eighteenth-century scholars like Alessandro da Morrona, Filippo Baldinucci and Guglielmo della Valle. 47

English scholarship had its own part to play in this process. Edward Wright, in his travels in Italy of 1720-22, had shown an interest in the Early Masters; Jonathan Richardson, the painter, even more so. 48 Smollett, in 1765, had commented upon the expressiveness of Giotto's and Benozzo's frescoes at the Campo Santo in Pisa. 49 Flaxman, in 1787, sketched the surviving works not only of Donatello, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti but also of Spinello Aretino and Duccio di Buoninsegna in Tuscany, as well as Orvieto Cathedral and the Scaliger Tombs at Verona. 50

But these were perhaps isolated instances, not part of a substantial cultural movement as such, and Early Italian Schools were still regarded as curiosities even in the 1850s. Of all the rediscoveries, it was that of the fourteenth and fifteenth-century Masters of central


48 Hale, *op.cit.* pp.75-6.


and northern Italy which most came to occupy the English mind, and in this the efforts of collector-amateurs such as William Young Ottley played a vital role. In 1792-3 Ottley drew and studied early frescoes at Assisi, largely unknown at the time. He published a set of drawings from the Early Masters, *Italian Schools of Design*, from 1808 until 1823. As a collector of Quattrocento painting his example was followed by the likes of, among others, William Roscoe, the Liverpool industrialist.\(^{51}\)

The greatest contribution to the revival of interest in the Italian Primitives was made over a period of about twenty years, from the early 1820s, by English amateur scholar-travellers like Mrs Graham, later Lady Callcott, whose *Essays*, based on her travel journals of 1827-8, contain rapturous references to the dramatic, expressive art of the fourteenth century.\(^{52}\) Another amateur, Mrs Anna Jameson, played no small part in the process, referring especially to the “pure and gentle feeling” detectable in the works of Fra Angelico and the young Perugino in her *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*, and contrasting these early artists with the more classical, realistic or heroic generation of Raphael and Michelangelo.\(^{53}\)

\(^{51}\) Sutton, Denys. 'Aspects of British Collecting (part IV) XIV: from Ottley to Eastlake' *Apollo* vol. 122, August 1985. pp.84-95. For a most useful recent study, focusing on the critical fortunes of Piero della Francesca, but containing many useful references to English collectorship and its interests in Italian art during the early nineteenth century, see: Cheles, L. 'Piero della Francesca in nineteenth-century Britain' *The Italianist* vol. 14, 1994. pp.218-49.

\(^{52}\) Haskell, op. cit. pp.47-8.

\(^{53}\) Jameson, Mrs [Anna Brownell]. *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters and of the progress of painting in Italy from Cimabue to Bassano* (2 vols.), London, Charles Knight, 1845. p.59
Expression and sentiment, too, were the qualities admired by Sir David Wilkie at the Arena Chapel in Padua.\textsuperscript{54} Deservedly, the most famous advocates of the Primitives were the Eastlakes, Sir Charles and Lady Margaret, who were instrumental in bringing about a change in attitudes through their work at the National Gallery in the 1840s and 1850s.\textsuperscript{55}

**Preservationism and Collectorship: conflicting forces in the 1850s**

The Eastlakes were primarily concerned with the appreciation, collection and classification of moveable specimens of Early Italian art. Their contribution to the rediscovery of Early Italian painting was substantial, but it may seem an obscure angle from which to approach the question of Italian restoration and English attitudes to it in the second half of the century. Obscure, that is, until one begins to consider how the collection and study of Early Italian painting helped to encourage a specific interest in Italian fresco-painting. The history of the fresco revival in the nineteenth century begins in Germany, where the ‘Nazarene’ painters Overbeck and Cornelius began to execute large scale public commissions using the technique in the 1830s. In England, the revival owed much to Eastlake and to William Dyce's commission for the decoration of the House of Lords, in 1839. In Italy itself, the interest in fresco technique combined with an interest in the Early Schools of painting led to a flourishing of historical research into the art of Pisa, Arezzo, Assisi and other cities. Frescoes, by their nature, are works which share in, and suffer from, the degradation of their immediate environment, and in the

\textsuperscript{54} Haskell, op. cit. p.50.  
middle of the nineteenth century, all over central Italy, wall-paintings perished or were mutilated. Writers such as Lady Callcott, in 1826, had observed the poor state of preservation of wall paintings like those by Giotto at the Arena Chapel. The first writer to make this situation fully apparent was Lord Lindsay, in his very important and influential *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, of 1847.

*Sketches of the History of Christian Art* belongs very much in the tradition of poetical or imaginative history of which Ruskin was to be the most famous exponent. It is, moreover, very strongly coloured with Lindsay's own commitment to the Christian faith. Lindsay's work is important on the one hand for the contribution it made to the re-evaluation of Giotto, hitherto not especially highly regarded among connoisseurs and painters. But in the context of the present discussion, of extreme importance were the author's criticisms of the condition of those early paintings and frescoes which, for so long abandoned to the indifference of scholars and sacristans, were rapidly disappearing altogether through

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57 Alexander William Lindsay, later 25th Earl Crawford and 8th Earl of Balcarres (1812-1880). Bibliophile and art historian. He married Margaret Lindsay, a half-cousin, in 1846. *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (2 vols., London, John Murray, 1847) was one of the first studies in English to treat sculpture alongside painting, and to give due consideration to the works of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano as well as Giotto and Cimabue. On Lindsay, see: Dictionary of National Biography vol.33, 1893. p.285; Barker, *op. cit.* passim. On *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, see: Steegman, J. 'Lord Lindsay's History of Christian Art' *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes* vol. 10, 1947. pp.123-31; Fleming, J. 'Art dealing in the Risorgimento II' *Burlington Magazine* vol.121 n.917, 1979. pp.492-508. Lord Crawford himself, later in life, became an important figure in the Anglo-Florentine colony. He and his wife lived at the Villa Palmieri, near Florence, from 1872 until Lindsay's death on 30 December 1880 (Barker, *op. cit.* p.255), and the Lindsays' patronage of Florentine architecture should perhaps be given some attention here - Lord Crawford contributed posthumously to the fund for the erection of the façade of the Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore (*La Nazione*, 3 March 1885. p.2), and Lady Crawford left £200 to the restoration fund for the English church in Via Lamarmora in 1891 (*The Florence Gazzette*, year 2 n.1, 1891). The Lindsay clan was to exert a tremendous influence on Victorian taste at home - Margaret Lindsay was the sister of Sir Coutts Lindsay (1824-1913), founder of the Grosvenor Gallery at 135 New Bond Street (1875), where Burne-Jones, Sir Charles Dilke, Edward Poynter and others were encouraged to exhibit.
neglect and ignorance. At Pisa he found Buffalmacco’s *Crucifixion* at the Campo Santo “a mere wreck, scarcely recognisable, it has been so repainted and injured;”\(^{58}\) the S. Agnolo altar facade by Spinello Aretino at Arezzo he found to be “persishing and almost indistinguishable;”\(^{59}\) he noted how regrettable it was that many of the works attributed by Vasari to Giotto at Ravenna, Florence and elsewhere, were either totally lost or very seriously decayed, the famous Bardi Chapel cycle at Santa Croce among them.\(^{60}\)

In much the same way, the Arundel Society performed a vital function, the impact of which was even more widely felt in the artistic community. Formed in 1848, and with Lindsay, Ruskin, Rogers and Austen Henry Layard among its members, the Arundel Society was dedicated to the recording of important works of art, partly with the aim of improving the quality of contemporary painting in England, and partly to provide a documentary record for the purpose of general scholarship. The Society’s work in the 1850s - in the form of water colour copies and engravings, printed for publication using colour lithography - included volumes of reproductions of the works of Fra Angelico at the S. Lorenzo Chapel in the Vatican, of Giotto’s fresco cycle at the Arena Chapel in Padua, and Masaccio’s frescoes at the Brancacci Chapel in Florence.\(^{61}\)

\(^{58}\) Lindsay’s remarks on the disappearance of works by Buffalmacco are in *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*. Vol. I, pp.85-90.


\(^{61}\) On the Arundel Society, see: Cooper, R. ‘The Popularization of Renaissance Art in Victorian England: the Arundel Society’ *Art History* vol.1 n.3, Sept. 1978. pp.263-92. *Giotto and his Works at Padua*, a series of specially-commissioned copper-plate and wood engravings with an introductory essay by Ruskin, was published in three parts in 1854, 1856 and 1860. Because it dealt with works of art not yet reproduced with any fidelity, it was especially significant. A second major study, *The Frescoes of Fra Angelico at the Chapel of Nicholas V*, was issued in 1860-2. The third major work by the Arundel Society, *The Brancacci Chapel of Masolino, Masaccio and Filippino Lippi*, was published in 1868.
The Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood was very much influenced by the Arundel Society’s reproductions. It had first encountered the art of Lippo Memmi, Giotto, Pietro Aretino, and Gozzoli through the copy of Lasinio’s volume of engravings of the Campo Santo frescoes, in the possession of John Millais.\(^\text{62}\) Inevitably many Pre-Raphaelite artists (though not all - Dante Gabriel Rossetti being the most notable exception) pursued their interest in Early Italian art, as did their mentor John Ruskin, by travelling to Italy and experiencing the works first hand. In 1865 John Millais’ experience of Italy was much enhanced by having as a guide Austen Henry Layard, who was a leading figure in the Anglo-Florentine community and something of a connoisseur of Early Renaissance painting himself.\(^\text{63}\) Edward Burne-Jones visited Italy on three occasions - in 1859, 1862 and 1871, accompanied on the last visit by William Morris. Burne-Jones’ love of Italy was especially strong. On his first visit, accompanied by Val Prinsep and Charles Faulkner, he sought out the Brownings and Landor in Florence.\(^\text{64}\) On his second tour he and his wife travelled with Ruskin to Venice, Verona, Padua and Milan.\(^\text{65}\) By the time he returned for his third visit, Burne-Jones’ conversion to Uccello, Piero della Francesca, and the Primitives was so profound that he no longer bothered to interest himself in Raphael.\(^\text{66}\) Ford Madox Brown was in Italy in 1845 and returned to England with the memory of Giotto, Masaccio, and Fra Angelico strongly "printed on his mind."\(^\text{67}\) He


\(^{65}\) Ibid. pp.241-9.


visited Rome in order to meet Cornelius and Overbeck, founder-members of the Nazarene brotherhood, who were still living there.\textsuperscript{68} William Holman Hunt travelled to Venice, Florence and elsewhere in 1867 and 1869. The poet A.C. Swinburne, who was close to the Pre-Raphaelite circle, visited Landor at Florence in 1860, and was inspired by Italy to write numerous odes, among them \textit{A Song of Italy}, in 1867.

Conversely, the study of the Early Italian Schools, whether on panel or plaster, may be seen to have involved English artists and connoisseurs in a less propitious activity - for it was precisely the poor condition of Italy and its art treasures which provided the cue for many dealers and collectors to sequester, after the example of Lord Elgin and the Parthenon frieze, substantial portions of the nation's inheritance and carry them off to their own national museums.

William Blundell Spence (1814-1900), a painter and collector, settled in Florence in 1836. Encouraged by Lord Holland, he began dealing in old masters. He published a handbook for collectors, \textit{The Lions of Florence & its environs, or the stranger conducted through its principal studios, churches, palaces & galleries by an artist} (Florence, Le Monnier) in 1847, and subsequently became a dominant figure in arranging the early purchases for Charles Eastlake at the National Gallery, and for Henry Cole and J.C. Robinson at the South Kensington Museum. He purchased the former Medici villa at

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{iibid.} pp.43-6.
Fiesole in 1857, by which time he was running his own private picture ‘gallery,’ where clients included distinguished collectors like Gambier Parry and Lord Rothschild.

Where artworks were concerned Spence, whose business continued to flourish after 1860, had no qualms about conveyancing Medieval wall-paintings, church furnishings, and architectural ornament, which had been purchased and removed from their original locations. Florence developed a unique expertise in this industry.

John Charles Robinson, who was in charge of acquisitions at the new South Kensington Museum, remarked in 1859 that Italy, on the eve of Unification, presented the collector with a unique chance to grab all he could, on the pretext that the exportation of art-works to the museums of South Kensington, Berlin, Paris and Vienna, was to rescue those works from an unknown and possibly fatal destiny, and therefore not merely justified, but necessary.

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69 The list of the objects conveyanced by Spence during his career includes: Perugino’s Nativity fresco from Sta. Annunziata at Fortignano, at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Inv. 7856/62; some of Guercino’s frescoes removed from Cento, transferred to canvas, and rejected by the South Kensington Museum in 1866; and frescoes by the School of Zuccaro, also rejected by South Kensington. For a full list, see: Fleming, J. ‘Art Dealing in the Risorgimento III’ Burlington Magazine vol. 121 n.918, 1979. pp.568-80.
Such brigandage, evidently done with good intentions, was not appreciated by the Italians. Throughout the second half of the century, they grew increasingly frustrated at what was rightly perceived to be a blatant and greedy abuse of sovereignty. There is irony in the deeds of the likes of John Fowler, the architect, who complained about the restoration of the cathedral at Florence while crowing to William Morris about fragments of serpentine and porphyry he had been able to carry off to the Society of Antiquaries as a souvenir. Venice was particularly susceptible to the rapaciousness of foreign hoarders, as the Venice-lover Henry Wallis complained in a letter to The Times. Even Giacomo Boni, an antiquary whose respect for the culture of England was considerable, had a word for the plunderers: he called them "Coccodrilli Archaeofagi" - the crocodiles.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

The Committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in June 1881 comprised 105 members. Of these, more than one third belonged to the class which includes artists and art critics, collectors and curators. Of these, 25 were practising artists. Many of the most influential were drawn together as a result of common bonds of friendship which have their roots in the rise of Pre-Raphaelitism and the anti-academic trend in painting and criticism. Many of the Society's most committed members,

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72 ALS Fowler to Morris, 18 Nov. 1879. ASPAB St Mark's Venice.
74 "ancient marbles are not to be scraped, and ... archaeofagus crocodily who tear down from the front of our houses the bas reliefs and friezes are to be blamed." ALS Boni to Philip Webb, 15 Dec. 1886. ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, I.
75 Only six were architects: George Aitchison, J.F.Bentley, John Hebb, J.J.Stevenson, Philip Webb and C.G.Vinall. If one were to include A.B. Mitford, Secretary to the Board of Works from 1874-1886, John Henry Middleton, the Cambridge Professor, and the architectural critics Samuel Huggins and the Rev. W.J.Loftie, the architectural contingent is still less than ten per cent.
including Morris, Webb, F.G. Stephens, George Price Boyce and William Bell Scott had been members of the Hogarth Club, part-friendly society, part-public relations co-operative for young artists in search of exhibition space, formed in 1858. Others were critics sympathetic to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. There was the 'Little Holland House' circle of artists and writers who regularly met at the house of Thoby and Sara Prinsep in the 1850s. Morris, Webb and Rossetti were also active in the Medieval Society, which met in William Burges' rooms, and included George Frederick Bodley and George Edmund Street among its members. This kind of fellowship, irrespective of the individual's commitment to the preservation of old buildings, is fundamental to the Society's identity, and the forces which bound the Society together in its early years were generated out of shared loyalties, experience, and artistic interests.

Italy, which as we have seen occupied such a central position in the imagination of the time, figured strongly in the consciousness of the Society's members. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's father was a political refugee and a Dante scholar and Dante Gabriel was an enthusiastic collector of Quattrocento art, and followed with interest the efforts of Layard and the Arundel Society. Burne-Jones' affection for Italy has already been mentioned. The first Committee which lined up behind Morris and Burne Jones included

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76 Notably Norman MacColl, editor of the Athenaeum, and Leslie Stephen, of the Cornhill Magazine.
77 Street was never a SPAB member, but had an important role in activating the campaign for the preservation of St Mark's. See Part II, Chapter 1.
78 At the Colnaghi sale in 1867 he acquired Botticelli's portrait of Smeralda Bandinelli, now at the V&A. Sutton, op. cit. p.96.
William Blake Richmond (1842-1921). Richmond's maternal grandfather was Charles Heathcote Tatham, the architect, and his father, George Richmond R.A., a friend and follower of William Blake, had studied in Rome from 1837 to 1839. At the age of 19 William travelled to Venice and Padua and in 1865 he went to Rome, where he became a leading painter among the expatriate artists' community. He was not a great lover of Florence, but had been much impressed by the emotional intensity of Giotto's *Death of S. Francis of Assisi*, at Santa Croce. In Rome, Richmond became re-acquainted with Sir Frederic Leighton (1830-1896). Since arriving in Rome in 1852 Leighton had become a regular member of the Caffè Greco set, an intellectual community which included the Italian painter Giovanni Costa (1827-1903), an artist loosely associated with the avant-garde Macchiaioli movement, based in Florence. The Italian link went back many decades for Lord Houghton (1809-1885), the most senior supporter of the SPAB, who had lived in Italy from 1830 until 1835. William Bell Scott (1811-1890), a Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, made three visits to Italy, the last in 1873. George

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82 Costa was to be a major influence on his contemporaries in England. Richmond, for instance, found his work "a revelation" (*Ibid.* p.206); the Rev. Stopford Brooke (1832-1916), himself a SPAB Committee Member, was an avid collector of Costa's canvasses, as was Morris' friend George Howard, the Earl of Carlisle (see below). Leighton never became a member of the SPAB, though he was initially a supporter of the 1879 St Mark's Memorial. On Leighton's Italian connections, see: Barrington, Mrs Russell. *Life, Letters and Work of Frederic Leighton* (2 vols.). London, George Allen, 1906.

83 Richard Monckton Milnes, poet and biographer of Keats, friend of Tennyson and Christopher Wordsworth. He wrote Byronic odes and "Meditative Fragments" on Venice. He became liberal MP for Pontefract in 1837, and a prominent free-trader. He was on the Committee from 1877-1885. On his life in Italy, see: Pope Hennessy, *J. Monckton Milnes. The Flight of Youth 1851-1855*, London, Constable, 1951.

84 Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, *op. cit.* p.8. The Introduction to this catalogue makes the interesting observation that in spite of the Pre-Raphaelite artists' interest in Italian Primitive art, Victorian interest in Italy as a whole was sustained primarily through connoisseurship and the collection of Italian objects,
Frederick Watts (1817-1902), who was a member of SPAB but not on the Committee, met Henry Edward Fox, fourth Lord Holland, in Italy in 1845 when the latter was Minister at the Court of Tuscany in the 1840s, and became a committed Italophile, eventually leaving a self-portrait in the Pitti Palace collection for posterity. Watts painted an unfinished portrait of Garibaldi in 1864, a personality who excited a tremendous popular following in England, and had been feted by Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary, and the Prince of Wales on his visit to England in 1864. A.B. Mitford, later Lord Redesdale (1837-1916), a SPAB Committee Member, even made a pilgrimage to the revolutionary hero’s retreat at Caprera in 1873.

Another leading British artist with strong SPAB sympathies was Sir Edward Poynter (1836-1919), who had also studied in Rome in the 1860s, and ultimately was made corresponding Senior Member of the Academy of St Luke in Rome in 1899. Poynter was a SPAB Committee Member from 1878 to 1888 and, like Laurence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912), another SPAB member who was also made Accademico di Merito corrispondente in 1893 in recognition of his services to art and archaeology, supported the 1880 Circular rather than exercising a lasting influence on the practice of art. The interest shown by English artists in the disappearance of Italy’s historical remains in the 1880s, and their general indifference to developments in Italian art after the Risorgimento, is perhaps another manifestation of this conception of Italy as a place where the historical and the new are very sharply and irreconcilably differentiated.

85 Ibid. p.20.
87 Slade Professor at the University of London (1871-5); Director for Art at South Kensington Museum (1875-8). He later became Director of the National Gallery (1894-1905) and President of the Royal Academy (1896-1919). He was, together with Henry Wallis, a leading figure in the Egyptian Monuments Preservation Society, of which he was Honorary Secretary from 1889 (see Bibliobiographies: Wallis).
drawn up by the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's in protest at the restoration of the Basilica. 88

Henry Wallis, a SPAB Committee Member until 1880 and then an energetic campaigner in his own right, and Honorary Secretary of the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark’s, who began as a painter but turned to the study of ceramics in later life, was a frequent visitor to Italy. 89 William De Morgan (1839-1917), SPAB Committee Member 1878-1912, had been deeply interested in Italian maiolica-ware ceramics, like that produced by the Ginori factory in Tuscany, which he had seen at the 1862 Great Exhibition. He became a frequent visitor to Italy, and moved there (partly for health reasons) in 1893. 90 De Morgan’s wife, Mary Evelyn Pickering (1855-1919), was the niece of the painter John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, a permanent resident of Florence from 1880 onwards, and a key figure in the account I will give later in this study of the SPAB campaigns in Florence in the early 1880s.

One of the most famous Italophiles of his generation, George Howard, later 9th Earl of Carlisle, was a close friend of Morris and Burne-Jones and a keen supporter of the SPAB. Webb designed his house at No.1 Palace Green. Howard was another who had studied in

89 See Bibliobiographies.
Italy - under Costa in Rome in 1866. He became Costa's chief friend and promoter in England in the 1880s, as is revealed in the extensive correspondence between Costa and Howard conserved at Castle Howard.\(^{91}\)

The point of this short discourse is to illustrate the extent to which an interest in the life, literature and art of Italy not only ran through Victorian culture like a continuous seam, but that the SPAB and its followers were in the vanguard of that culture, and included some of England's most informed and influential Italophiles. This predilection for Italy must be seen as pre-disposing them to follow with special concern at least some aspects of the artistic life of the new nation, and if they were not on the whole strongly influenced by contemporary Italian painting and sculpture, they did become increasingly anxious about the condition and treatment of Italian monuments, for reasons which I hope have been made clear in the first part of this chapter.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, then, counted among its senior members some of Britain's most well-travelled and cultivated public figures: John Ruskin, James Bryce, George Howard, Sir Charles Dilke. The artists who associated themselves with it, like Watts, Burne-Jones, Richmond and Leighton, were not merely nationally, but internationally-known in their respective fields. The Society was not initially set up with the intention of campaigning on an international platform. However, during the first few years of its existence the Society appears to have extended its remit,

\(^{91}\) 136 items of correspondence from Costa to Howard, 1876-1902, in the Howard Papers, J22/35.
and the presence in its ranks of so many distinguished artists, parliamentarians and literary figures was undoubtedly the motivating factor in the development of the Society's outward-looking, international agenda. The interest it began to show in foreign restorations was by no means limited to Italy, though as the following chapters will reveal, first in respect of St Mark's, Venice in 1879-80, at Ravenna in 1880, then at Florence between 1881 and 1883, Italy was the testing ground for an organisation which came to see itself not as a national force alone, but as upholding principles and values which were believed to be of wider significance. In the following chapters of this thesis I will explore the precise events surrounding this aspect of the Society's evolution. They begin with the campaign to protect the Basilica of St Mark, in Venice - a building which exercised a unique and profound influence over the artists of northern Europe.
PART II
CHAPTER 1

ST MARK’S, VENICE

This chapter will first enumerate the events leading up to the campaign of November 1879 to prevent the restoration of the west front of St Mark’s. The facts themselves, though they must necessarily be painstakingly set out, provide the basis for an analysis which I will provide in the second part of the chapter. In the first part of the chapter I will first consider the case from an English standpoint, reviewing the course of the campaign, and the effects of the campaign in England and among English observers. I will briefly evaluate the response to the Memorial of 10 November 1879 in Italy. In the second part of the chapter I will consider the St Mark’s affair in terms of the fundamental issues it raises in the wider question of Italian restoration, incorporating a detailed analysis of the Memorial, its content and tone, and an assessment of the conditions prevailing in Italy at the time it was received. From this, I will proceed to offer a broad evaluation of the campaign’s strengths and weaknesses.

SECTION 1: THE PROTEST.

Ruskin and Venice

Ruskin arrived in Venice on 8 September 1876, and remained there until 23 May 1877.¹ He had been considering a revised version of the Stones of Venice, his influential tract on

Venetian art and history, first published in 1852, but he was also engrossed in studies of Carpaccio, in particular his *Dream of St Ursula*. Ruskin already had numerous acquaintances in Venice, among them Niccolò Barozzi, who had asked Ruskin for permission to translate the *Stones of Venice*. Another contact was the scholar Giambattista Lorenzi. Ruskin’s friend Rawdon Brown (1806-1883) lived there. Both he and Ruskin were members of the Deputazione di Storia Patria, and of the Accademia di Belle Arti. The painter John Wharlton Bunney (1828-82), who had known Ruskin since the 1850s, and was a long-time protegé, had lived and worked in Venice since 1870.

Another acquaintance was Count Alvise Pietro Zorzi, a young antiquary. Ruskin’s visit to Venice on this occasion took place at a time when the most recent works to the southern elevation of St Mark’s Basilica were subject to public scrutiny. It was a subject

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2 Niccolò Barozzi (1826-1906), historian, founder of the Deputazione di Storia Patria, and Keeper at the Correr Museum 1866-82. In 1856 he had begun to edit and publish the *Raccolta Veneta di Storia, Archeologia e Numismatica*, which later became the *Archivio Veneto*. He was a member of the Commissione Consultiva di Belle Arti della Provincia di Venezia 1866-75, and then of the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti e Oggetti d’Arte e d’Antichità per la Provincia di Venezia from 1876 onwards, and of the Commissione di Vigilanza per i Restauri della Basilica di S.Marc, and was therefore closely involved in the controversial restorations.

3 Clegg, *op.cit.* p.140.

4 *Ibid.* pp. 121 & 137. He and Ruskin had met in the 1850s and Lorenzi was later to help Ruskin with his researches on Venetian history.

5 Brown had been Ruskin’s chief contact in Venice. He was a source of practical help and criticism, gave Ruskin valuable assistance during his studies at the Archives, and provided countless introductions to persons of note in Venice during Ruskin’s many visits. See: Clegg, *op.cit.* passim.


7 John Wharlton Bunney, painter. He met Ruskin while a student at the Working Men’s College in London in the 1850s. Became a clerk at Ruskin’s publishers, Smith Elder & Co. but gave this up to be a painter and drawing master. He settled in Florence in 1863, and moved to Venice in 1870. See: Hewison, *op.cit.* p.105.

8 See Bibliobiographies.
on which Zorzi held especially strong views. It was Ruskin's collaboration with Zorzi on
the subject of these restorations which formed the basis for the sequence of events which
followed.

The works to the façade formed the culmination of a second phase of works carried out
under the direction of a Venetian architect Giovanni Battista Meduna (1800-1880). He
had taken control of the Basilica, after the dissolution of a commission established by the
Austrian Government on its annexation of the Venetian provinces, in 1853. From 1856 to
1866 Meduna was effectively superintending architect to the fabric, receiving in return a
retainer from the Austrian authorities. Under Meduna's direction work began at the north
elevation, where the marble panels which form the 'skin' of the construction were
dismantled, the brickwork foundations strengthened, and new marble panels affixed. The
antique marble, dating from the twelfth century, was discarded, and the columns and
decorative elements were abraded with pumice powder. This work continued until 1864.
The Austrians withdrew following the Peace of Prague in 1866, but Meduna remained at
his post, having already set about restoring the south elevation, adjacent to the Doge's
Palace. This scaffolding was fully dismantled, and the work open to public view, by the
end of 1875.9

architetti*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1889. pp.292-4. Though largely self-taught as an architect, he was much
favoured by the Austrians who first appointed him architect to St Mark's in 1836. His career as a restorer
includes such works as the recently destroyed Teatro La Fenice, which he rebuilt together with his brother,
the engineer Tommaso Meduna, after the fire of 1836. For a general picture of restorations at Venice in
Meduna's time, see: Pertot, Giovanni. *Venezia Restaurata*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1988; Romanelli, G.
*Venezia Ottocento*, Roma, Officina Edizioni, 1977. pp.296-306 et seq. Of the specific works executed at St
Mark's, Meduna himself left few documentary records. The only accessible accounts are therefore Berchet,
F. 'Modern Restorations' in: Boito C.[ed.] *The Basilica of St Mark Illustrated from the points of View of

90
Zorzi had written a treatise on the restorations which he hoped to publish. Further restorations to the monumental west façade were programmed, and Ruskin agreed to provide an introduction to the book in the form of a letter to Zorzi commending him on his efforts, regretting the sad decline of art in Venice, and calling for measures to protect the building from the vandalism to which it was being subjected. Ruskin and Zorzi began their discussions in February 1877. Zorzi's book *Osservazioni intorno ai restauri interni ed esterni della Basilica di San Marco* (Venice, Ongania) was published in June 1877.

The pamphlet caused much debate in Italy, and its publication was also signalled abroad, where it aroused interest in artistic circles. Attitudes in Italy to Meduna's exploits at St Mark's, and the critical reception of Zorzi's work there, form part of the general response among Italians to the English anti-restorationists' intervention, and I will look at these more closely later in this chapter. As for the fortunes of Zorzi's tract in England, it is sufficient to indicate by way of example how its publication was welcomed by the *Athenaeum*, a journal which was, in many ways, the voice of anti-restoration sentiment in

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England at the time. The journal was astonished that no efforts had been made earlier to protest against the restoration of the Basilica:

"Why has none of the many artists of distinguished reputation, who have seen these 'restorations' in progress, not appealed to the learned and artistic world? We could name twenty men of note who have seen and been silent. What has Count Zorzi been about before? Why has not Mr Ruskin, or Mr Browning, or Mr Rossetti, or Mr Alma-Tadema, or Mr Wallis, or Mr Burne-Jones, or Mr Holman Hunt delivered his soul by protesting against this astounding philistinism, this folly which has not even the apology of Mr Five Per Cent, who betrays his art and sells his skill for shekels?"

No meaningful progress was made with the debate until in the summer of 1879. Again it was Ruskin, whose personal concern for St Mark's had only temporarily subsided since the publication of Zorzi's book, who led the way. Ruskin's exertions in Venice that winter eventually took the form of a second major volume on Venetian history, St Mark's Rest. The third part of this was published in July 1879 and contained an appeal for funds to support an initiative Ruskin had embarked upon, namely the commissioning of detailed drawings and water colours of St Mark's to serve as a memorial once the building had been destroyed, as Ruskin felt it would soon be. The same appeal was issued in the traveller's edition of Stones of Venice, published in 1879. In autumn 1879 Ruskin returned to the subject of St Mark's with renewed enthusiasm, copying a drawing he had made in 1877, which he sent to Charles Eliot Norton, who was arranging an exhibition in Boston. Ruskin went over his old drawings and daguerreotypes, selecting

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12 Athenaeum n. 2611, 5 Nov. 1877. p.605. The Athenaeum's art correspondent, F.G.Stephens (1828-1907) was a painter and member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and a SPAB Committee Member.
13 Hewison, op.cit. p.88.
Fig. 1. St Mark's Basilica - the west front (the author)

Fig. 2. (overleaf) Dedication to Ruskin, at the beginning of Zorzi's *Osservazioni intorno ai Restauri interni ed esterni della Basilica di San Marco*
A

JOHN RUSKIN

Socio Onorario del Collocio della Chiesa di Cristo a Oxford; Socio Onorario del Collocio del Corpus Christi a Oxford; Dottore di Lecce nella Università di Cambridge; Professore di belle arti nella Università di Oxford; Socio Onorario della Società Antica dei Pittori Acquarèlisti di Londra; Membro della Società Geologica di Londra; Membro della Società Veneta di Storia Patria, Socio Onorario della Regia Accademìa di belle arti di Venezia, ecc., ecc.

Autore delle Gemme letterario-artístico archeologiche

LE PIETRE DI VENEZIA

I PITTORI MODERNI, ED i SETTE LUMI D'ARCHITETTURA, ECC.

QUESTA BREVE OPERA

Diretta a salvare il più singolare monumento d'Italia

ALVISE PIERO ZORZI

in segno di stima e di viva amicizia

DEDICA
ten of the latter for a miniature exhibition in London at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colour, popularly known as the Old Water Colour Society, in Pall Mall. He drafted an accompanying circular, which was distributed among the visitors, and also published in leading journals.\textsuperscript{14} The circular, typically prolix, was both a celebration of the unique character of the building, and a mournful sigh at the prospect of its imminent loss. By this time the threat to St Mark's was widely known. The SPAB held a meeting on 23 October at which members learned that the Society had been informed that the Italian Ministry of Public Works had nominated a Commission to consider in what way works to the west front should proceed.\textsuperscript{15}

The 1879 Protest

The fate of St Mark's was embraced by William Morris and the SPAB, and struck a chord of public sympathy. Over 30 articles appeared in the English press between November 1 and Christmas, beginning with Morris' own condemnation of the works, published in the \textit{Daily News} on November 1.\textsuperscript{16} Zorzi's pamphlet was now over two years

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Circular respecting Memorial Studies at St Mark's, Venice, now in progress under Mr Ruskin's direction.} The text was reprinted in \textit{Works: XXIV.} pp.412-24. The second part of the circular, detailing the subjects of the plates, with comments, was added, probably in January 1880 (\textit{Works: XXIV.} pp.416-23). Full texts were published also in: \textit{The Architect} vol. 23, 31 Jan. 1880. p.86; \textit{Art Journal} vol. 19, 1880. pp.47-8 - unusual in the latter case, since the \textit{Art Journal} has almost no record of interest in Italian restoration during this period, in spite of having the Italophile and collector of early masters, the American James Jackson Jarves (1818-1888) as a senior critic. Cf. also: Hewison, \textit{op. cit.} pp.88, 95.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{The Athenaeum} n. 2714, 1 Nov. 1879. p.569.

old, but information concerning the imminent restorations by Meduna of the west façade, probably conveyed by John Bunney who was acting as Venice correspondent for the SPAB, stirred Morris and his colleagues into action. Morris spoke of an imminent “disaster” to art and culture, and urged the perpetrators of the proposed restoration to the west front to consider how repairs might be carried out without the need for radical interventions. He attacked the would-be restorers as presumptuous imitators, who suppose that they can renew the old workmanship without detriment to the character of the monument.\footnote{Kelvin, \textit{op.cit.} Vol. I, pp.528-9.}

The outburst provoked a number of public meetings - at the SPAB and in Cambridge on Thursday 6 November, and at Oxford on Saturday 15. At the latter event extracts of Ruskin’s letter to Zorzi were read out, and Morris and Burne-Jones spoke in defence of the Basilica.\footnote{A report of the proceedings was published in the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, November 18 (cutting, ASPAB \textit{Venice St Mark’s}), and in \textit{The Architect} vol. 22, 22 Nov. 1879. pp.298-9.} Meetings were also held at Birmingham and at the Old Water Colour Society, and later at Liverpool, Manchester and elsewhere.

It was resolved at each of these meetings that a petition should be drawn up and sent to the Italian Government. The SPAB took on this responsibility, with Morris himself doing much of the hard work. Duly, a memorial was prepared, dated 10 November, and published in \textit{The Times}.\footnote{\textit{The Times}, 19 Dec. 1879. p.8.} It attracted hundreds of signatories, among them Gladstone, Professor Charles Darwin, Tennyson and many MPs and public figures.\footnote{Morris personally contacted Ruskin, Gladstone and Browning. See: Kelvin, \textit{op.cit.} Vol. I, pp.530-9.}
The peculiar force of the protestations, certainly the most vigorous ever mounted on such a subject, can be explained by three immediate factors. Firstly, there was Ruskin's own authority. Morris had claimed that it was "Ruskin's words in our mother tongue..." - his passages on restoration in the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* - which had shaped the conscience of the memorialists, and given life to the anti-restoration crusade of the present generation, and the exhibition and Appeal for Memorial Studies heightened the level of concern for St Mark's. Another key component was Morris' own abrasive style - Morris had witnessed the condition of St Mark's in 1878 and became the driving force behind the campaign, his frenzied attacks even overshadowing Ruskin's own attempts to recruit support for his Memorial Studies project. A third factor, which has not so far been considered, was the role of George Edmund Street.

Street was the most senior architect to support the St Mark’s protest and, with Morris, he was one of its dominant personalities. Street had last visited Venice in 1877 and had been enraged by the re-facing of the north façade. At the Oxford meeting Street roundly condemned Meduna, accusing him of planning to take down the glorious west front and reconstruct it on the same principles, on the grounds that it was unsafe. Street’s view was

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22 Some observers regretted the detrimental effect Morris' campaign had on Ruskin's work, cf: 'St.Mark's, Venice' *Building News* vol. 37, 21 Nov. 1879. p.611. Ruskin actually dissociated himself from the meetings and the Memorial of November 10, although despair, rather than pique, was the motive for his silence. It has been suggested that the participation of Street and other members of the architectural establishment, whose legacy of architectural vandalism Ruskin despised, may have been a factor. Unrau, *op.cit.* p.202.
that there was no structural danger, and no grounds for pursuing such a course of action.\footnote{1} The architects G.F. Bodley and Ewan Christian also backed up these assertions,\footnote{2} and they had been endorsed in the Memorial, which however, in the absence of firm evidence, declined to express a definite opinion on the safety of the structure.

Evidently there were difficulties of mounting such a protest without reliable data as to what was required and what was being proposed by Meduna. While those closest to the real events, like Bunney, lacked technical knowledge, those who were qualified to speak on technical matters, like Street, relied on intelligence passed to them from another source, and on observations made years earlier.\footnote{3}

In recognition of this lack of reliable details, the SPAB asked the architect J.J. Stevenson to report on the case during a visit to Venice to be made in December 1879. Stevenson found no cracks or deformities indicating recent movement in the structure. The need for repairs was superficial, confined to the re-fixing of marble cladding and small amounts of brickwork repair. The south west corner, where a pair of columns stand in semi-isolation, was, he felt, the only portion which required structural intervention in order to tie it back to the core of the building. Meduna, intending to take down and re-erect this portion

\footnote{3} Street claimed, in a letter to \textit{The Times} dated 18 November, to have seen the appalling re-laying of the mosaic pavement in the north aisle in 1877. He had also had an opportunity to examine Meduna's works to the north and parts of the south façades; but his most recent assertions concerning the west front are made on the basis of information communicated to Street by an unnamed correspondent. \textit{The Times}, 21 Nov. 1879. p.11. See Appendix A.1.1
along with the west façade, had not taken measures to secure these elements. Stevenson was most critical of Meduna’s replacement marble cladding, which was of poor quality, the wrong size, and affixed with its striations running vertically rather than in the irregular or zigzag patterns of the old work. The ‘scraping’ of the surface of sculpture and capitals had removed the patina, leaving the building cold and grey. New mosaics were much inferior to old ones in quality and design. As for the future, he felt the building could be stabilised for a fraction of the cost which was being allocated.26

The Suspension of Works

On 22 November the periodical La Roma Artistica announced that works to the mosaics of the Basilica would be suspended, by ministerial decree, pending a proper inquiry into the measures necessary for their preservation. On the previous day, the Rome correspondent of The Times,27 had sent a message to The Times from the Minister of Public Instruction - the first official rejoinder. The Minister’s tone was indignant. He made two key points: firstly he pointed out that no complaint had been made when the restorations were begun under Austrian dominion; secondly, he protested that a decision

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27 Shakespere Wood (d.1886). He was something of an archaeological expert, and a member of the British Archaeological Association in Rome. Wood was correspondent for The Times in Rome from 1870 until 1882.
had been taken in May to suspend works to the exterior while less damaging methods were investigated.\(^{28}\) The English protests were therefore misguided and misinformed.

Reaction to the counter-protests was a mixture of relief and insistent scepticism, rather than contrition. Morris complimented the Italians, while urging the sitting Commission now responsible for the future of St Mark’s to consider the issues raised by his Society.\(^{29}\) As the dust settled, the English protesters relaxed in an oddly self-congratulatory mood. There were reasons for their self-satisfaction: it was claimed in a letter to W.B. Richmond, one of the Society’s members, that the authorities had been directly influenced by the Memorials and the press campaign in England.\(^{30}\) The general view by now was that the Memorial had served some purpose, but that the Basilica remained under threat.

Some sectors of the English press had been hostile to the campaign from the very first. A writer in *Truth* dismissed Morris as a “fretful poet with the toothache.”\(^{31}\) *The Times* had been broadly supportive, but maintained a balanced view, and was critical of Britain’s lacklustre record on preservation.\(^{32}\) Its Rome correspondent was inclined to be sympathetic towards the Italian viewpoint, but the Editor never sanctioned the

\(^{28}\) *The Times*, 22 Nov. 1879. p.5. A fuller account of these revelations was made in the form of an official communication from the Office of the Ministry of Public Instruction to the Office of the Foreign Minister, Count Maffei (1834-1897). The Italian consul in London, the veteran diplomat Count Luigi Federico Menabrea (1809-1896), was also provided with copy of this letter, explaining clearly the resolution of May 1879, and *The Times* published the letter in full, 27 Nov. 1879. p.5.

\(^{29}\) Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1879. p.10.

\(^{30}\) SPAB. 3rd Annual Report, cit. p. 39. Cf. also: Sharp, *op.cit.* p.12. At the meeting Richmond read out fragments of letters he had received. He did not disclose the identity of his sources.


condemnation of the English protesters - quite the contrary. However, the sense of regret which followed from the Italian Foreign Minister’s announcement is palpable: the campaign had brought to light innate national hostilities; it had thrown into sharp relief how injudicious the English interference had been, and how foolish and impertinent had been the Italian reaction to it.33 The Builder said that “an excitable kind of English people” would do well to

“modify that tone of superiority in which they lecture and take to task those who are often better informed in regard to the matter in hand than any of their censors.”34

Stronger still were the criticisms of J.P.Seddon who, while sympathising with the object of the Memorial, condemned the “wild denunciations” of “these modern Don Quixotes.”35 Another architect, William Burges, was quick to deny claims that he had spoken in support of the protest, which he considered to have been premature.36 It is probably not co-incidental that Sir Frederic Leighton, a seasoned Italophile with many connections in Roman circles, wrote requesting his name be withdrawn from the St Mark’s Memorial on 23 November, the day on which The Times published the riposte from the Italian Ministry.37

34 The Builder vol. 36, 13 Dec. 1879. p.1364. The Builder had maintained a sceptical stance throughout, and hesitated to take the accusations against Meduna too seriously (Ibid. 15 Nov. 1879, p.1253). The reaction of the Royal Institute of British Architects should also be referred at this point: its Secretary William White (1825-1900), who was known for his moderate support for the anti-restoration movement, invited Count Menabrea to address the Institute’s 3 December meeting; Menabrea reassured the Institute that it was a question of stability and endurance, an explanation which appears to have satisfied the RIBA. See: Proceedings of the Royal Institute of British Architects 1879-80, London, RIBA, 1880 p.42; The Builder vol.36, 6 Dec. 1880. p.1334.
35 Building News vol. 37, 28 Nov. 1879, p.662.
36 Athenaeum n.2719, 6 Dec. 1879. p.733.
37 ALS Leighton to SPAB, 23 Nov. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark’s.
Hints of an appeal for conciliatory action were also sent from the British Ambassador in Rome, Augustus Paget. Paget had become involved when it was suggested he might act as go-between, a role he was reluctantly drawn into, since on 17 November he had suggested that the “Society for the Protection of Works of Art” (sic) make its representations through Menabrea. A few days later Paget had conveyed the letter from the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction to another protest group, the Society of Painters in Water Colour, and asked whether they might reconsider their actions. But on 2 December Newman Marks, Secretary of the SPAB, forwarded the SPAB Memorial, to which 1800 signatures had been obtained in the space of three weeks, to Paget, together with copies of the Memorials from the Society of Painters in Water Colour, and from the Manchester Society of Women Painters. He expressed satisfaction that works had been called off and said that thanks were now on their way.

Clearly, while the suspension of works had been recognised, it was not felt that this was a sufficiently conclusive assurance that further wrongs would not be committed at St Mark's. Among those who pressed for firm action was S. Russell Forbes, in Rome.

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38 Sir Augustus Berkeley Paget (1823-1896). He was ambassador at the court of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy 1876-83. Subsequently transferred to Vienna.
39 ALS Paget to R.C.Grosvenor, 17 Nov. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's.
40 ALS [Copy] Paget to Alfred Fripp (of the Society of Painters in Water Colour), n.d., ASPAB Venice St Mark's. The enclosed letter is a copy of the one referred to in The Times from the Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Instruction, to Count Maffei of the Foreign Ministry (see note 28). Fripp's Society of Painters in Water Colour had also voted to petition the Italian authorities at a meeting earlier in the month.
41 ALS [Copy] Marks to Paget, 2 Dec. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's. The Memorial sent to Paget was presumably the translation which Edward Poynter had prepared for the benefit of the Italian authorities, and returned to the Society's office on 22 November (ALS Poynter to SPAB, 22 Nov. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's).
42 ALS Marks to Forbes, 13 Dec. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's. S. Russell Forbes was a writer on Roman antiquities, and something of a tourist entrepreneur. In works such as Rambles in Rome (London & Rome, 1872), which he published himself at his house in Via del Babuino, 93, he had alighted upon a
said that, in their attitude to foreigners, Italians never listen to advice. Zorzi too would later countenance this persistence, in the form of a letter read out by Richmond at the third Annual Meeting, urging continued pressure on the restorers and their patrons to prevent further restorations being carried out. In short, suspension or no suspension, the prevailing view at the SPAB was that the protesters had a duty to press on in the hope of influencing the outcome of current ministerial deliberations. The feeling was that the Memorial had been wholly justified, and had achieved the required ends. If there were reservations, they were minor; after all, campaigns such as these, if perceived as the unwelcome interference of meddlesome persons in the internal affairs of a nation state, especially one so young and susceptible, were bound to provoke national jealousies the like of which the SPAB was not accustomed to dealing with. It was therefore a question of ‘how’ to conduct such an enterprise, not ‘whether’ to do so.

Italian Reactions

Many Italians reacted furiously to The Times' coverage of the English protesters' activities in November 1879. Some of The Times' letters were reprinted in the columns of Italian dailies, with comments. The English were preaching to the converted, said

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popular formula combining art historical indications with practical information for tourists. He also sold photographs of antiquities, and wrote and published a fortnightly bulletin, Forbes' Tourists' Directory, as well as contributions to Murray's Handbook. He was subsequently elected a member of the Society, and official Rome correspondent.  

ALS Forbes to Marks, 2 Dec. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's.  

SPAB. 3rd Annual Report, cit. pp.39-40. I have been unable to trace the original letter, probably dating from early 1880, when Meduna's scheme for the west front was officially abandoned. Richmond describes its author only as “an Italian antiquarian (sic)” but there can be little doubt that it was Zorzi. The author claimed to have had published Morris' letter to the Daily News in the Rinnovamento, and to have carefully delivered the English remonstrances into the hands of those best positioned to bring about change. The letter insisted that it was the pressure which these remonstrances brought to bear which induced the Venetian authorities to scrap Meduna's scheme.
Rinnovamento, one of two newspapers (the other being Gazzetta di Venezia) which had played a leading role in directing public attention to the disasters perpetrated by Meduna. Its contributor made the very point that numerous Italians had already raised the issues in question, in the public domain. The Prefect himself, Comm. Sormani Moretti had set out in an address to the Provincial Council in 1877 his intention to "ensure (its) preservation, taking care to repair, replace, retain, rather than reconstruct."45 'Dottor Sincero', in the same paper, defiantly insisted that restorations would proceed in spite of the protest, because it was structurally imperative that they should go ahead.46 Italians were also angered that when the works had been commenced, under Austrian jurisdiction, there had been no cries of protest. Those who knew that the writing was on the wall for Meduna’s plans were equally scathing, and from a correspondent in Rome who was evidently close to ministerial sources, Wallis received an embarrassing slight:

"The project for the demolition and rebuilding of the west façade of St Mark's does not exist except in the all-too feverish imagination of someone who has amused himself by starting off this fuss. Here in Italy they are laughing about it, as they laughed at the great fuss made by 'Ouida' over the famous demolition of the Fountain at Ponte Sisto, which nobody had thought of."47

45 'I Ristauri di S.Maro' Rinnovamento, 21 Nov. 1879 (cutting, ASPAB Venice St Mark’s).
47 ALS unidentified correspondent (10, Piazza Esquilino, Rome) to Wallis, 16 Nov. 1879. ASPAB Venice St Mark’s. The correspondent claimed G.B.Cavalcaselle as the source of his information. Cavalcaselle (1819-1897), the noted critic, administrator and art historian, was at the time serving as Ispettore del Ministro (Government Inspector) per la Pittura e la Scultura, and was responsible for the preservation of art works. ‘Ouida’ - pen-name of the novelist Marie Louise de la Ramée (1839-1908) - had written to The Times to express her fears about the destruction of the Ponte Sisto Fountain in August 1879. Her letter caught the attention of The Architect, which reproduced it (vol. 22, 16 Aug. 1879. p.87). A debate ensued, centring chiefly upon the accuracy, or otherwise, of her claims. See: Ibid. 30 Aug. 1879. p.124; 6 Sept. 1879. p.134; 13 Sept. 1879. p.147. ‘Ouida’ subsequently became one of the fiercest critics of the demolition of the historic quarters of Rome and Florence.
Camillo Boito, one of Italy's most respected authorities on historic buildings, summarised all these issues in a measured, yet firm defence, which reflected the mood of the majority: Meduna, he claimed, was a competent architect who had been praised by Viollet-Le-Duc for his work at St Mark's; substantial rebuilding of the west façade, as had been carried out to the south façade, was not contemplated, and on this point Meduna himself had been clear; moreover, many eminent Italians had stepped forward to defend the building from unwarranted alteration, not least of whom was Count Zorzi and the sixty artists who spoke out in his support, and whose memorandum was subsequently published in the *Gazzetta di Venezia*.

To the English, these sentiments appeared to confirm the hypersensitivity of the Italians on such matters, an impression which did little to repair relations. But the outrage was by no means universal. The St Mark’s question had polarised Italian opinion more decisively than might have been supposed. Some years earlier, while Zorzi’s remonstrances were still fresh, Michelangelo Guggenheim had had a letter on St Mark's

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49 Morris was among those who was sensitive to wounded Italian national pride: addressing the SPAB in 1880, he regretted that the Memorial had been "misunderstood, and supposed to indicate ill-feeling towards that country" SPAB. *3rd Annual Report*, cit. p.15. The more subtle tactics of the St Mark's Committee were a direct result of the re-assessment which these realisations necessitated.

printed in the *Rinnovamento* of 22 November 1877, arguing a case for polishing the new marbles of the south façade in order to make the contrast between old and new less startling. He now took the opportunity to repeat his suggestion. He was more gracious in his attitude to the English, observing that the problems associated with Meduna's work had already been considered in Italy, but that Wallis and his fellow protesters were right to fear for the future of St Mark's.\(^{51}\) The first reaction of the newspaper *L'Adriatico* had been to welcome the interference of the English in the question of St Mark's, a question which, the Editor acknowledged, deserved to be seriously discussed.\(^{52}\) Far from suggesting universal hostility, these examples indicate that there was a section of the Italian press sympathetic to the campaign.

But the campaign was not in any way dependent upon such support. Its preoccupations were of quite another sort.

**Successes Abroad**

Morris was clearly strong enough as a personality to inspire and direct the St Mark's campaign. With Street's support, and Ruskin's name, it is easy to see how the protests gathered such momentum so quickly. But underlying motives for the protest remain to be examined.

\(^{51}\) 'Ristauri di S. Marco' *Rinnovamento*, 22 Nov. 1879. (cutting, ASPAB *Venice St Mark's*).

\(^{52}\) 'Cose di Venezia' *L'Adriatico*, 8 Nov. 1879. p.4. The *Adriatico* had been a staunch backer of Zorzi since the publication of the *Osservazioni*.  

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To begin with, any effort to assess the determination of the protesters must take into account the Society’s early fortunes during the first years of its existence, and its need for success and further support. I think there is no doubt that Society was much discouraged by its lack of success in its attempt to prevent the restorations to St Alban’s, then in progress under the direction of Sir Edmund Beckett. The problems at St Alban’s for the SPAB between 1878 and 1880 were threefold: the projected new roof; the projected new west front; and the hostility of Beckett. Beckett had been convinced that the whole nave of the Cathedral was on the point of collapse in 1875. Sir George Gilbert Scott, the restoring architect, had come up with proposals to straighten the south wall in 1878. He had inspected the roof and reported its condition to be sound, but he was later proved wrong - it was in a poor state of repair. Scott died in March 1878 before the matter of restoration or repair of the roof had been resolved, and Beckett procured the services of J.O. Scott who, however, was little more than a puppet through which Beckett would carry out restoration according to his own radical criteria the following year. His plan was to take down the lead-covered sixteenth-century roof and have it reconstructed in thirteenth-century pitched form. Protests were made first by the Society of Antiquaries. Then, in August 1878, Morris wrote a carefully-worded letter to The Times on the subject of the roof, an eleventh-hour appeal for the restoration committee to show restraint, and for the public at large to resist the “modernisation” of the building. But Beckett’s plan went unchecked. As works neared completion in October 1879, Beckett turned his

53 ‘St.Alban’s Abbey restoration’ The Times, 10 May 1878. p.4.
attention to the west front which, he claimed, was about to collapse, taking the new roof with it, unless urgent works were carried out.\textsuperscript{55}

He applied for a second faculty for the rebuilding of the west front. The SPAB, on hearing of this rash scheme, enlisted the help of John Evans, the antiquary and historian of St Alban's, and Earl Cowper,\textsuperscript{56} in a further attempt to oppose the faculty, but to no avail.\textsuperscript{57} The faculty was granted in October 1879. Beckett had by now muscled in to such an extent that the finances, mostly from his own pocket anyway, were now entirely controlled by him, and he could not be stopped. The disappointment must have been profound: Morris had always felt that, because of the unpopularity of Beckett's scheme, this was a strong case.\textsuperscript{58}

One problem which the failure at St Alban's had highlighted was the lack of legal redress available to the Society. Sir John Lubbock\textsuperscript{59} had repeatedly introduced his Preservation Bill at the House of Commons, without result, since 1873. The St Alban's affair had also been a financial drain on the SPAB, which had invested considerable energy in what it perceived to be a strong campaign.\textsuperscript{60} Psychologically, the affair was also a cause of

\textsuperscript{56} Francis Thomas de Grey, 7th Earl Cowper (1834-1905). A wealthy landowner, he acquired, in 1880, Wrest Park, near Bedford from his maternal grandfather, the 2nd Earl Grey. Earl Cowper went on to become Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1880-82.
\textsuperscript{58} Morris to James Bryce, 3 June 1878, in: Henderson, \textit{op.cit.} pp.128-9.
\textsuperscript{60} SPAB. 3rd Annual Report, cit. 1880. p.14.
anxiety: Beckett had ridiculed the "Society for the [ruination] of Ancient Buildings which," he said, "is fast going to ruin itself." Such criticisms were damaging to morale, and there were signs that the Society might be heading for a collapse itself.

The timing of the St Alban's crisis, and the declining fortunes of the SPAB in the autumn of 1879, must have had an impact on the conduct of the St Mark's campaign. The St Mark's protest thus provided an opportunity for the SPAB and its supporters to reach out beyond the limitations of domestic experience and to hoist their principles onto an international platform. At an early stage it had occurred to Henry Wallis that certain sectors of the French, German and Belgian press would be sympathetic, and that publication of the protest there would "raise the whole question of restoration" in those countries. Soon after the British protest was launched the French did in fact begin a similar campaign. Interest shown by the French in the Society's work at St Mark's culminated in Adolphe Guillon's call for the formation of an analogous Society to the English one, not necessarily for the purpose of campaigning against St Mark's, but in order to improve standards of restoration and preservation in France. For all the tension and ill-feeling, the St Mark's lobby undoubtedly succeeded in mobilising anti-restoration

62 Morris was dissatisfied with the lack of energy among the members. He wrote to Boyce "I foresee that we shall all have to make a great exertion & do a deal of disagreeable work if we are to keep our Society together. This you will understand, I know, since you are so decidedly one of the few who really have the matter to heart." Morris to G.P. Boyce, 13 October 1879, in: Kelvin, op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 525-6.
63 ALS Wallis to Marks, 16 Nov. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's.
64 Letter from Adolphe Guillon, in: Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité n. 37, 29 Nov. 1879. pp.295-6. Guillon was not at first enthusiastic about the St Mark's affair. On the reception of the SPAB in France in the light of the St Mark's affair, see also the letter to the same journal from Wallis, Ibid. n.38, 6 Dec. 1879. pp.312-3.
opinion abroad and bringing anti-scrape ideas to the attention of a wider audience. It was with this objective in mind that the Society began to consider translating and publishing its views abroad. It was felt this strategy might have positive benefits for the Society as a whole, as well as for the St Mark’s campaign.65

The culmination of this was the St Mark’s Preservation Committee (see below), which evolved out of these early campaigning experiences. I shall consider the Committee in greater detail later below. Suffice it to say that the St Mark’s Committee made much of its international character, and in some respects it could be argued that the protest of 1879-80, taken as a whole, represents the first concerted example of unilateral action by private societies and individuals on an international scale towards the protection of an historic monument. There is, in this analysis, one factor which cannot be ignored, and that is the growing sense that such objects belonged to the world and not to the host nation alone: as Morris himself had stated at the Oxford meeting, great monuments such as St Mark’s were not the property of one state, but of all nations and cultures, and all nations and cultures held a stake in their welfare.66

Perhaps the most positive outcome of the campaign was precisely this: that it raised the possibility - indeed, the necessity - of co-ordinated international efforts to set down guidelines and programmes for the protection of the world’s historic monuments. It was a

65 Letter from Morris to Editors of Italian Newspapers, 27 November 1879, in: Kelvin, op.cit. Vol. I, p. 544. Morris enclosed the Society’s original Manifesto in the hope of setting out more clearly the context of the St Mark’s protests. Bunney was one of those who agreed to translate and publish the 1877 Manifesto. Cf. ALS Bunney to Marks, 2 Dec. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark’s.

theme contemplated not only by Morris, but by others also in connection with the St Mark's episode. It is, of course, but a short step from this to the notion of International Charters and World Heritage.

St Mark's: A Second Phase - The Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's

I have shown how the campaign of November-December 1879 was at times prejudicial in its accusations, and attempted to explain some of these characteristics within a broader context of the rise and fortunes of the SPAB. We now come to consider the second phase of the St Mark's campaign, and particularly the role of Count Alvise Pietro Zorzi. These aspects of the discussion focus on a rather more subtle episode, the ultimate effects of which were of more lasting value. Under Zorzi's direction - for it is chiefly he, and not William Morris or his colleagues, who was responsible for successfully harnessing the force of the English outrage into constructive strategies for change - the whole affair was managed more cleverly, with more far-reaching consequences for the ideology of anti-restoration.

Out of the experience of November - December 1879 was born the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's, in May 1880. It was in that month that a core group of

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67 Among them John Fowler, who wondered what measures might be considered to ensure international protection of St Mark's, and whether the Italians might be involved in such an initiative. *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects 1879-80*, London, RIBA, 1880. p.16. Another was the French author known for his writings on Venetian Art, Charles Yriarte (see note 76). Leighton had also raised this point at the Oxford meeting (see: *L'Adriatico* 26 Nov. 1879).

68 See Bibliobiographies.

69 Papers of the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's are held at the British Library Add.MSS 38831.
activists formed themselves into an ad hoc committee and, in a meeting at the Society of Arts on 31 May, resolved to draft a circular with a view to keeping the pressure on the Italians, and garnering support where it mattered - in Italy. In July a resolution was drawn up and signed by the adherents, who included senior figures in the British art world, such as F.W. Burton, Sidney Colvin, and William Blake Richmond. Others included James Russell Lowell, Carl von Lützow, Rudolf von Eitelberger, Wilhelm von Böde, Charles Eliot Norton, Charles Yriarte, Adolphe Guillon, and Zorzi himself, all of whom were prominent in the art world of their time.

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70 Sir F.W. Burton (1816-1900), Irish watercolourist, member of the Old Water Colour Society, and of SPAB (1878-91), Director of the National Gallery (1874-94); Sidney Colvin (1845-1927), art scholar and critic, contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazzette* and *Portfolio*, Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge (1873-85), Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum (1876-1883). He succeeded G.W. Reid as Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum in 1883. Colvin was a prominent anti-restorationist, and contributed a notable article to the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled 'Restoration and Anti-restoration' (vol.2 n.91, Oct. 1877. pp.446-70).

71 James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), American poet, diplomat and literary editor.

72 Carl von Lützow (1832-1897), German art historian, protegé of Eitelberger; Librarian and Keeper of Engravings at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna. From 1867 he was Professor (and Senior Professor from 1882) of Architectural History at the Polytechnik.

73 Rudolf von Eitelberger (1817-1885), Austrian art historian; Senior Professor of Art History at the University of Vienna from 1864. He was among the founders of the Oesterr. Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Kunstgewerbemuseum), the Kunstgewerbeschule, and leader of the Zentralkommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und Historische Denkmale (the Central Research and Conservation Commission).

74 Arnold Wilhelm von Böde (1845-1929), art historian and museum curator, a well known student of Renaissance sculpture. In 1872 he was Assistant Curator of Sculpture and Decorative Art at the Berlin Staatliche Museen (and Director from 1883); also responsible for the Gemälde Galerie at the Königlichen Museen.

75 Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), American author and editor, a friend of Lowell; travelled extensively in Europe in the 1850s, becoming acquainted with the Brownings at Florence. He met Ruskin in Switzerland in 1860, to whom he remained a lifelong friend, and in London he was in friendly terms with the Pre-Raphaelite circle, Carlyle and other leading literary figures.

76 Charles Yriarte (1833-1898), French journalist and writer on art; distinguished himself as a war reporter in Morocco in the 1850s; in 1860 joined Garibaldi in Sicily to report on the Revolution there. On returning to France he became Rédacteur en Chef of *Le Monde Illustré*. Author of *Venise: histoire, art, industrie, la ville, la vie* [1877] and *Florence: l'histoire, les Médicis, les humanistes, les lettres, les arts* [1880].

77 Adolphe-Irénée Guillon (1829-1896), landscape painter. He had studied under Gleyre in Paris, in the studio of whom the young Henry Wallis had also been a pupil; settled at Vézelay in 1868 and went on to exhibit numerous works in London. Yriarte and Guillon were responsible for recruiting support for the Committee in France. Guillon in particular made it his business to contact other potential supporters in France. BM Add. MSS 38831. ff. 62 et seq. In France the existence of the new St Mark’s lobby group was well publicised, cf: *La Semaine des Constructeurs*, 31 July 1880; *Moniteur des Arts*, 6 Aug. 1880. The French cell of the Committee published the Circular in *Chronique des Arts*, 21 Aug. 1880, pp. 224-5, and the French prospectus contains many names which did not feature in the English prospectus (BM Add.
whom had added their names to the Committee in the intervening period through the
efforts of the core members of the group. These, the chief protagonists in the episode,
were Henry Wallis, William Morris, and Street.78 Morris and most of the senior figures
on the SPAB Committee (Webb, Poynter, Burne-Jones, Pattison, Wyndham, Boyce,
Alma-Tadema, Rossetti, Balfour and Richard Grosvenor, as well as Burton, Colvin and
Richmond) signed up.

Interestingly, Morris was obliged to be cautious about the closeness of his involvement in
the organisation: Street was its Vice-President, and Morris did not wish to associate
himself with “that old ass” who, he said “would restore every building in England if he
could, and to our minds with the necessary result of ruining them.”79 Street had been in
dispute with the SPAB over his planned restorations to the Fratry at Carlisle Cathedral.
When a local man protested at Street’s proposals, and the SPAB sprang to the Cathedral’s
defence, Street had written to The Architect denouncing the Society’s objections as
“demonstrably absurd.”80 Street’s credentials as an anti-restorationist were awkwardly

MSS 38831.f.163). Of the French subscribers, several of the most useful were appointed members of the
Committee of the SPAB that year - a further indication of how closely the St Mark’s Committee was
identified with its parent body. They were Louis Gouse, Editor of the Gazette des Beaux Arts, Charles
Blanc (1813-1882), its former Editor and a distinguished art critic and member of the Institut de France,
and Yriarte. Guillon became corresponding member at Paris.
78 George Price Boyce also seems to have been closely involved.
79 ALS Morris to Wallis, 29 Aug. 1880, BM Add. MSS 38831. f.59. See also: Kelvin, op.cit. Vol. I,
pp.588-9.
80 The Carlisle Fratry dispute was reported in The Architect vol.23, 28 Feb. 1880. pp.144-5. Morris’
hostility to Street, and the problems this caused for the St Mark’s project, came to a head that same
summer, when Stanley Leighton, the Shropshire MP and SPAB member who was standing in for Ruskin
(Ruskin had declined to deliver the opening address), made insinuations about Street’s work as a restorer.
These were published in the Report which was sent out to members in July. Morris did not want these
antagonisms to affect the St Mark’s campaign by revealing cracks and splits behind the scenes. Cf: SPAB,
3rd Annual Report, cit. p.9. This was the motive for his letter to Wallis, which went on to disclaim any
direct association between the SPAB and the St Mark’s Preservation Committee. In reality, as Sharp has
Fig. 3 English tourists in Venice, drawn by Randolph Caldecott (The Graphic vol. 22, 11 Sept. 1880. Supplement). On the left, John Bunney caricatured in the act of painting his epic canvas showing the façade of St Mark’s (See notes to Appendix A.I.1.).

observed (op.cit. p. 12), Morris was closely involved, as his numerous letters on the subject disclose (See: Kelvin, op.cit. Vol. 1, pp. 576-7 et seq.).
compromised by his advocacy of the principle of restoration which, unlike the meeker George Gilbert Scott, Street was inclined to defend fiercely when it suited him. His involvement in the St Mark's affair was undoubtedly a source of controversy at the SPAB.

Zorzi was not involved with the St Mark's Committee from the outset. With help from Bunney in Venice, the Committee made contact with the Count in July.\(^{81}\) It was Zorzi who translated the Circular of the Committee into Italian in August 1880.\(^{82}\) He did not publish it immediately, as he had done with Morris' letter to the \textit{Daily News} of November 1879. Zorzi's name was conspicuous as one of the few Italian names to be attached to the Circular prior to its release on 1 August, and he wanted time to cultivate support of his compatriots who, as he remarked to Wallis in September, "are almost all of an opinion contrary to my own."\(^{83}\) Instead he instructed the Committee to make private contact with numerous persons in Italy, whose names he would supply. He continued to adjust the text of the Circular translation until November.\(^{84}\) Zorzi's letters to Wallis reveal the delicacy of his mission - to cultivate support in the wider artistic community, among administrators and persons of importance, playing down his own role in that process, while trying to ensure that the Circular reached the right people at the right moment, without tipping the balance and precipitating another international stand-off.

\(^{81}\) ALSS Bunney to Wallis, 18 July 1880, BM Add. MSS 38831. f.16; and Zorzi to Wallis, 15 July 1880, \textit{Ibid.} f.12.  
\(^{83}\) "... sont actuellement presque tous d'un avis contraire au mien." ALSS Zorzi to Wallis, 28 Sept. 1880, \textit{Ibid.} f.77.  
At last the breakthrough came towards the middle of December. One of those to whom Zorzi had suggested the Committee might despatch a copy of the Circular was Francesco Azzurri, who sympathised with the aims of the St Mark’s protest, if not with its methods. Azzurri, an architect, was President of the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti di San Luca - the Academy of St Luke, at Rome, and according to Zorzi’s own testimony, had been urging Zorzi to persuade the English Committee to make its criticisms through the Academy at Rome, in the hope, perhaps, of obtaining a more constructive result. In accordance with Zorzi’s recommendation, Wallis contacted Azzurri by letter on 4 October. Azzurri replied on 24 October, declining to join the Committee officially - an act he could not contemplate as the representative of a publicly accountable body with its own laws and statutes - but expressing reassurance that the Academy was itself keeping a close eye on events in Venice, and was fully confident that the Government of Italy would be taking in hand the necessary measures to protect the Basilica.

The contents of the Circular are of no special significance: the document summarised the circumstances which had led to the 1879 Memorial, and urged artists and lovers of art to join the Committee, which, “as delicately as possible, by friendly representations,” would voice the Committee’s concerns individually and collectively, in the hope of persuading the Italian nation to modify its course of action.

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86 ALS Azzurri to Wallis, 24 Oct. 1880, BM Add. MSS 38831. f.95. See Appendix A.1.3.
87 Circular, St Mark’s Venice Committee, 1 Aug. 1880. BM Add. MSS 38831. f.99.
Of far greater value to the St Mark's cause, and to the prospect of further fruitful involvement in foreign restorations, was the alliance which Zorzi had procured, by inspired diplomacy, with Azzurri. Zorzi and Azzurri were elected onto the SPAB Committee during the year 1880-1. The lessons of the St Mark's campaign were being learned, and it was largely on Zorzi's account. One of the chief drawbacks of the 1879 protest had been its foreign character - as was said at the time, it was preposterous to suppose that the Italians would be cowed by a petition signed by "popular actors, provincial mayors, and the Suffragan Bishop of Nottingham." But the tactful measures adopted by the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's during this second phase held the prospect of fertile collaboration, and increased notoriety for the anti-scrapel programme. Zorzi, so remote and isolated in his patient labours, had his own reward - his application to honorary membership of the Academy of St Luke was accepted in 1881.

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS - THE 'CHARACTER' OF ST MARK'S.

In theoretical terms, the language and focus of the Memorial of November 1879 comply with the philosophical precepts established by Ruskin, which I have set out in the previous chapter. In the following pages I will look more closely at its content, seeking to interpret the Memorial in the context of those ideas, and analyse and account for the

89 Annuario dell'Accademia di San Luca, cit. p.183. Co-incidentally, Lady Walburga de Hoental Paget, wife of Sir Augustus Paget, was also elected to the Academy that year. It would be most interesting to be able to explore Azzurri's role, his contribution to the St Mark's affair in Italy, and the precise nature of his agenda, but I have been unable to trace any meaningful documentation to assist in such an undertaking.
mixture of sentiments which the publication of the Memorial, and of the protest in general, aroused.

The text implies a recognition of the monument in three essential aspects: as a "storehouse of instruction," that is, a didactic instrument upon which the history of architectural style and technology is written; as a testimony of the historical events which have shaped Venice, that is, as a document of history; and as an object of visual beauty naturalised and "glorified" by the patina of age.\textsuperscript{90} As I will now explain, it was the attempt to assert the importance of these three qualities, and particularly the third, over the rationalist doctrines of functionality and stylistic unity which had formed the intellectual basis of the anti-restoration movement during the 1870s.

The SPAB, in its own Manifesto, had alluded to the continuous thread of use, repair and adaptation which is wrought upon a building by the passage of time. The application of scientific knowledge to the study of architectural history reduces these complex, imperfect and disparate accumulations into rigid styles and classified types which are hitched together as arbitrary sequences according to a hypothetical chronology. Such speculations, when made manifest as "restoration," effectively "strip" the buildings of their value and dignity, alterations converting them into crude archetypes in a mechanistic historical world-view, into "feeble and lifeless forgeries" rather than objects of wonder and veneration.

\textsuperscript{90} SPAB. Memorial to the Prefect of Venice, 10 November 1879. See Appendix A.1.1.
"restoration ...a strange and most fatal idea, which by its very name implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history - of its life, that is - and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was."91

It was in the quest to overcome this rationalistic, positivist approach to the study of architecture, and to arrest the degradation to which, on this pretext, historic buildings were being relentlessly subjected, that William Morris and Philip Webb came together to form the Society in 1877. In their philosophy, historic buildings could only be properly safeguarded if subjected to a regime of daily care, of propping and mending using simple technology:

"It is for all these buildings, therefore, of all times and all styles, that we plead, and call upon those who have to deal with them to put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no pretence of other art...."92

To understand the novelty of the anti-scare philosophy, one needs to compare it with preceding traditions. The didactic properties of architecture had long been regarded as central to architectural training and practice, and the early anti-restoration movement, led by such figures as John Louis Petit (1801-68) and Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-92), had valued highly the historiographic properties of a building. It was John Carter, and later Lewis Cottingham (1787-1847), for instance, who first practised Madsen's 'principle of equivalence', or respect for architectural components of all periods and styles as the

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92 Ibid.
raw material of archaeological inquiry. However, English theorists like Edward Freeman in the 1850s had arrived at a philosophy which subordinated the needs of preservation to those of "necessity." While they recognised the additive nature of a built entity, and the historical importance which attaches to each and every part of its anatomy, however diverse in style and form, they felt that historically, buildings were changed and adapted in accordance with changing functional requirements, and that in restoration the same demands of function, utility and performance should prevail over mere antiquarian interest.

As late as 1882 the values of practical utility and constructional beauty were still considered by the Establishment as the essentials of architectural design. As one architect claimed:

"There are in fact three different ways of regarding an ancient building, three different values which attach to it, viz., its historical interest, its architectural beauty, and its practical utility." 95

The conservation movement of the 1870s began to re-process these formulae - perhaps partly in response to the unhappy solutions applied by architects like George Gilbert Scott, whose theoretical stance was close to Freeman's, and whose projects were heavily criticised by the anti-restorationists - adding an important new element to the equation. A more militantly Ruskinian position was adopted, which abjured utilitarianism and

93 Myles, op.cit. pp.15-16.
condemned traditional aesthetics, arguing for outright and honest destruction rather than any kind of tampering with historic fabric for the purpose of re-use, and denouncing imitative art as a fake. The formation of the SPAB was the culmination of this new mood.

The question of what worth an historical building actually possessed, if not that of the raw material of scientific inquiry, or common utility, or merely that of being more beautiful in style than its neighbour, was thus re-drawn in Ruskinian terms. The sense in which historical architecture served as a vivid and humbling lesson for contemporary art in an age often derided for its debased and passionless industrialism had been a key theme in Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. In his introduction to Zorzi’s paper, Ruskin had illustrated the difficulties of meaningful, accurate research when the subject under scrutiny has been so contaminated by unrecorded interventions that “it now takes me at least half the time I have to study a building to find out first what pieces of it are genuine.”96 The sense in which historical monuments did not belong, like chattels, to the present age but were merely held in trust on behalf of past and future generations formed a central plank of his arguments against restoration.97 But it was the picturesque conception of historical architecture, the sense in which its value was linked to the passage of time - the idea that architectural beauty could be defined as a consequence of the imperfections and contingencies of natural phenomena on the surface of the building - that really set the anti-scrape of the 1870s apart from the anti-restorers of an earlier generation. The veil of poetical grandeur which shrouded the monuments of the Venetian

96 *Works*: XXIV. p.409.
97 *Works*: IX. pp. 244-6.
Lagoon, and the sense in which history could be read in the surface of such monuments as in a colossal book, had earlier been persuasively expressed in the pages of *The Stones of Venice*.

Ancient buildings, then, were to be regarded not as types, but as repositories of archaeological data and folklore, historical souvenirs, and, crucially, fragments of visual poetry. Soon after the foundation of the SPAB, the Scots architect, George Aitchison (1825-1910), a figure closely associated with the anti-restoration movement, set out this trinity in rather blunter, pragmatic terms. Great buildings, he told the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Aberdeen, are "storehouses of many arts and of many sciences," but also "records which are committed to your safekeeping." They may very well be restored as faithfully as possible, and lost parts replaced and renewed, but in so being they lose that "venerable hoariness" which is their unique quality. The St Mark's campaign opened with precisely this kind of utterance: William Morris, in his letter on St Mark's to the *Daily News* of 31 October, used the same trilogy of values in his evaluation, describing the Basilica of St Mark as "a work of art, monument of history, and a piece of nature." Thus, in the 1879 Memorial, we find St Mark's again hallowed as a sacred trinity - a book of instruction in the arts, a testament of the progress of civilisation, and a lovingly-fashioned reliquary burnished by the hand of nature.

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These three values - the didactic, the historical, and the natural - when unified in a single work, render the work fundamentally unique and, therefore, unrepeatable. None of these elements can be falsified by the modern workman, the Memorial argues. His consciousness and handiwork are so remote in every respect from those of his antecedents, that the monument cannot, by definition, be restored. Where the ancient and the modern workman differ, it is suggested, is that the modern workman, "amid thoughts strange to that (the original) workmanship," respects and aspires only to the ruled line, the right angle, and the straight arris. It is the imperfections of design and finish, however, each one the product of the Medieval creative spirit, or of the action of time and the natural elements, which lend the monument its unique personality, and these cannot be imitated by the modern engineer or tradesman.

This, the idea of the 'impossibility' of restoration in modern times, of the incompatibility of thought which exists between the modern workman and his antecedents, was a theme to which Ruskin had recently returned. In the Seven Lamps of Architecture he had penned the famous phrase:

"it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture...Another spirit may be given by another time, and it is then a new building; but the spirit of the dead workman cannot be summoned up, and commanded to direct other hands, and other thoughts."  

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101 See Appendix A. 1.1.
In his introduction to Zorzi's *Osservazioni* he condemned the modern approach to restoration which entrusted repairs to

"men unacquainted with the handling of the chisel and sure to think the mechanical regularity meritorious, which a true artist hates as a musician does a grinding organ."\(^{103}\)

The exactitude of modern building methods and their ruinous effect when applied to restoration work also worried Street. He complained to *The Times* about the re-laying of the mosaic pavement, dead flat, in the north aisle of St Mark's, which he had seen in 1877.\(^{104}\) All too often, he later argued, when he had had an opportunity to examine the offending works, this trend was accompanied by a casual approach to the selection of materials:

"the nineteenth century workman does not care much about the quality of his mortar, his marble or his bricks, but he does care intensely to have every angle perfectly square, every dimension exact, and every line straight."\(^{105}\)

It was such self-evident truths as these which led to the "fatal dilemma,"\(^{106}\) the irreconcilability of old work and new in restoration.

Meduna's perception of the monument is well revealed by Street, who argued that although Meduna had protested that he had never intended to carry out rebuilding of the west front on the scale with which he had tackled the restoration of the north and south

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104 Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 21 Nov. 1879. p.11.
façades, visual evidence conclusively proved that this was untrue, because in his rebuilding of the flanks Meduna had straightened out the irregularities of the elevations with the result that the horizontal members stood at a level several inches above those of the west front, a sign which was interpreted as proof of his intention to 'correct' the west front just as drastically as he had the north and south façades.

Street's fears for restoration should perhaps be given a little consideration here. Like Ruskin, his impressions of foreign restoration were based on personal observations made during travels on the continent. I have made reference to some of these in an earlier chapter. Street, however, was himself a restoring architect - of the 'eclectic' school. The dislike of French restoration which Street had expressed in the early 1860s, was focused quite specifically on the problem of surface, and particularly, carving. Like most architects, Street was respectful of Viollet-Le-Duc, but suspicious of the French treatment of sculptured façades at Rheims, Laon and Notre Dame de Paris. Sculptural ornament, he contended, should be treated as sensitively as one would a painting. Would the owner of a painting by Fra Angelico have missing features filled in by a Royal Academician, so that the whole may look "neat, perfect, and (probably) insipid?" he had asked. 107

Near the beginning of this chapter I indicated that Street may have played a significant role in the protest against the rebuilding of St Mark's, for which he has not been credited. There is a sense in which these concerns, which Street had expressed, for the unique

107 Street, 'Destructive Restoration on the Continent,' cit. p.343.
qualities of the finished surface of a building might lead us to speculate on how English restoration theory might be seen as contrasting with the French, or continental outlook - namely in its tendency to approach the question of preservation as a problem of surface rather than structure.

A look at Meduna's approach at St Mark's helps to clarify this distinction. Meduna was essentially an engineer, belonging to a generation of practitioners who operated in accordance with strictly mechanical principles. His favoured building style was a fanciful, eclectic medley, and he has been classed as an "eclectic" revivalist, not a neo-goth. His manner was derived more from a crude sense of theatre than of archaeological rigour. Even so he earned the respect of Viollet-Le-Duc, who praised Meduna's works at St Mark's. Viollet-Le-Duc's influence in Italy was extensive. Both Boito and Pietro Selvatico were influenced by his theories. He had been involved in the adjudication of the projects for the completion of the Duomo façade in Florence in 1862, and had visited Naples, Rome and Bologna at the invitation of numerous high-ranking public officials, and been honoured by the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and Florence in 1860 and 1862 respectively. Viollet-Le-Duc's own remedial works at Saint Denis (1846-51) had involved the consolidation of unsound masonry at foundation level in order to prevent collapse. Viollet's approach to repair incorporated a notable principle, namely that stronger and better materials, more durable fixings, improved constructional methods,
should be employed if there were proven shortcomings in the historic structure. Meduna’s works had been executed in the same spirit: he had strengthened the foundations, discarded the old, corroded marble facings, replacing them with new marble, and straightened out any misalignments which might signify or provoke instability, though he had done this perhaps at the expense of historical accuracy, and without regard for the peculiar chromatic quality of the ancient coloured surface. In 1871, the year of Viollet’s visit, the artificial shine which Meduna had achieved had probably not yet faded. The work looked good and solid, and the Frenchman’s blessing followed in the wake of the generally positive reception which had greeted the unveiling of the north wall in 1865.111

And so to Zorzi. According to Robotti, Zorzi’s Ruskinian sympathies, and his advocacy of conservative repair, point to an emergence in Italy of new principles, like those enunciated by Ruskin thirty years before.112 The relationship between Ruskin’s (and the memorialists of 1879), and Zorzi’s reflections on St Mark’s, is in reality a more complex one: Dalla Costa has shown that Zorzi was no mere disciple of Ruskin.113 But there are central notions on which Zorzi and the English interlopers concurred. Ruskin, in his letter to Zorzi, had taken care to avoid making any direct attack on the Venetian tradesman, insisting that the modern system of superintendence, rather than the labourer

111 According to Berchet, when unveiled the finished façade “was met with approbation because its completeness afforded a striking contrast with the well-remembered damages which Time had produced in the ancient one...” Boito [ed.] The Basilica of St Mark, cit. p.927.  
112 Robotti, op.cit.  
113 On the originality of Zorzi’s theories, cf: Dalla Costa, op.cit.
at the banker or on the scaffold, was at the root of the problem.\textsuperscript{114} Zorzi went further, calling for a reassessment of the policy of issuing contracts by public competition, which he felt was responsible for the shoddiness of the resulting work.\textsuperscript{115}

The Ruskinian stance, so hostile to the shoddy competitiveness of the building industry and its money-profit ethos, can of course be detected in the writings of English mid-century social critics like Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, who sought to turn away from the materialistic free-for-all of their age and recover something of the Christian beauty and integrity of a vanished Medieval golden age. On a practical level the visible decline of quality and taste in the building industry was a malaise which the RIBA, for instance, constantly fought against. For Zorzi, the crisis of St Mark's was inseparable from the shortcomings of the public contracts system which bound the authorities to a profit-oriented external labour market.

On another level Zorzi, like Ruskin, was critical of those who entrusted restoration work to engineers whose scientific education made them uniquely unfit to deal with questions of what he defined as "archaeology."\textsuperscript{116} As for the authentic character of the Basilica, he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Zorzi, \textit{op.cit.} p.14.
\item \textsuperscript{115} \textit{Ibid.} pp.39-50.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Zorzi, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 52-57. Dalla Costa explains Zorzi's conception of the term \textit{archeologia} within his art-theoretical model. In this model, the principle of 'repair rather than restoration' is the cipher, while the notion of 'Arte' (Art) refers to the aesthetic dimension. In other words, the idea of the monument as \textit{archeologia} corresponds roughly with the idea of the monument as repository of documentary evidence. \textit{Op.cit.} pp.54-5.
\end{itemize}
described the building as "not an architectural monument, but a museum of architecture."\textsuperscript{117}

In this sense the Basilica must be seen as a repository of historical information, its decorative marble components each carrying vital data used to decode the history of the monument's construction, and of its constructors.\textsuperscript{118} But it is much more than this: for Zorzi one of the worst offences committed by Meduna was the bleaching of the surface of those marbles with "the Pumice and the Rasp,"\textsuperscript{119} a process which, in the name of rendering old work and new more harmonious, succeeded only in extinguishing every trace of poetry from the face of the building. Zorzi, like the memorialists of November 1879, was acutely aware that the beauty of St Mark's resides in the effect of its colour, over which Time has "cast a veil of beautiful tone."\textsuperscript{120} It is a pictorial conception of architecture which identifies the character of the monument not with the laws of architectural style or design, or the mathematical principles of its construction, but with the painter's eye and palette.\textsuperscript{121}

Architectural as Painting

Central to the entire debate, therefore, is the growing perception that the value of architecture lies not only in its functional and mathematical character, but also in optical

\textsuperscript{117} Zorzi, op.cit. p.66.
\textsuperscript{118} Dalla Costa, op.cit. p.55.
\textsuperscript{119} The Pumice and the Rasp - "Pomiciatura e Raschiamenti" - is the title of the second chapter of the Osservazioni, op.cit pp.59-80.
\textsuperscript{120} See Appendix A.1.1.
\textsuperscript{121} Zorzi, op.cit. pp.66-70.
effects: the effect of light, climate, physical composition, colour, and the action of time and the elements on the outer surface. St Mark's was a uniquely extraordinary example of this pictorial function of architecture, not only by virtue of having been painted and drawn by Bellini, Canaletto, Turner and countless other artists, but because in its structure it was, as Ruskin had demonstrated, not a more-or-less homogeneous composition of architectonic solids but rather an "incrustation"\(^\text{122}\) of precious stones upon a core of pure structure - brick. Ruskin later described it as a "jewelled casket and painted reliquary."\(^\text{123}\) This critical reappraisal of architecture involved the reorganisation of the architectural Idea into a duality comprising structure and aspect. The acknowledgement of that separation of elements produces a recognition of the distinctive quality of the architectural surface. It was to this distinctiveness that anti-scrape responded. In conservation terms, it is this response which distinguishes the anti-restoration movement of the 1870s from that of the 1850s, whilst on a technical level, such an evaluation imposes new challenges to the restorer who is henceforth obliged to consider not the stylistic properties of his subject, nor merely its utility, but, as a principal criterion, its patination.

The application of painterly aesthetics to architecture was by no means limited to Ruskin and the 'Romantic' school, but was becoming an instrument of mainstream architectural criticism. Labrouste had separated basic structure from exterior decoration.\(^\text{124}\) Pugin also

\(^{122}\) Works: X. p.93.
\(^{123}\) Works: XXIV. p.414.
had re-established architectural beauty as a corollary of structure, refuting the aesthetic value of applied ornament and ultimately precipitating a debate about the merits of "decorated construction" versus "constructed decoration" which preoccupied the architectural establishment from the 1850s onwards.\textsuperscript{125} Butterfield, Scott, Teulon and others had developed a style which made much use of structural polychromy through the deployment of glazed and coloured brick, terracotta and contrasting freestone partly in response to this dilemma. The conceptual basis, in the form of a recognition of the anatomy of architecture, for the new aesthetic of anti-scare was already present.

Ruskin's musings on St Mark's generated a flurry of critical debate in which the building became a focus for the investigation of the effects of architectural polychromy, such as that recorded in \textit{The Builder} in 1869, in which it was suggested that the character of St Mark's lies not in its family resemblances or its stylistic genealogy, but in its surface colouration. It appeared to be "one of the cases where the enjoyment of art supersedes, or at least, subordinates, the interest of archaeology."\textsuperscript{126}

For some, the very lessons of colour in architecture were best learned in the Mediterranean. E.M. Barry explored this at length, in a paper given at the Royal Academy in 1880, at the very moment in which the St Mark's question was uppermost in the mind of the architectural profession.\textsuperscript{127} Barry particularly admired the use of colour in

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Builder} vol. 27, 16 Jan. 1869. p. 37.
\textsuperscript{127} 'Architecture Allied with Colour' \textit{The Builder} vol. 38, 21 Feb. 1880. pp. 213-4.
Italian Medieval architecture, citing such examples as Giotto's Campanile at Florence, Siena Cathedral and the Ducal Palace in Venice, in which colour "heightens the effect of the architectural detail." St Mark's he singled out as a unique instance in which the effects of colour stemmed not from the structural use of solid building materials, but the effect of time on the thin cladding of precious marbles,

"ripening some tints and subduing others, and throwing over all the softening and harmonising influence of age." 129

Charles Yriarte, the French critic, made the same point with concise clarity. In an article for Revue des Deux Mondes, he declared that the structure and decorative cladding of St Mark's were fundamentally separate; that the beauty of the Basilica derived therefore not from any abstract structural harmony, but from the action of Time on the marble veneer. This, he said:

"is the glazing of the picture, it is the envelope, the mystery, the poetry, the harmony in which all the various tones of the architectural palette are melded together... In France, our most noted artists and archaeologists have tried in vain, in religiously restoring our old basilicas and palaces, to forestall the action of time, attempting to imitate in the newly-sculpted portions this precious tint without which there is neither character nor real grandeur." 130

128 Ibid. p.214.
129 Ibid. p.213.
130 "C'est le glacis au tableau, c'est l'enveloppe, le mystère, la poésie, l'harmonie dans laquelle viennent se fondre tous les divers de la palette architecturale... En France, nos plus célèbres artistes et archéologues... s'efforçaient en vain, en restaurant religieusement nos vieilles basiliques at nos palais, de devancer l'action du temps, cherchant à imiter, pour les parties nouvellement sculptées, cette teinte sans laquelle il n'y a ni caractère, ni vraie grandeur." Yriarte, C. 'Les Restaurations de St Marc de Venise' Revue des Deux Mondes vol.38, 15 April 1880. p. 836.
Meduna's work was a further manifestation of this insensitivity to the real properties of an ancient building. Though he had reservations about the English protest, Yriarte expressed the view that if restoration were to be satisfactorily performed upon any building - and there was evidence that at St Mark's some works of stabilisation were required - it must acknowledge as its prime objective the need to respond to this quality. 131

The 'problem' of restoration in Italy

I have indicated how, in addition to censuring the protesters for having failed to ascertain the true facts of the case, the reaction in Italy to the 1879 Memorial focused on the extent to which the St Mark's question had been a preoccupation in the Italian art world for some time prior to the English intervention. It is true that, as Giacomo Boni later remarked in a letter to his friend W.D. Caroe, the Venetian press had initially responded with enthusiasm when Meduna's works to the south façade began to be revealed in late 1875. 132 Zorzi himself mentions two articles which complimented the architect on the results of his labours: the article by Vincenzo Mikelli, 'La nuova facciata a mezzogiorno della Basilica di San Marco,' in Gazzetta di Venezia, 21 February 1876, and another in Rinnovamento, 24-5 December 1875. 133 In the Rome daily, Fanfulla, a columnist wrote in praise of the architect. 134

131 Ibid. pp. 827-856.
133 Zorzi, op.cit. p.39.
134 'Sior Momolo' Fanfulla, 20 Aug. 1875. The architect is wrongly named as 'Merdum.'
But Meduna's exploits were by no means universally esteemed. One of the most curious aspects of the affair is the attitude of Pietro Saccardo. Saccardo, an engineer, had been Meduna's assistant since 1861, and expressed reservations about the proper treatment of the mosaic decoration in a measured historical-critical essay on the subject delivered to the Ateneo Veneto in 1864. In it he described St Mark's as a "completed poem (which) therefore no longer needs to be beautified, it needs to be conserved." While the Gazzetta di Venezia championed Meduna and his plans for the south façade in 1868, Saccardo objected, not explicitly to Meduna, but to remarks made in the press that Meduna planned to demolish seventeenth-century additions around the Cappella Zeno, in the south aisle, a feature described by the Gazzetta as "a large section of modern architecture placed so as to disfigure the Byzantine original." He also delivered a report to the Prefect of Venice on 22 February 1868, requesting clarification of these alarming rumours.

135 'Saggio di uno studio storico-artistico sopra i mosaici della chiesa di S. Marco' Atti dell'Ateneo Veneto, Venice, 1864. pp.32-44.
136 "Un poema compiuto (…) dunque non si tratta più di abbellire, si tratta di conservare" Quoted in: Mantovani, Anita. Pietro Saccardo 1830-1903, Unpublished thesis, Istituto Universitario di Architettura, Venice, 1986. p.8. Saccardo, having served as Clerk of Works (Fabbriciere) under Meduna from 1861, was subsequently appointed Director of Restorations in 1878. With Meduna increasingly side-lined after 1879, he effectively took over full responsibility for repairs, and distinguished himself in the difficult task of the salvaging of the south-west corner of the main façade, which Meduna had left in a semi-reconstructed state. Mantovani's thesis suggests that he was a key anti-restoration practitioner, and may even have had close contacts with Zorzi, who in any case referred on several occasions to the contents of Saccardo's 1864 memorial in Osservazioni. He was, however, by no means sympathetic to the SPAB, and it was Saccardo to whom Morris reiterated his concerns, in December 1879, after Saccardo, rather than Meduna, had condemned the Society's intervention. See: Kelvin, op.cit. Vol. I, p.547.
137 The affair is reported in: [Fabbricieri di S.Marcio]. La Basilica di S. Marco nel suo passato e nel suo avvenire, Venice, Tip.dell'Immacolata, 1883. pp.16-19.
138 Saccardo makes the claim in 'I Restauri della Basilica di San Marco dall'anno 1878 in poi' in: L'Ingegneria a Venezia dell'ultimo ventenio. Pubblicazione degli Ingegneri Veneziani in omaggio ai colleghi del VI Congresso, Venice, Prem. Stabilimento Tipografico di P.Naratovich, 1887. That discussions of this sort between Saccardo and Meduna should take place in public reveals much about the unhappy state of affairs prevalent in Venice at the time of the St Mark's crisis.
Weathering on the north façade had been drawing attention to the inferior quality of the marble which Meduna had inserted there. The same effects began to be observed on the south façade around 1877, as Meduna’s artificial polish faded. The loss of detail which resulted from his abrading of the surface of sculpture and columns also became glaringly apparent once the sheen had gone. The problem of St Mark’s and of Meduna’s works to the exterior was brought still more sharply into focus with the publication of the Osservazioni in June 1877. It was Count Zorzi’s pamphlet, with its potent and articulate message to Meduna and the authorities, which crystallised these latent reservations. In Gazzetta di Venezia, soon after publication of Osservazioni, appeared a letter, in support of Zorzi, signed by some sixty artists. Zorzi’s attack evidently struck a chord with some of the newspaper editors, including the Fanfulla, which categorically allied itself with Zorzi on the subject of the abrading of the old marble elements. The publisher and pioneer photographer Ferdinando Ongania had begun to produce detailed photographic plates of the monument in 1877. (Ruskin collaborated with Ongania during his sojourn of 1876-7.) After a summer hiatus during which time Zorzi’s ideas must have been widely considered, the Rinnovamento took up the issue, again citing Zorzi:

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139 The petition signed by the sixty artists appeared in Gazzetta di Venezia, 30 June 1877, p.2.
140 ‘Sior Momolo’ Fanfulla, 13 May 1877. Sior Momolo was the sobriquet of Pompeo Gherardo Molmenti (1852-1928), lawyer, journalist, Member of Parliament, and historian. He became an enthusiastic campaigner against restorations in Venice, in spite of having earlier written in glowing terms on Meduna’s work to the south elevation.
"for our part, we are not however prepared to leave alone the question (of restoration of the Basilica), indeed, without exaggeration, we very much wish that Zorzi's pertinent warnings do not come to no avail."  

By 1877, then, the Italians - or at least a significant minority - showed considerable anxiety about both the interior mosaics and those remains of the historic marble exterior which had survived Meduna's interventions. If they had not succeeded in persuading the authorities to dispense with Meduna after his works to the south front were shown to be defective, it was not because the idea of conservative repair had not been freely discussed, but because Meduna enjoyed privileges which could not easily be taken away. The Director of Works himself, as well as contractors and municipal committees, must have felt the rising pressure of public scrutiny, as when the Rinnovamento delivered a prophetic reproach to those responsible for allowing workmen to place ladders directly on the unprotected tesserae of the pavement:

"Do we really want Venice to be pointed out to foreigners as a shameful example of a despoiler of its ancient monuments? ... It is high time that whoever is responsible should keep watch and punish severely (the offenders)."  

Inevitably, public opinion was mobilised more easily in the context of Venice's famous Basilica. But the likes of Saccardo, and Camillo Boito were active proponents of

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142 Rinnovamento, 22 Sept. 1877.
143 "Si vuol proprio che Venezia sia additata agli stranieri come vergognoso esempio di deturpatrice degli aviti monumenti? ... È tempo ormai che chi ne ha l'obbligo sorvegli e punisca severamente" Rinnovamento, 15 Aug. 1877.
144 Although an architect and restoration theorist of immense distinction, Boito (1836-1914) is rarely directly involved in the English protests, his letter (described earlier) being his only contribution to the 1879 St Mark's debate. For a brief introduction to Boito and the literature on Boito, cf: Contorni,
conservative repair, and liberal-minded and sensitive to Venice’s historic character even in the context of less highly-publicised cases. One such is the case of San Moisè (Fig. 4), a seventeenth-century church close to St Mark’s and in danger of demolition in 1877. Though some sectors of the press regarded San Moisè as inferior in value, others were prepared to campaign for its survival by publishing letters protesting at the planned demolition. Saccardo became involved, collecting 5000 lire by subscription in 1878, and working for nothing in order to devise a rescue plan for San Moisè. His attitude contrasts with Meduna, who demanded a fee of 24,000 lire for demolition.

Academies and learned Societies had also interested themselves in issues of restoration to an extent which was perhaps under-estimated in England. The Ateneo Veneto was essentially a literary and scientific society. Its members included leading academic and political figures, men of letters, artists, engineers, lawyers. The Milanese historian Carlo Cattaneo was a member, as was Cesare Cantù. Austen Henry Layard was among the array of international corresponding members during 1878. Early in 1879, a few months before the threat to St Mark’s was publicised by the English observers, one member,

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143 Rinnovamento, 19 July 1877. The author of the piece reported that a Technical Commission had been established to report to the Genio Civile, or Board of Works, on procedures for the demolition of the church: “that church is not very grand (monumentale), and therefore to demolish it will be no great loss (non farebbe veruna perdita),” he declared, arguing that the money saved would be better spent on restoring St Mark’s. On the restorations of San Moisè, cf. also: Calvi, R. & Peretti, M. ‘Sul Restauro Ottocentesco di S.Moisè a Venezia’ Bollettino d’Arte vol.69 n.25, May-Jun 1984, pp.123-30.

144 Fanfulla, 23 Oct 1877. Sior Momolo expresses satisfaction that, apparently on the strength of several letters written to the Gazzetta di Venezia by ‘a friend,’ San Moisè now looks safe.

145 Mantovani, op.cit. p.163.

146 Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1896), journalist, Editor of the literary and philosophical bi-monthly, Il Politecnico 1839-69; Cesare Cantù (1804-1895), poet, novelist and politician. Both were subsequently
among the adherents to the Circular published by the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark’s in London.
Francesco Scipione Fapanni, had presented a long address to the members of the Ateneo, appealing for a new sense of responsibility. As the minutes record, he condemned both the "miserly speculators," who in their pursuit of personal gain had contributed in no small way to the despoliation of Venice, and the incompetence of those municipal organs supposedly invigilating over restorations:

"He (Fapanni) described in a clear and scholarly manner how necessary it should be to the honour of Venice to conserve every building, every work of art; he strongly deplored the way in which not only mean speculators but at times even persons of repute had contributed to the dispersal of great paintings and other art treasures; he deplored the fact that restorations are poorly carried out, and the heedlessness of the authorities. Nor did he fail to observe that the 'Commission' created for this purpose had so far done little or nothing of any worth."

These were events about which the English protesters, on the basis of their accusations, appeared to be ignorant. This apparent oversight was irksome to the more enlightened members of the antiquarian lobby in Venice, and made the English intervention of 1879 deeply unpopular with the very group to whom the appeal was made.

The publication of the Osservazioni had a secondary outcome - exposure to Ruskin's ideas on the character of St Mark's, and on the artistic impoverishment and technical deficiencies which characterised the commercialised building industry. Ruskin's

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150 "Espose in modo chiaro ed erudito quanto sia necessario al decoro di Venezia conservare ogni edificio, ogni capo d'arte; deplorando vivamente che avari speculatori non solo, ma talora anche persone di alto lignaggio abbiano contribuito alla dispersione di quadri insigni e d'altri tesori d'arte; deplorò che I ristauri si facciano male, e che le autorità manchino di vigilanza. Nè ommise di osservare che la 'commissione' all'uopo istituito poco o nulla fece di bene fino ad ora." Ibid. p.163.
introduction to Zorzi’s pamphlet, far from being dismissed as the mischievous ramblings of an eccentric English busybody, was received with interest at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts. In 1878 Giuseppe Guerzoni delivered the annual lecture, entitled ‘San Marco nell’Arte e nella Storia.’ He began with a long description of the building’s various parts, in which he likened the ensemble to an immense illuminated bible. He quoted from Ruskin’s letter to Zorzi, alluding to the unique status of the monument as a materialisation of the craftsman’s individual imaginative vigour, embodying the creative power of the collective. The character of the monument lay in its beauty as a hand-wrought palimpsest, an embroidered fragment of human history, rather than an functional artifact - not a temple for worship but, again, an illuminated codex. To the Venetian, such interpretations had a deeper resonance - they conjured up a vision of the past which, phoenix-like, might rise again to recount the legendary deeds of yesteryear. In such a vision the workman stands, god-like, as the master arteficer of a nation’s heroic destiny:

“...and when all the reality which he had evoked no longer held any mystery he delved into his viscerae and sought the archetype within, he seized it, he sealed it in his breast, he kindled it with his heart, he cherished it with all the tenderness of his imagination, until one day this beloved phantasm sprang forth living and alert in his mind, gave itself sensual and corporeal form, and transformed itself into a temple in which, like a ray of sunlight, the multitudinous gilded atoms of its mother city are glittering, it is the resplendent Saint Mark’s!”

151 Its members included Ruskin, who was made Socio d’Onore in the early 1870s. Camillo Boito, and Tommaso and Giovanni Battista Meduna were also members. Ruskin’s introductory letter to Zorzi’s pamphlet, translated into Italian by Mlle. Szczepanowska (Zorzi’s fiancée) was really the first occasion on which his ideas reached an Italian audience. His other works, however, were not fully published in translated form until the turn of the century, The Stones of Venice not until 1910.

152 "...e quando tutta la realtà da lui evocata non ebbe più segreti penetrò fin dentro le sue viscere a cercare l’idea archetipa, e l’afferrò, la chiuse nel proprio petto, la scaldò nel proprio cuore, la vagheggiò con tutte le carezze della sua fantasia, finché un giorno il caro fantasma s’agìto vivo ed inquieto nella sua mente, si vestì di forme corporee e sensibili, si trasformò in un tempio in cui scintillavano come in un raggio di sole..."
It can be seen, therefore, that the counter-protest - which stressed the point that the question of St Mark's had been subjected to wide-ranging critical debate and scrutiny for decades - was forcefully made, and with some justification. But on closer scrutiny an underlying preoccupation reveals itself. It is a preoccupation which is far removed from the English experience, and it constitutes yet another level on which the English and Italian modes of thought were intrinsically at odds.

I believe the reaction was conditioned by a sense of profound frustration which had as its object not the rude arrogance of the foreigner, but the ineffectiveness of State machinery, municipal sloth, the envy, torpor and self-doubt which, after fifteen years of freedom from Austrian hegemony, still conditioned the Venetian world-view. The savagery of the response to the English protests of 1879 is in part explained by the unleashing of latent impulses which are perhaps traceable to the effects of almost half a century of cultural oppression.

Italy, in 1877, possessed an elaborate network of public commissions, inspectors, and an expanding legislative apparatus designed to control and monitor works affecting historic buildings.153 But the inefficient and largely unaccountable bureaucracy was seen as a 

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153 To summarise briefly, the Ministry for Public Instruction was created in 1861, and it gradually took on the responsibility of providing for the conservation of monuments in the new kingdom of Italy. A consultative commission, the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice di Belle Arti, was constituted in Florence, for the provinces of Florence and Arezzo, in 1865, and became the model for identical commissions formed over the next decade throughout all the provinces of Italy, often based on rump institutions left over from pre-Unification years. Thus, by 1877, in a typical Region like Lombardy, Veneto, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna or Campania, there were eight or nine provincial bodies, called the
handicap. In a country in which the faith invested in the statutory authorities was widely regarded as a pillar of social cohesiveness, this was an important source of frustration.

The Rinnovamento’s protest over the lack of site supervision with regard to the internal mosaics (see above) may seem odd in the light of the more lasting impression made by Meduna on the exterior elevations, but the tone of the author of that piece is indicative of a widespread uncertainty as to how such infringements were supposed to be prevented. “It is high time that whoever is responsible should keep watch and punish severely,” the paper had said: evidently the commission which was supposed to be monitoring the works was not publicly accountable, and distrusted by the keen observer.

Like Meduna, the architect Giuseppe Castellazzi was an architect who enjoyed the esteem and patronage of more than one of these commissions. In a paper at the Ateneo Veneto he considered the prospects of success for architect Annibale Forcellini, director of works under the new commission established in 1876 to report on the progress of works to another great Venetian monuments, the Doge’s Palace, or Palazzo Ducale. Forcellini, he implied, will have his work cut out to cope with the administrative burden which will be

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Commissioni Consultiva Conservatrice di Belle Arti. Each was made up of painters, sculptors and architects, half of whom were appointed by the Government and half by the local academies. Major reforms to the central bureaucracy in Rome in 1874 and 1875 created the Giunta Superiore di Archeologia e Belle Arti, a kind of state umbrella-organisation under the Directorship of Ruggero Bonghi (1826-1895). Under Bonghi also was instituted a system of special inspectors at regional level, with a Government officer in Rome to oversee their work. By end of 1876 there were 111 inspectors in 64 out of 75 provinces, and 205 by early 1879. 1875 was also year in which the first Elenco Ufficiale degli Edifici Monumentali (Official List of Monumental Buildings) was approved. The long and elaborate history of the formation of this administrative structure is told in: Bencivenni, M., Dalla Negra, R. & Grifoni, P. Monumenti ed Istituzioni (2 vols.), Florence, Alinea, 1988.
placed on his shoulders, while on a technical level, he regrets that the report made by Malvezzi under an earlier commission, headed by Pietro Selvatico, is not readily available for consultation. If Castellazzi, in so many respects an architect with credentials, could not lay his hands on a copy, then one must assume that the keeping of records was less than should be expected.\(^\text{154}\)

These reservations form part of a much wider body of criticism dating back several years. In 1873 Riccardo Fulin expressed his doubts in the Archivio Veneto as to efficacy of commissions. He pointed to a recent instance - the removal of the monument to Paulus Lauredanus from the church of Santa Caterina: Why, he demanded, did the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti not prevent this act? He cited legislation from the eighteenth century, the time of the Serenissima, the Venetian Republic, preventing such misdeeds, and hoped that the Commissioners

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\text{"will not permit those (acts) which used to occur to start up again. Here too the Republic teaches us important lessons ... old relics were respected by our ancestors, even though they may not have been the only, or by any means the best, of their glories."} \quad \text{\cite{155}}
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^{155} "non permettere che si rinnovi quello che qui accadde altre volte. Anche a questo proposito la Repubblica ci lasciò grandi lezioni; e le antiche memorie erano rispettate dai nostri vecchi, benchè le memorie non fossero o l'unico o almeno il migliore dei loro vanti." 'La Conservazione dei Monumenti' *Archivio Veneto* Anno III, vol. 6, 1873. pp.183-4. The problem of inadequate administration was not an issue which preoccupied only Venetian writers before 1879. In Florence both Marco Treves and Giuseppe Poggi, whose theoretical position in respect of restoration will be considered in a later chapter, had expressed concern about the failings of the Italian system.
The English protests, by exposing the inadequacies of Italian restoration, served to highlight the problems of administration and funding which were at the heart of the problem, and here one finds frequent references to corruption, inertia and weakness on the part of public servants and the State. Camillo Boito’s article in *Nuova Antologia* of December 1879 was partly a defence of Meduna and a condemnation of the erroneous speculations of the English, and partly a critical study of state machinery. The three-tier system of commissions and sub-commissions was counter-productive, he complained, because the Government officials, the Provincial representatives, and the local councillors never agreed with one another, and invariably argued over who should fund the works. Even more useless were the hundred or so inspectors, who “know nothing and do nothing.”  

The *Giunta Superiore*, Boito claimed,

“meets every three or four months at Rome; its members come from Naples, Florence, Siena, Milan; they shake hands, argue for two days, and go off in a hurry.”  

They are provided with little documentation, he went on, and often have no knowledge of the building in question, and the idea that all this can be monitored by a single inspector based in Rome, on a pittance of a salary, was absurd. As for finance, the sum registered in the national budget for the conservation of monuments is so paltry, he says, 

“...that Bonghi, when he was Minister, in his preface to the decree with which the State created the post of Government Inspector, said he was ashamed to say how much it was, and in fact passed over it in silence.”

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There was evidently much that the English protesters neither knew nor understood. It was even questioned whether Morris and his colleagues, in their protests, had fully understood the nature of Ruskin’s concern for St Mark’s. In a letter addressed to William Morris but published in *L’Adriatico*, Lorenzo Seguso claimed, quoting directly from Ruskin, that the problems of restoration at Venice did not stem from poor workmanship or lack of respect for the monument, but from the system “in which monetary reward becomes for those who have no real talent for art, a way of indulging in the practice of imitative work.”

Nor was this all. The Italian authorities were guilty of apathy and avarice, but the English protest could not be accepted because they too were in part responsible for the state of affairs. No Englishman had protested when works were carried out by the Austrian authorities. English shareholders of the Venice and Murano Glass Company (Layard seems to have had an interest in the Company), which had installed new mosaics at St Mark’s, had to shoulder some of the responsibility for what had occurred; and however much one might denounce the Fabbricci for selling off the bits and pieces of old work which Meduna had pulled out, the fact remained that Englishmen were among those who quietly bought the pieces and contributed to their permanent dispersal.

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159 “per le persone che non hanno un vero talento per l’arte, motivo di occuparsi nella pratica del lavoro imitativo” *L’Adriatico*, 4 Dec. 1879. p.2 The letter was serialised and printed in the *Adriatico* 2,3,4,5,6, and 7 December. He is paraphrasing from Ruskin’s introduction to Zorzi’s *Osservazioni* in which he talks of how “the modern system by which, throughout Europe (the) money-profit (system)... becomes a motive for persons of no real art faculty to occupy themselves in the direction of imitative work, for which, of course, no genius is required.” *Works*: XXIV. p.407.

160 One individual whom Seguso singled out in this respect was a certain Bentinck - perhaps George Augustus Frederick Cavendish Bentinck (1821-1891), an MP and Cabinet Minister - who he claimed had hunted down, purchased and shipped off thousands of fragments. Bentinck, of Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire, was, ironically, a member of the SPAB, as well as a trustee of the British Museum and
Here lies the crux of the matter: Italian suspicion of the English was as profound as English disdain towards the Italians, and with some justification. As an Italian correspondent had written in a letter to the *Athenaeum*:

"Every day all over Italy English people, on their own account or for Museums and Galleries, go hunting about for artistic treasures of all kinds, and, having found them, tempt the proprietors (too often poor) by offers of large sums to deprive themselves of the coveted object, never once stopped by the thought that its removal defaces the walls of a beautiful chapel or hall, or that it leaves a fearful scar in the façade of a fine old building... Many of those who have written on the subject would gladly buy and remove to England the whole Basilica of S. Marco..."^{161}

**CONCLUSION**

The main issues which emerge from the St Mark’s affair in terms of theoretical discussion can now be summarised. They concern both the propositions of anti-scrape itself, and the difficulties of communicating those propositions to an alien culture without adequate preparation and with no clearly-defined long-range vision. To begin with, the philosophy of anti-scrape - as the term itself so emphatically proclaims - adopted as its central rationale the conviction that beauty and character in architecture reside in the quality of the surface patination. St Mark’s Basilica, by virtue of having both a richly-patinated exterior, and by virtue of being a constructional archetype in which outer shell and inner core are sharply differentiated in structural terms, was a consummate embodiment of this approach to architectural beauty (partly on the strength of Ruskin’s

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^{161} Athenaeum n.2719, 6 Dec. 1879. p.733.
writings). It was an aesthetic which centred neither upon abstract notions of mathematical harmony, nor upon the functionalistic doctrine of utility, but upon the imperfect, unpredictable and unreproducible effects of time, nature, and man's unfettered expressive impulses. St Mark's - the Medieval Cathedral *par excellence* - exemplified this naturalistic architecture, and its restoration was for these reasons an impossibility.

But the St Mark's affair exposed a fundamental technical failing on the part of the British, namely their misunderstanding of the Italian state of mind. Their ignorance of the shortcomings of Italian public administration, the extent to which Italian Government and society was enduring a colossal overhaul in the aftermath of Unification, and, apparently, their unawareness of Italian resentment of the perceived acquiescence of the English *milord* in Italy's own humiliation over a long period, made the English exercise appear, from the other side of the Alps, to be a blatant provocation.

We must recognise that the harnessing of influence of the press, and the tactics employed to raise international resistance to the works at St Mark's were of extraordinary significance. The collaboration of Zorzi and Henry Wallis in the second half of 1880 represents perhaps the very first instance in which combined European pressure was brought to bear on the treatment of a monument. The growth of research in architectural history, aided by more advanced technologies of reproduction such as photography and colour lithography, and underscored by the nineteenth-century appetite for cultural enrichment, delivered a sensibility towards the collective duties of custodianship. It is no
accident that this development occurred so hot on the heels of a rapidly evolving museology. The trade in antiquities and works of art highlighted the cultural perils of unregulated trafficking, and signalled the need for controls to protect small national interests against stronger economic forces. At the same time, with nations increasingly viewed as custodians rather than landlords, and the values of conservation regarded as the foundations for the implementation of universal guidelines, statutory protection at international level for historic monuments - and not only of the immoveable kind - was inevitably a short step away.

The conflict which I have outlined was therefore a much wider one. Its dual character is strikingly mirrored in the activities of one personality who I have yet to mention: correspondent of The Times, William James Stillman. Stillman’s participation in the St Mark’s debate is, like Saccardo’s, an ambivalent one. He was an energetic defender of Meduna and a thorn in the side of the English protesters. Yet, observing at close quarters the St Mark’s campaign, Stillman argued strenuously for measures to

“forbid by law the restoration or repairing under any pretext whatever of any work which dates more than a century back (they cannot pull down too many of the more recent ones, unless they attempt to replace them), except after examination and approval of a Royal Commission and a certain lapse of time, in which those more interested than Italians themselves generally in the keeping of good art may take such action as individuals can. These barbarisms are not a loss merely to Italy, and the whole world has a right to cry out against their repetition.”162

162 The Times, 18 Nov. 1879. p.5. Having begun as a sceptic, Stillman subsequently visited Venice to report on Meduna’s exploits, and, in a surprising about-turn, thereafter adopted the mantle of Meduna’s champion.
Stillman maintained strong convictions of the value of foreign interference in hauling the subject of proper controls for the restoration and excavation of antiquities onto the government agenda. The year 1879-80 was precisely the period in which Stillman was formulating a set of views, based on personal experience as an archaeologist, upon the preservation of monuments and works of art, in which the international community is seen as a fundamental agent in protecting and preserving cultural heritage. His experiences in Greece, Crete and Asia Minor had taught him some practical lessons: firstly, that artists and archaeologists in the southern Mediterranean tended to sacrifice the interests of art to their own national suspicions; secondly, that foreign participation in archaeological affairs was generally beneficial to the preservation of antiquities, which otherwise fell under the exclusive control of academic institutions and government officials which, while jealously preserving their rights to their own cultural property, were not necessarily able to guarantee the rapid, safe or sensible disposal of archaeological finds. Stillman criticised Greek laws forbidding export of works of art which, he said, encouraged contraband and the break-up of sculpture and antiquities for resale on the world market. He wanted a relaxation of rules, a lowering of export duties, and a less chauvinistic attitude to archaeological finds which would allow artefacts to move more freely across national boundaries and grant foreign archaeologists freedom of access to historic sites. 163

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At the same time Stillman stood up in defence of the indefensible, as the champion of Meduna he battled on behalf of the small and weak against the foreign oppressor - a role in which he had already shown himself to be most at ease.\(^\text{164}\)

I will consider Stillman again in subsequent chapters. As an actor in this particular story, his part is perhaps the most captivating, most volatile, and most typical of the fundamental conflicts and challenges which were played out in this first international preservation campaign, and thoroughly deserving of more consideration.

\(^{164}\) See Bibliobiographies.
CHAPTER 2

THE ARENA CHAPEL, PADUA, AND RESTORATIONS AT RAVENNA, 1880

In the previous chapter I have hinted at what I consider to be the two fundamental problems associated with the St Mark’s protest. The first was its failure to properly acknowledge and respond constructively to Italian grievances about a weak, exhausted and cumbersome administrative system. The tendency to attack Italians in general for misdeeds which, in reality, had complex and sensitive origins, only partly explained by the prevalence of the excessively functionalist restoration philosophy exemplified by Meduna, was counterproductive. The second concerned its apparent ignorance of the animosity caused by English complicity in the theft of works of art over a long period. Although, as has been mentioned, one of the effects of the protest was to draw to general attention the need for international control over works affecting historic monuments of special importance, the protest itself, and the change of attitudes which it in some ways embodied in England, came at a moment in which Italy, young and insecure as a nation, was still coming to terms with the consequences of mistreatment, exploitation and trespass upon its cultural heritage by powerful foreigners.

In this chapter I propose to explore further both of these issues. To begin with, Section 1 is a study which focuses on the fortunes of the Arena Chapel in Padua, a small oratory dedicated to Santissima Annunziata, or the Holy Spirit, dating from the early fourteenth century, decorated with an important fresco cycle by Giotto di
Bondone. It is an instance in which the interests of foreign antiquaries came into direct confrontation with those of the Italian State. The story begins some decades before the formation of the SPAB, and ends with the intervention of the Society which, though minor, was of significance to the Society’s Italian campaigns as a whole. Section 2 of this chapter will consider another case in which the SPAB became involved, one which illustrates how the Society’s exploits in Italy were severely constrained by its remoteness from the true facts, and by the density of mistrust and misunderstanding against which the Society was compelled to struggle.

SECTION 1: THE ARENA CHAPEL.

The decoration of the so-called Arena Chapel at Padua (Fig. 5) was commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni and its frescoed interior executed by Giotto between 1303 and 1306. Though the case of the Arena Chapel was not one of the principal cases in which the SPAB took an interest during the period which is under investigation in this thesis, I include it here as a case study for numerous reasons.

Firstly, it is, outside of Florence, the case which best illustrates how the concerns of the SPAB in the 1880s grew out of a history of involvement on the part of British collectors and connoisseurs in the deterioration of Italian monuments and works of art going back to the 1840s and 1850s. The complex relations which developed out of these early expressions of concern continued to exercise a negative influence on the debates of the 1880s, and the Arena case is the one in which the effects of this legacy can be most directly ascertained.
Fig. 5 The Arena Chapel, Padua (the author).
Secondly, the criticism we have already encountered among certain sectors of the Italian architectural community in relation to the inefficiencies of state bureaucracy and its public servants, can be better interpreted in the context of this, an instance in which gentle pressure and patience on the part of energetic officers, in the midst of the colossal reorganisation of the administrative machinery of the State which began after Unification, eventually yielded results. Considered as an example of effective and innovative public administration, the case offers some interesting possibilities for reflection on the tone of the English condemnation, from which the Arena Chapel itself was not altogether absolved, and on the fundamental attitudes towards Italian restoration which have been sketched out in the preceding chapter, not least because of the way in which the interests of the State and the unregulated traditions of foreign entrepreneurship in the art business came to blows.

Thirdly, the events of 1880-1, on which this section will focus, uncover a number of important connections which enable a more detailed picture to emerge of the operations in Italy of the SPAB at that time, and which are essential to the case studies which follow.

The Arena Chapel correspondence, and that relating to the Baptistery at Ravenna which I shall also consider in section 2, in the archives of the SPAB, relate to the period July - August 1880, and represent the first attempts, after the St Mark's affair, to tackle the problem of Italian restoration outside Venice. It is therefore logical to deal with the issues these cases raise at this juncture.
The Arundel Society and the Arena Chapel.

As the Chapel was known chiefly for being the site of Giotto’s famous frescoes, its condition was of the utmost interest to those scholars who, participating in a cultural movement of rediscovery which honoured Giotto and his followers as the masters of a ‘Primitive’ school of fresco painting, were drawn to the States of pre-Unification Italy in search of the relics of the fourteenth century, whether for pure contemplation, or in the interests of collectorship. The Arena Chapel became an important attraction for the art tourist from the early decades of the century, and was subjected to scholarly investigation by Wilkie, Callcott and others, as Haskell has amply demonstrated.¹

Lord Lindsay in the mid-1840s found Chapel and frescoes to be in sound condition.² However, when Henry Layard visited Padua in the 1850s, the condition of at least the south wall and its scene of the Last Judgement was giving cause for particular concern. It was in the autumn of 1855, and again in autumn 1856, that Layard made an extensive tour of Italy, ostensibly on behalf of the Arundel Society. Aided by Mrs Higford Burr, whose contribution at Padua included a coloured illustration of the interior of the Arena Chapel, he prepared over seven hundred tracings of frescoes, many of which were exhibited in England for the first time at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. It was perhaps the rapid rate of deterioration of the frescoes at the Arena Chapel which had induced the Arundel Society to conduct extensive works of copying at the Chapel even before Layard went there in person. First an artist, W.O. Williams, had been commissioned to make drawings of the works

¹ Haskell, op. cit. pp.47-50. See also Part I, Chapter 2, notes 52 and 54.
in 1853, and these were subsequently made into copper-plate engravings and offered for sale to the Society’s subscribers. Ruskin wrote the first of what was to be a three-part essay, *Giotto and his works in Padua*, to accompany the publication of the engravings. By 1856 four wood engravings had been added to the ensemble, and preparations were under way to re-issue a colour reproduction in chromolithography (still a relatively new technique) which had been produced by V. Brooks in 1854.  

In 1858 the *Quarterly Review* printed an essay by Layard, ‘Publications of the Arundel Society.’ The essay was, on the one hand, a resumé of the Arundel Society’s activities since its formation in 1849, and on the other, an exposé of the sorry condition of dozens of frescoes throughout Italy which Layard had seen during the preceding years. Layard, whose Italian credentials were second to none, was bitterly critical of the Italian Governments which, he claimed, had abandoned the buildings which contained the frescoes, allowing them to fall into decay. He spoke of “Italian neglect, indifference, and ignorance” having been the cause of far greater destruction than the London smoke.

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3 See also Part I, Chapter 1, note 61.

4 Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894). He grew up in Florence with William Blundell Spence and is to be considered one of the members of the élite cadre of Anglo-Florentines who, unlike the arrivistes of the 1870s and 1880s had firm associations with the city since the 1830s. He was associated with radicals like Cavour, and knew Wordsworth and Lamb. Layard became a lawyer and diplomat, serving in Turkey and the Middle East (he was considered as a replacement for the departing Paget in 1880), and in the early 1840s turned his attention to archaeology, conducting excavations for the British Museum at Nineveh (Nimrud), which led to the publication of numerous accounts such as *Nineveh and its Remains* (2 vols., London, John Murray, 1849). He became an M.P. in 1852, and developed an association with Charles Eastlake, Director of the National Gallery in London, for whom he obtained numerous Italian paintings during his frequent visits to Italy. As a member of the Arundel Society, Layard was instrumental in promoting the cause of Italian frescoes. On Layard and Italy, see: Waterfield, G. *Layard of Nineveh*, London, John Murray, 1963; Anderson, J. ‘Salvare gli affreschi del Rinascimento Italiano: la missione di Henry Layard’ in: Varese, R. [ed.] *Austen Henry Layard, Giovanni Sanzio e l'affresco di Cagli*, Florence, Centro Di, 1995.

Layard's visit seems to have had some effect in arousing local concern in Padua as to the condition of Giotto's Chapel. In November 1857, after the departure of Layard and Mrs Higford Burr, a delegation of Paduan historians petitioned the municipal authorities to set up a commission to take in hand urgent repairs. Their letter remarked that lumps of plaster from the frescoes had been falling off even as the Arundel Society was present. The authorities had already made numerous representations to the owner of the Chapel, but without result. A report was prepared, and on the basis of its recommendations the owner, Countess Foscari Gradenigo, was asked by the Podestà (Mayor) to carry out urgent works. She agreed to do so in a reply dated 6 January 1858, but died soon after, and the property passed into the hands of her executors. For several months nothing was done, and the danger of further losses to the painted surface remained. Then, in July 1858, the Count Federico Gradenigo, the inheritor of that portion of the estate, who was unwilling to pay for the repairs which were being demanded, decided to sell the property instead. The Municipality requested details of the sale price with a view to acquiring the Gradenigo estate, including the Chapel, if possible.

The following spring saw Padua engulfed in war following the secession of Lombardy from the Austrian Empire. When the war ended two years later, the municipal authorities, for financial reasons, were obliged to suspend negotiations for the purchase of the building.

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6 Prosdocimi, Alessandro. 'Il Comune di Padova e la Cappella degli Scrovegni nell'Ottocento' Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova vol. 19 n.1, 1960. pp.16-19. Prosdocimi claims that around 1857 "A passing Englishman (...) had proposed to undertake (repairs) at his own expense," but there is no way of verifying this remark, since Prosdocimi does not give his source.

7 Ibid. p.20.
Prosdocimi's account, which is based on material deposited in the Archivio Storico di Padova, tells us that rumours began to circulate in 1863 that the Arundel Society planned to purchase the frescoes, detach them, and export them to England. I can find not a shred of evidence to confirm this either in Layard's correspondence in the British Museum, or in the reports of the Arundel Society. The Society's funds would have been gravely diminished by such a purchase, if it were affordable at all. Nor did the exportation of works of art form any part of the Society's remit, it having been founded purely with the object of making available, both for scholarship and for posterity, copies of works of art which could not be removed. The Arundel Society's works of reproduction of the Chapel's frescoes had been complete since 1860, and had been a successful enterprise. But the fact that such rumours were rife is an interesting reflection on the fears which the Arundel Society's activities had apparently engendered. The Society's presence in Padua over a long period will have been well remembered at a time when suspicion of foreigners was substantial. Its copyists will have had to negotiate with the owners in order to have access to a building which was, in 1858, still private property and therefore out of bounds to the ordinary citizen for most of the time. The well-founded suspicions of the Italians, at a time of extreme nervousness, would appear to have led to misunderstandings about the real intentions of the English. But we cannot ignore the fact that the war in northern Italy in 1859 had created a unique window of opportunity for less sensitive foreign art dealers and collectors. The activities of Spence, the developing expertise which existed among Italian restorers like Gaetano Bianchi in Tuscany for the removal and transportation of wall paintings, and the opinions publicly expressed by J.C. Robinson on the desirability of the exportation of works of art abroad for
safekeeping, constituted a very real threat to the national heritage about which Italian public opinion was rightly disturbed.⁸

In a letter of 23 April 1863 to the Lieutenant of Venice (the Province of Veneto remained under Austrian rule until 1866), Count Federico Gradenigo denied that he had entered into any formal negotiations with any prospective buyer, and offered the building to the city once more. But the matter remained unresolved in July 1866, when the Austrian regime was at last expelled from the region. At one of the first meetings of the newly-elected Council of the Commune in November 1867, 100,000 Lire was unanimously approved for the purchase of the site, and a commission, the Commissione dei Pubblici Monumenti, headed by the art historian Pietro Selvatico (1803-1880) reported on the urgent need for repairs to prevent the total loss of the frescoes, which were judged likely to be utterly irrecoverable within a few years. But there were further legal complications surrounding the authentic ownership of the Chapel.

The following autumn, 1868, the Chapel fell under the scrutiny of Henry Cole of the South Kensington Museum, who was visiting Italy for the purpose of making new purchases for the Museum. Between July and December 1868 he toured northern Italy, and Henry Layard helped to direct him in his searches. Cole wrote to Layard telling him of his desire to obtain reproductions of bronzes and other works of art from the Basilica of Sant’Antonio and the Church of the Eremitani. He suggested to Layard - a bizarre yet apparently earnest suggestion - that the Museum seek the

⁸ See Part I, Chapter 1, esp. notes 70-72.
approval of the local authorities to purchase the Arena Chapel from the Gradenigo, and transport it wholesale to South Kensington for safe keeping.9

The renewed threat of exportation seems again to have aroused frustrations, especially on the part of the Podestà, who had since 1858 been struggling to find a way of purchasing the Chapel and thus guaranteeing its repair. Feverish activity ensued as the Municipality engaged its lawyers to seek some form of injunction to prevent the monument being sold, or worse, removed to London. Eventually, the danger was averted thanks to the persistence of the judiciary. But not until 16 April 1880 did the Gradenigo-Baglioni family agree to hand over the building to the Fabbriceria degli Eremitani after a protracted wrangle.10 The poet Antonio Tolomei (Fig. 6), who was Assessore (deputy leader) of the Giunta Municipale (Municipal Council) at the time, and deeply involved in the legal proceedings which were underway, addressed the Council of the Commune on the issue on 10 May 1880, by which time the painstaking task of establishing legal rights to the property was drawing to a conclusion. He informed the Council that the monument would become public property, though

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10 Cimegotti, Cesare. ‘Per la Chiesetta di Giotto e l’Arena di Padova’ in: 'Padova' Rassegna Mensile del Comune Anno X fasc. 4-5, part XV, April-May 1937. p.5. The Fabbriceria (wardens) of the Church of the Eremitani had long enjoyed rights of access and custodianship of the Chapel. In its attempt to find a legal mechanism by which to subtract the monument from the Gradenigo property, the Commune had, since 1867, been exercising its claim on the building by virtue of an alliance with the Eremitani. It is a measure of the interest shown in this case by the general public that the Giornale di Padova (n.236, 24 Sept. 1869) had made much of the legal triumph by which the Commune had successfully petitioned for a court order permitting the Chapel to be compulsorily purchased and restored to public ownership, for the sum of 100,000 Lire, under the custodianship of the Fabbriceria of the Eremitani. The Paduan daily press, in common with many provincial newspapers of the time, appears to have shown only slight interest in the progress of works at the site after this initial event. However, such absence of news on the progress of these difficult and costly works in the 1870s and 1880s does not indicate general disinterest. The very fact that works of repair and consolidation had been proceeding for decades prior to this may mean that the events attracted little public attention.
enclosed within the Gradenigo estate. The Commune would then be empowered to oblige Gradenigo to lower the external ground level, thereby alleviating some of the problems of dampness. The Commune should also agree to lease the site to the Fabbriceria degli Eremitani for a given annual sum, and upon taking over the Chapel, agree to take in hand all measures necessary to its material conservation. The Council approved his recommendations and the Chapel duly transferred to the Commune, together with all rights and privileges retained until that moment by the Counts of Gradenigo and Baglioni. For an infant nation, seeking to substitute the authority of the State and its institutions over a complex jumble of historic land and property rights, this was a significant achievement, for which Tolomei should rightly be credited.¹¹

Luckily, on a technical level, the complications regarding acquisition did not prevent the Commune from acting upon the recommendations of Selvatico’s commission of 1867. In that year, Guglielmo Botti, the country’s leading fresco conservator, was

¹¹ Tolomei, Antonio. La Chiesa di Giotto nell'Arena di Padova [Relazione al Consiglio Comunale, 10 May 1880], Padua, Fratelli Salmin, 1880. Also repr. in: Scritti Vari [1895], 2nd ed., Padua, Draghi, 1919, pp.39-65. Antonio Tolomei (1839-1888), a young poet and patriot in the 1860s, had been obliged to flee to Modena on account of his anti-Austrian activities during the war with Austria. He spent a period in Turin before departing on a European tour which took him to Britain and parts of northern Europe. Tolomei’s activities in Britain are not recorded, but he may well have been introduced to fellow Italian patriots resident at London (he apparently stayed at Greenwich, where he composed a sonnet ‘Alla Bambina di Greenwich’ in August 1862). He returned to Padua in 1864, took part in political journalism, was appointed to the secret Veneto Committee and, after the expulsion of Austria, became a member of the Provisional Government, and a Provincial Councillor in 1867. From 1872 to 1876 he sat in parliament as a Member of the left-wing party. He seems to have been known to Ruskin and Layard, perhaps because of his radical political background and the advanced programme of social and municipal reform he oversaw as Assessore (a deputy-leader’s position in the municipal council), and later Mayor, of Padua. There is no record of any surviving correspondence between Tolomei and Ruskin or between Tolomei and Layard (See also Appendix A.6.2). On Tolomei, no biography exists, but he is mentioned in, among others, Luzzati, Luigi. Memorie Autobiografiche (2 vols.), Bologna, Zannichelli, 1931-5. Vol. I, pp.62-70; Cimegotti, C. Antonio Tolomei nel ventesimo anniversario della morte, Padua, Società Cooperativa Tipografica, 1908 [extract of Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova Anno XI nn.4-5, 1908]; and in the introductory notes to Scritti Vari, cit.
summoned to report on ways and means of securing the long term preservation of the frescoed interior by Pietro Selvatico himself.\textsuperscript{12}

Although Prosdocimi’s account makes no reference to Cole’s remarks having been noted in Italy, it does appear that the stimulus for accelerated moves to try and acquire the Chapel was certainly as much a reaction to the continuing threat of exportation as to the immobility of the Gradenigo-Baglioni. Tolomei himself, congratulating his fellow Councillors, asserted that:

\begin{quote}
“at the very time in which precious works of art were being spirited away from Italy ...that people were growing rich from our impoverishment, it will be no small subject of honour, shall we say, that our city should furnish in contrast such a harmonious example of the retention, undamaged, of an important document of the past greatness of our homeland.” \textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

It is true that after the war of independence the challenge for the authorities in seeking to acquire and repair the property was essentially a legal and administrative one. Botti’s contract to carry out urgent repairs was issued only months after the commissioning authority - the new Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti- had been formed; war, confusion and unrest had played a large part in inhibiting effective action. These are the aspects on which Prosdocimi has focused. The threat of exportation had, however, interfered with the wave of patriotic pride which had swept over the region. It had created a climate of mutual mistrust in the case of the Arena Chapel, and certainly rendered the issue far more urgent than if the monument had

\textsuperscript{12} Prosdocimi, \textit{op.cit.} pp.25-41.

\textsuperscript{13} “in quei giorni medesimi in cui si videro per via d’incanti lanciate fuori d’Italia preziose opere d’arte ... che si arrichiscono del nostro impoverire, non sarà poco argomento d’onore, diciamo, che nella nostra città si contrapponesse esempio di tanta concordia per serbare indenne alla patria un insigne documento della sua passata grandezza.” Quoted in: \textit{Ibid.} p.27.
been crumbling away unnoticed. Similar exercises at Venice, and at Ravenna as I will show later in this chapter, had given rise to a situation in which English contempt for Italian neglect was matched by Italian resentment towards the mixed motives of the English, which in this case had led the Italians to fear, rightly or wrongly, the worst.

The Arena Chapel - reprise

So much for the history of the Chapel and of English interest in its preservation up to 1880. We now come to consider the events of July 1880, which began when a member of the SPAB found himself at Padua examining the condition of the Arena Chapel and its frescoes. The member in question, John Willis Clark (1833-1910), visited the Arena Chapel towards the end of July, where he found scaffolding had already been erected. The 'foreman' told him that the Commune had just acquired the building and was planning to restore the façade to its former appearance, that is to excavate and reinstate the steps leading to the main entrance which can be seen in the painting by Giotto on the internal retrofaçade. Clark asked about the interior and was assured that no restoration was contemplated, but only "protection" to prevent further loss. His reaction exemplifies how the mood of mistrust generated in the context of the St Mark's affair had come to dominate English attitudes to Italian restoration: on returning to England, Clark suggested that, in the light of all the recent 'mischief' carried out in Italy it might be prudent for the SPAB to engage the services of one of

14 Archaeologist, the nephew of Professor Robert Willis, Jacksonian Professor at Cambridge and author of Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages (see Part I, Chapter 1, note 27), and of The Architectural History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge (4 vols., Cambridge, 1886), the latter of which J.W. Clark himself posthumously completed.
its members to monitor the works at the Chapel and report on "what is really going on."\textsuperscript{15}

The 'foreman' whom Clark met at the site was probably the painter Antonio Bertolli. Bertolli had been commissioned in April by the Mayor Enrico Morpurgo to erect a scaffold and

\begin{quote}
"examine diligently all the paintings and thereupon indicate the location and nature of eventual damage, not to mention the remedies proposed and expense required. Extremely urgent works shall be distinguished from urgent ones and from those which, rather, can be delayed without adverse effect."
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{16}

He submitted a report to the Municipality on 22 June, in which he attributed damage to the paintings as the result of water penetration at the choir end, via the windows of the campanile, together with poor maintenance, and the removal of an adjacent external wall allowing penetration of water to the rear of the frescoes (not, apparently, to rising dampness from the elevated ground outside). He recommended the cleaning and fixing of painted surfaces, detachment and readhesion of loose areas of plaster after consolidation of the substrate with water repellent cement; small-scale grouting with cement from behind; and filling of cracks and voids in the painted surface using a 'neutral' filler.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} See Appendix A.2.1
\textsuperscript{16} "esaminerà diligentemente tutti i dipinti e poscia indicherà i siti e la qualità dei guasti eventuali, nonché i rimedi proposti e la spesa necessaria. Saranno distinti i lavori urgentissimi dagli urgenti e da quelli che si possono alquanto ritardare senza pregiudizio" Report to the Sindaco, 30 April 1880, quoted in: Prosdocimi, \textit{op.cit.} p.52.
Accordingly, on 8 July 1880, Bertolli was asked to proceed with the most urgent repairs, and for the first month he was to be assisted by another painter, Caratti, and supervised by the Assessore, Antonio Tolomei.

Clark’s letter alludes to the dual nature of the works which were being proposed. Indeed, as Tolomei had explained in his presentation to the Council of the Commune on 10 May, one of the early objectives of the Commune as legal freeholder, was to compel Gradenigo to lower the ground level around the Chapel, which had reached a level at which the windows of the underlying crypt were half-buried by earth,

“from which one can infer that changes had taken place as a result of capillary action in the hygrometric condition of the painted walls.”

This work was carried out by a local engineer, Eugenio Maestri, and the Commune availed itself simultaneously of the chance to conduct archaeological excavations in the area around the Chapel, site of a Roman theatre dating from the time of Augustus. Evidently Maestri had not yet begun his work at the time of Clark’s visit in July, but by September of 1881 he had swept away the baroque stucco decoration to the façade, and the clearing of the base had exposed several of the original steps as painted by Giotto in the Last Judgement scene. Two months earlier Bertolli had successfully completed his contribution to the programme of works inside the building. Tolomei commended Bertolli before the Council on 22 September:

“In the restoration of the vault every fragment of old plaster required extreme patience and an almost monastic labour, first for the detachment, and then for the reattachment, no more or

18 “Donde si può inferire quale mutamento sia avvenuto per l'azione della capillarità nello stato igrometrico delle muraglie dipinte” Tolomei, La Chiesa di Giotto nell’Arena di Padova, cit. p.21.
Fig. 6 Antonio Tolomei (from the frontispiece to *Scritti Vari*).
less than if it had been the most precious painting. We have passed an absolute law requiring
equal devotion to be observed in respect of every part of this treasure of ours.”

In a footnote to one of the printed versions of his address, he reminded the reader that
Bertolli had been highly esteemed by Selvatico, and referred how

“The Mr Charles Fairfax Murray, secretary (sic) of the Society for the Protection of Ancient
Buildings saw him at work in the oratory and was impressed.”

Charles Fairfax Murray was a painter and art connoisseur whose role in the
dissemination of SPAB values in Italy, as the following chapters will demonstrate,
was of seminal importance. As Murray’s involvement in the campaigns in Tuscany
testifies, he was one of the key agents of the Society in Italy - indeed, perhaps the
single most important member from the point of view of monitoring the restoration
situation in Italy. In the absence of firm documentary evidence, we cannot be certain
whether Murray was asked to go immediately to Padua on the strength of Clark’s
recommendation, or whether the Society’s concerns had been communicated to him
subsequently by another channel, or even whether his business in Padua was SPAB
business. The Arena Chapel file at Spital Square contains no copies of letters to
Murray, and nothing addressed to the Society in Murray’s hand.

20 “Nel restauro della voltina, ogni frammento di vecchio intonaco domandò un pazientissimo e quasi
fratesco lavoro, per lo stacco dapprima, quindi per la riapplicazione, nè più nè meno che si fosse
trattato del più prezioso dipinto. Tanto ci siamo fatta una legge assoluta di trattare con egual religione
egni parte di questo nostro tesoro.” Ibid. p. 71.
21 “Il Sig. C. Fairfax Murray, segretario della Società inglese per la conservazione degli antichi
monumenti, lo vide di fresco lavorare nel nostro Oratorio e ne rimase ammirato.” Ibid. note 1. The
footnote does not appear in the version of the address published by Tipografia della Minerva, Padova,
1881.
22 See Bibliobiographies.
The most that we can say, therefore, is that sometime between July 1880 and May 1881, Murray arrived in Padua. Murray almost certainly on this occasion met Tolomei in person. He wrote to the Secretary of the Society, Newman Marks, recommending that Marks try and contact Tolomei, who Murray believed to be sympathetic to the Society’s cause.\textsuperscript{23} Evidently Murray and Marks were aware of the need - already rendered painfully obvious by the lessons of the St Mark’s controversy - to establish a productive working relationship with Italians who might be receptive to the Society’s aspirations, so as to quickly overcome the perception of SPAB and its ideals as an unwelcome foreign incursion. Tolomei was duly sent details of the Society, doubtless in the hope that he might fulfil this role. But he did not join, and there is no record of him having replied to these overtures.

Already we can observe the different way in which the SPAB operated in Italy through the activities of its agents. It is significant that Tolomei saw fit to mention Murray’s visit and his approval of the works being carried out. But it is equally evident that the sensitive nature of the case, resulting from the history of misapprehension described above, posed severe pitfalls for the SPAB.

SECTION 2: THE BAPTISTERY, RAVENNA.

Of a different nature are the circumstances surrounding a second case outside Venice, that of the Baptistery at Ravenna (Fig. 7), which appeared in the English newspapers in the course of the same summer of 1880. Concern had been developing since the mid-1870s among several English observers as to the future of the Baptistery,

\textsuperscript{23} See Appendix A.7.2.
threatened with substantial works of restoration of an unusual sort. Still buoyant after the apparent success of its attempts to halt the restorations of the west front of St Mark’s, the SPAB was spurred into action over the works with the same enthusiasm which J.W.Clarke had shown at Padua.

The works in question were radical ones, occasioned by unique geological conditions which put the Baptistery and many of Ravenna’s most historic structures at grave risk from excessive dampness and structural instability caused by high water levels in the silty marsh in which it stood. An engineer, Filippo Lanciani, had begun, in 1875, to prepare designs for a major tanking exercise in which the Ravenna Baptistery would be isolated from its waterlogged surroundings by digging out a trench around the base and inserting a concrete wall to inhibit moisture penetration. When the scheme proved impracticable for technical reasons (chiefly the poor condition of the foundations and wall structure at ground level), Lanciani devised a new scheme: the monument would be temporarily shored inside and out to make it rigid; the walls of the octagonal structure would then be sawn through horizontally several metres below ground level, and the building raised bodily by a metre or so from its existing position using an elaborate system of mechanical jacks, and then repositioned on a concrete surbase. Lanciani’s scheme was approved by the Provinciale Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti e delle Opere d’Arte early in 1876.

Needless to say, the prospects for this remarkable feat of engineering were keenly debated in England in the autumn and winter of 1876. The Times correspondent made a personal pilgrimage to the site, and described the elaborate lifting apparatus devised
by Lanciani for the purpose. At the end of the year he returned to Ravenna, where he found that much apprehension now surrounded the scheme. The Italian authorities were apparently concerned about possible damage to the interior mosaic decoration. Lanciani, perhaps with a view to calming such fears, had commissioned accurate colour facsimiles of every portion of the work, to be kept as permanent records. Some buildings abutting the Baptistery had been removed to enable the project to proceed, but the pace of the work had slowed almost to a standstill.

In April 1880 Henry Wallis again brought to the attention of the readers of The Times the sorry state of the Baptistery, in particular of its richly-inlaid mosaic interior. It transpired that the removal of the numerous dwellings which had formerly abutted the building had produced adverse consequences, and that water seepage was now occurring at the juncture of the Baptistery and the now-demolished adjacent structures. Wallis, who had seen the consequences at first hand during a visit to Ravenna, criticised Lanciani for indulging in a “whim,” and warned that any threat to such a building was a matter of concern “to all intelligent Christendom.”

The St Mark’s protest was still fresh in the memory. The inexactitude of many of its allegations - caused by a belief that the protesters had failed to properly investigate the matter in person - was felt to have been the cause of considerable mischief. The

25 'The Ravenna Mosaics (from our own correspondent)' The Times, 30 Dec. 1876. p.3.
26 'The Ravenna Baptistery' The Times, 20 April 1880. p.5.
Fig. 7 Interior of the Baptistery, Ravenna, around 1900, shortly after works to raise the internal floor level (Alinari).
Times correspondent (Shakespere Wood, not W.J. Stillman), believing the SPAB to be behind these new complaints at Ravenna, made a suggestion in response:

"Would it not be practicable for the society (SPAB) to send out one or more competent persons to examine the state of the building, to hear and report, without passion and uninfluenced by preconceived ideas, upon the value of the opinions of those, and of course those only, who, whether for or against the raising of the Baptistery, are thoroughly qualified to speak on the subject, and then, if the society is convinced against the plan proposed, to suggest some other calculated to involve less danger and be more effectual? Would this not be better than calling for an “English protest” on a subject upon which it is evident thus far the English people are absolutely uninformed? Such a protest will be taken in the light of “nothing if not critical” and will only have the effect of creating additional bad blood. “It’s all very well,” said an Italian to me: “a protest is called for against the danger of our touching the building in the earnest and anxious desire of saving the mosaics, but if you English could buy it, you would very soon be convinced of the practicability of removing it to South Kensington in perfect safety.” 27

The question of the effect on the mosaics of the raising of the building remained the chief focus of English attention in the following months. Wallis’ letter had contained alarming references to mosaic-work falling away from the wall before his very eyes, and The Architect dedicated itself to offering some practical suggestions for their preservation: making good of the brickwork in the upper parts of the building where dampness was penetrating the interior, and perhaps even increasing the wall thickness as an additional measure; installing a sound, waterproof concrete footing around the base. Again, chiefly with the mosaics in mind, it was recommended that the plan for raising the monument in its entirety, though feasible, should be dropped on the

grounds that the valuable mosaics would not stand the pressure of the padding used in
the shoring of the interior walls, or the stress on the brickwork during lifting. Perhaps
an even greater concern stemmed from the diffidence which had been revealed in the
St Mark's affair towards the tricky hand of the Italian workman:

"If the Baptistery be raised to its former height, the recovered wall will assuredly be seized
upon by the modern Italian decorators, and equally certain is it that their decoration will be
out of harmony with the ancient mosaics. As it is, if the friends of art exercise a little
vigilance, the present comparative unity may be retained, but if the ancient decoration be
made to rest on nine feet of brand new work, this unity and harmony will be for ever
destroyed."

Wallis had perhaps been speaking for himself, not as a member of the SPAB (he did
not renew his membership in 1880). But in June the SPAB was ready to make a
pronouncement, and William Morris wrote personally to The Times to express the
Society's views on the issue, which were, like those of The Architect, strongly
unfavourable to the raising of the building on the grounds that the mosaics, the chief
interest of the building, might be damaged, and also because the new internal
decoration which would surely follow, irrespective of how well the mosaics
themselves survived, would gravely compromise the historical interest of the edifice.
Morris added, in response to Wood's remarks about the Society sending out a
representative to examine the case at close quarters, that the Committee would be very
pleased to do so if any invitation to this end were received.

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28 'The Orthodox Baptistery at Ravenna' Ibid. 29 May 1880. pp.365-6.
29 Letter to the Editor, The Times, 12 June 1880. p.10. The same letter is reproduced in Kelvin op.cit.
At the end of June 1880 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings summarised the state of play at its Annual Meeting. Here too the conviction was expressed that the Italians would not be content merely to raise the edifice but would find reasons to extend their work and “restore the decoration to the three feet of wall, which would be newly uncovered by this process.” The protest was thus no longer merely about the wisdom of carrying out such a risky operation, but about the quality of modern Italian art in general, still seen in Ruskinian terms as inferior in feeling and mechanical in execution, and liable to diminish the unique qualities of the original. The Society went on to say that it was in consequence of the importance of the case that the Society had earlier resolved to petition the Minister of Public Instruction. The Society said it was willing to discuss the matter further if necessary. 30 Obviously still feeling encouraged by the effects of the St Mark’s protest despite its equivocal outcome, the Society felt that it had done all that it was empowered to do, and one senses a mood of expectancy as the official Italian response is awaited.

It seems that no response was forthcoming. S. Russell Forbes was given his first task in his capacity as the Society’s own Roman correspondent (which he had been appointed in December 1879). There is a crucial point here which must not be overlooked, since it goes some way to explaining how the Society’s hopes were, perhaps, inflated. It concerns the role of The Times and its correspondents. Stillman’s defence of Meduna at Venice was still fresh in the mind and the newspaper’s correspondent on this occasion, even though Stillman himself was not involved in the Ravenna case, seems to have been regarded as a kind of semi-official spokesman for

the Italian authorities. The suggestion that the Society send a delegation to Ravenna to meet with competent persons and hear their views on the raising of the Baptistery before reaching a judgement on the issue, was taken at face value - as a kind of semi-official overture. Forbes was asked by the Secretary to “get at the facts of the case and that speedily? Letting us know definitely whether or not a deputation will be received; when & by whom?”31 In fact, there is no evidence whatever, either in press accounts or in archival documents at the Ministry of Public Instruction, that The Times’ invitation - if so it was - was anything other than a personal recommendation to the Society to proceed on less openly hostile terms.

It is another instance of how easily matters could be misinterpreted. Forbes replied to say that his attempts to look into the matter in Rome had been fruitless, but that he would gladly make enquiries in Ravenna. Forbes had not seen Wood’s piece in The Times, but suspected that the Ministry of Public Instruction might have been behind the remarks which issued from Wood’s pen.32 On reaching Ravenna, however, many questions remained unanswered. As it was high summer, Forbes undoubtedly found offices closed and officials out of town. The best he could offer was a sequence of loose hypotheses: the Government, as far as he could establish, had no intention of acting on Lanciani’s proposals; he did not believe they had the money to finance the scheme; he was told, or deduced, that The Times’ man may have got his story from a relative of the commissioned engineer, one Sig. R. Lanciani, in Rome.33

31 ALS [Copy] to S. Russell Forbes, 6 July 1880, ASPAB Ravenna Baptistery.
32 ALS Forbes to Marks, 15 July 1880, ASPAB Ravenna Baptistery.
33 Rodolfo Lanciani (1847-1929), Secretary of the Commissione Archeologica Comunale from 1872. A frequent contributor from 1876 onwards, in his column ‘Notes from Rome,’ to the Athenaeum. He enjoyed the friendship and patronage of numerous members of the expatriate archaeological set, and
condition of the building itself, a channel had been dug around the base allowing Forbes to examine the foundations: the brickwork, he confessed, was poor, but

"if left alone, or (the) foundations simply strengthened, it will, in all probability, last as long as it has already stood," 

said Forbes, who described himself as an 'Archaeological and Historical Lecturer' in his letter-heading. Clearly such opinions, from an unqualified person, made without consultation, on a single summer afternoon, were of very limited value. Forbes did not feel that anything much could be gained from sending a delegation.

Marks wrote to E.H. Luxmoore, a Master at Eton and the Society’s Buckinghamshire correspondent, to try and follow up another lead, but this too came to nothing. 

Forbes had stated in his letter that there were no signs of active decay to be seen in the mosaic decorations of the interior. This may have allayed the immediate fears of the English, and the correspondence on the matter now tails off. But the mosaics were, in fact, crumbling away. Three years later Lanciani’s controversial scheme - which, as Forbes had pointed out, never had the full support of all parties from the outset - had not been activated, and deterioration was worsening.

was made an honorary corresponding member of the RIBA in 1899 (cf. Journal of the RIBA, 3rd series, vol.6, 1899, p.134).

34 See Appendix A.2.2.


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CONCLUSIONS

We must now consider what effects these interventions had in Italy, and the conclusions that can be drawn from them in the light of the St Mark’s episode. In the case of the Arena Chapel, with the departure of Austrian troops and the establishment of Italian government in the region, the Arena Chapel itself quickly became a focus of concern on the part of the new administration, which made strenuous efforts to acquire and preserve it as a national monument. But the documents uncovered by Prodocimi, re-assessed in the light of additional facts, imply that the Arundel Society’s presence in Padua in the 1850s would appear to have played a definite part in motivating the Italian authorities to work speedily towards the safeguarding of the monument. That latent fear of the foreigner’s intentions which had already manifested itself at Venice was undoubtedly a significant factor. Henry Cole’s intentions further emphasise how justified these fears could be at a time when Italy was vulnerable to spoliation.

The involvement of the SPAB at Padua has a rather different complexion to the Venice scenario. Here it is not against the undesirability of carrying out restorations that the Society is objecting. Instead, its anxiety stems from that mistrust of the Italians which had been nourished by the St Mark’s outburst. Their interference shows a distinct lack of sympathy for the Italian predicament and, again, blissful ignorance of the damage wrought by wealthy foreign aesthetes upon the fabric of the new nation’s artistic patrimony and, perhaps more importantly, its psychology.
At Ravenna we find these fundamental misunderstandings still more apparent. The Society's strategy depended largely on the official protest letter, in this case Morris' petition to the Italian Government. When this solicited no response, the campaign was seriously undermined. Forbes and the SPAB show little sign of having made any great effort to inform themselves of Lanciani's plans in advance of Forbes' visit. The mistrust towards the English press, generated by the mostly unsupportive reportage of the St Mark's affair, had already taken over, inhibiting the Society from collaborating with one of the only Englishmen who had actually been to Ravenna and met with Lanciani - namely Shakespere Wood of The Times. Indeed, the tendency to presume that The Times spoke for the Italian authorities proved to be suppositious and counter-productive. Add to this Forbes's inexperience, and the poor timing of his visit, and the result would appear to add up to very little indeed.

Neither in Padua nor in Ravenna, as far as I can ascertain, did the Society's actions receive any exposure in the Italian press. Yet it would be wrong to deduce that the English protest had been without effect. Tolomei thought it appropriate to mention afterwards that when the SPAB had seen Bertolli at work, its representative had been impressed. We know from Murray's own correspondence that his respect for Tolomei was so considerable that he actually proposed that the latter be invited to join the Society. In Ravenna, there were even more significant consequences. One erudite young scholar, a Ravennese, who subsequently graduated from the University of Bologna and took up a post as librarian at the University library there, had noted with interest the English involvement, and collected cuttings from The Times for his own records. He was Corrado Ricci (1858-1934). When at last the Italian Parliament was
urged by the Honourable Deputy Cavalletto to grant a government subsidy for the elevation of the edifice in conformity with Lanciani’s designs, on the pretext that

“this project is to be preferred over all others and there is no reason to waste time over not carrying out works which everyone wishes to see carried out, especially the foreigners who are visiting that rich and monumental city...”

Ricci objected. On the contrary, he argued, it was precisely the foreigners, especially the English, who had shown concern for the monument. Ricci agreed with Wallis, that in the event of the building being raised, new material would have to be inserted, in particular old columns would have to be substituted for new ones as the height of the internal chamber would now be greater. He concluded with a quote from Wallis’ letter published in *The Times* of April 24 1880:

“In any way to endanger such a monument is a matter which concerns the whole of intelligent Christendom. This engineer’s whim is against the wishes of educated Italians, and I am hopeful that an English protest may be added to theirs in a cause for which both must sympathise.”

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37 Ricci, op.cit. p.3. These are Wallis’ words, translated into Italian: “l’esporre a pericolo un tal monumento è cosa che riguarda tutta l’intelligente Cristianità! Il capriccio d’un ingegnere s’oppone ai desideri dei colti Italiani, ed io nutro fiducia che una protesta per parte degli Inglesi possa unirsi alla loro in una causa nella quale gli uni e gli altri devono esser concordi!”
CHAPTER 3

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY, 1881-1885

SECTION 1: FLORENCE.

The St Mark's affair at the beginning of 1881 had become unimaginably complex, demanding painstaking efforts on the part of Zorzi and Wallis in order not to crumble through misunderstanding and mistrust. We have seen, however, how mutual confidence was being established by an elaborate sequence of choreographed exchanges, the coup de grace being the honorary membership of the SPAB Committee granted to Francesco Azzurri.

In 1881, however, the attention of the English anti-scrap lobby switched suddenly to Florence, and to a new set of controversies which pitted the English school against the more typically continental, scientific approach to restoration 'in stile'. The spark which ignited this flame of protest, one which was not to be fully extinguished for several decades, was struck on this occasion not by a maverick conservationist like Zorzi, but within the expatriate community of English artists whose associations with the SPAB in particular were deeply rooted in the culture I have described in Part I of this thesis.

The cultural value of Florence among the Victorians has been remarked upon, and this chapter provides an opportunity to investigate it in greater detail. But before exploring the events which provoked this second large-scale and lengthy campaign, it is as well
to consider the extent to which a respect for ancient monuments had already established itself in Florence after 1861, as well as how such sensitivity expressed itself, whether in the form of some kind of notion of ‘equivalence’ which attached equal value to cultural products of all ages and styles, or whether as a more selective activity associated with the recuperation of the privileged symbols of a specific communal identity, or whether under the influence of some other mood, such as the creation of a pluralistic and multivalent showpiece of modern urbanism.

Principles of conservation

Something like a theory of conservation, based partly on French models, had been devised and published in Florence in the early post-Unification period. The name which is associated with it is that of an architect, Marco Treves (1814-1898). Treves is perhaps best known for his role in designing, jointly with architects Micheli and Falcini, the Jewish synagogue in Florence, constructed between 1872 and 1882. He was also one of the leading architects responsible for the re-planning of Florence in line with Poggi’s Masterplan (see below) from 1865 to 1876. In the newspaper *La Nazione* on 1 October 1861, at the very moment at which Italy was still dizzy with the implications of national union, Treves published an article, ‘Conservazione dei Monumenti,’ in which he set out the criteria to be followed in the revival of Italian cities. His words are worth quoting at some length:

"We ... set ourselves the task of transforming ourselves, now into artists of the thirteenth century, and now of the fourteenth century, and so on and so forth; we wish to ascertain the thoughts, the concepts of the men of those times, to fly with their imagination, to experience

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what their minds experience. It is always a difficult, almost an impossible, thing - unless we conduct extensive studies on monuments of the same period and on the phases of transition form one epoch to the next, comparing them with one another, with the aim of discovering the theories of the workman; unless we live, as it were, at length in the atmosphere of the monuments, so as to immerse ourselves in them. And even when a person succeeds, thanks to these studies, in miraculously obtaining this second sense, he should not always aspire to lead the monuments back according to the principle of unity, even though it has been rightly proclaimed that this is indispensable in the attainment of perfection in any work whatsoever. The alterations and additions made, with the passing of the centuries, to our monuments often reveal to us new artistic methods not lacking in artistic beauty. Sometimes they possess value as records of the past which, however badly applied, demand our respect, if for no other reason than that of their relative antiquity, and they must be conserved, and restored in the style proper to them."

Treves' article borrows some of its fundamental tenets from the rationalist theories of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc (1814-1879) concerning the restoration of buildings in accordance with their stylistic character. We have seen in an earlier chapter how Viollet-Le-Duc was fêted in Italy in the early 1860s, and how Italy's leading restoration theorists Boito and Selvatico were influenced by him. Respect for Viollet-Le-Duc was considerable also among the English architectural establishment,

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2 "Noi...ci diamo per tema di trasformarci ora in trecentisti, ora in quattrocentisti e via dicendo; vogliamo indovinare i pensieri, i concetti degli uomini di quei tempi; vogliamo volare colla loro immaginazione, pensare colla loro mente. Cosa sempre difficile e quasi impossibile; salvoché non si facciano molti studi sui monumenti congenere e sulle epoche di transizione, e non si paragonino fra di loro: affine di scoprire le teorie del loro operato; salvoché non si viva per così dire, lungamente nella loro atmosfera per immedesimarsi in loro. E quando anche mercé questi studi succedesse in alcuno il miracolo di questa seconda intuizione, non sempre devesi aspirare a condurre i monumenti al principio di unità, sebbene proclamato, ed a ragione,indispensabile alla perfezione di un'opera, qualunque. Le superfetazione fatte coll'andare dei secoli ai nostri monumenti ci svelano spesso una nuova maniera artistica non mancante di vero bello; talvolta hanno valore come ricordo, e sebbene malamente applicate, si raccomandano al nostro rispetto non foss'altro che per la loro antichità relativa, e debbono essere conservate, restaurandole a seconda del loro stile." 'Conservazione dei Monumenti' La Nazione, 1 Oct. 1861. pp.1-3.
and we have observed how the French and English approaches to restoration only began to be seen in marked contrast to one another during the 1850s, in debates such as those in the *Ecclesiologist*. A detailed investigation of the Frenchman’s approach need not be incorporated here; it is sufficient only to highlight some of its fundamental attributes. One, to which I have already drawn attention in the chapter on St Mark’s, concerned the substitution of modern materials and constructional technology for structural consolidation in the place of old masonry or timber. Here we are concerned with Viollet’s interest in style and in the method of acquiring knowledge. He had written that the architect must

> “have mastered every detail of (a) structure, just as if he himself had directed the original building; and having acquired this knowledge, he should have at his command means of more than one order for undertaking the work of renewal.”

Treves’ philosophy, centred upon the “attainment of perfection” through “the principle of unity,” belongs to a certain tradition, of which Viollet-Le-Duc was the most gifted exponent. His mantra, consummately expressed in the section on restoration in his *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l’Architecture* had been that every building and every part of a building should be restored in its own style, not only as regards appearance but also in its structure:

> “There have been few buildings, particularly during the Middle Ages, built all at one time; or if so built, that have not undergone some considerable modifications, either by additions, transformations, or partial changes. It is therefore essential, previous to every work of repair, to ascertain exactly the age and character of each part...”

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The architect, he stressed, must be acquainted with every style, period, school and variation in art. When faced with a building exhibiting varying styles and modifications, and in need of repair, he urged the architect to adopt, *prima facie*, the principle of unity - a principle which should only be overridden in instances where the modifications in question have been made to structural or utile advantage.  

Such a theory clearly does not absolutely exclude the preservation of uncharacteristic forms, anachronisms and alterations which are alien in style or substance. But it does exercise a principle of preference. Treves' article is a logical extension of Viollet's thinking; the author suggests that the adaptations and alterations made upon a building may themselves possess not only constructional importance, but also historical value, and that this historical value is itself of great interest to the archaeologist whose aim is to acquaint himself with the changing physical character of architecture through the ages. It is a methodology which allows for a diversity of styles and periods within a single monument, affording potentially equal value to all periods (although, in practice, baroque and seventeenth-century styles were on the whole excluded from this canon, and not yet generally rehabilitated by the architectural profession and by scholars of art). It is a theory which perhaps approximates in certain respects to that of Sir George Gilbert Scott and G.E. Street in England, in which conservation without alteration of the building, in all its parts, is recognised as, in Scott's words, "the great object... - the very key note" of restoration, but with the architect making due allowances for both practical necessity and congruity of style. Like Treves, Scott had implied that the architect must cultivate an intuitive sense of history, immersing

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himself in the story of the past so that, when called upon to remove or efface a piece of ancient work, he can instil

"warmth and feeling even into those chilly elements, and to make them bend to the tone and character of the building he is treating."\(^6\)

Giuseppe Martelli

It has been suggested that the transfer of the Capital of Italy from Turin to Florence in 1865 contributed to a considerable degree in placing conservation on the agenda.\(^7\)

Among the problems and challenges which ensued were the practical ones of re-use and refurbishment of buildings for the purposes of government, and the construction of new services, public buildings and commercial centres. There were also a number of challenges of a cultural nature, in which historic monuments became, after Unification, the focus of a revived sense of history and identity, and the Medieval Republic was celebrated in expressions of civic pride ranging from the new statue of Dante outside the church of Santa Croce (1864) to the creation of the new National Museum at the Bargello or former Palazzo del Potestà.\(^8\)

It was during this period that many of the proposed restorations which were to become the focus of attention with the anti-scrape movement in the 1880s were conceived. At the same time, the first moves towards a system of control and protection for historic buildings were made, with the formation of the first conservation commissions for the

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\(^8\) On the creation of the Museo Nazionale at the Bargello, see: Barocchi, P. & Gaeta Bertelà, G. *Dal Ritratto di Dante alla Mostra del Medioevo, 1840-65*, Florence, SPES, 1985.
administrative regions of Tuscany and Emilia in 1860, the creation of the Ministero per la Pubblica Istruzione in July 1861, and the reforms of 1866 which instituted the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice di Belle Arti in each of the three provinces of Tuscany.9

Two personalities in particular distinguished themselves as restorers and as theoreticians during the period of the decline of the Grand Duchy and the ascendance of Firenze Capitale. They developed a scientific approach to the preservation of historic remains, based on a careful, rigorous and minute analysis of the monument prior to any intervention which might or might not entail the removal or reconstruction of components in the design. One was Giuseppe Martelli (1792-1876).10 Martelli had carried out restorations of the Palazzo Vecchio in the 1840s while employed as junior architect at the Scrittoio delle Reali Fabbriche, the Royal Works Department.11 By the late 1840s, however, he was developing the idea that historic buildings should only be subjected to the minimum of interference on the basis of careful analytical and documentary research. Thus, in a report of 1860 he declared

9 Fantozzi Micali, O. ‘Il dibattito sul restauro architettonico a Firenze intorno al 1860’ in: Roselli, op.cit. pp.11-20; Bencivenni, Dalla Negra & Grifoni, op. cit. Vol. I: La nascita del servizio di tutela dei monumenti in Italia 1860-80. pp. 91-187. The Commissione Conservatrice normally comprised a Chairman (the Prefect), together with six or nine members consisting of sculptors, painters and architects in equal proportion. Half of the members were appointed by Central Government, the other half were elected locally. The Academies of Art were invariably well represented, and wielded a powerful influence on the constitution of these committees.


11 Accounts of Martelli’s various works at Palazzo Vecchio may be found in Ibid. passim. A short account is in Dezzi Bardeschi, M. Il Monumento e il suo Doppio, Florence, Alinea, 1981. pp.7-11.
"It has always been my opinion, however much I have been challenged on it, that ancient monuments must be left as they are, and where they are; if the damage caused by time and by the hand of man demand restoration one should study the best way of doing as little as possible, changing only the most worn and decayed elements but always scrupulously ensuring that one preserves the forms just as they were in the original construction; avoiding artistic anachronisms and false alterations which, however ancient they too might be, could have been made during a subsequent period.12

These notions also, though of earlier date, are closely akin to the ideas set out by Viollet-Le-Duc: respect for ancient fabric and for its preservation in situ unless seriously decayed; a philosophy of replacement in which, following careful study and analysis, the architect ascertains the original style of the building, and re-instates its components not by substituting like for like, at the risk of perpetuating the anachronisms which result from posterior alterations and additions, but in an effort to purge the building of components which are not proper to it wherever there are compelling reasons for doing so. In practice, such an approach most often centred on, and was in part derived from, the need to eradicate Baroque or Rococo adaptations which were seen as inferior in style, performance and quality. Thus, at the Palazzo Vecchio, Martelli reinstated sandstone colonnettes and mouldings to the window openings, which had been replaced fifty years before in marble; he restored the upper portions of the tower, where the crenellations had been modified at some previous

12 "È stata sempre mia opinione, quantunque contrastatami, che gli antichi monumenti debbano essere lasciati come sono, ed ove si trovano; se le lesioni fattevi dal tempo e dalla mano dell'uomo esigono dei restauri si debba studiare il mezzo più idoneo per farvi il meno possibile, cangiano solamente le parti più logore e corrose ma sempre avendo cura di scrupolosamente conservare le primitive forme della loro originaria edificazione; di evitare gli anacronismi artistici, ed i falsi cangiamenti, i quali quantunque antichi ancor'essi, possono essere state alterazioni più o meno posteriori" Archivio dello Stato di Firenze, Capi Rotti, p.41: Report to the Direttore delle Finanze e dei Lavori Pubblici, quoted by Wolfers & Mazzoni, op.cit. p.143.
date, to a more archaeologically ‘correct’ form; and he removed render from the machicolations to expose the painted heraldic designs of the fourteenth century.

Martelli was one of the few architects of his generation who actually studied in France, but the schooling of architects and engineers in Italy had long been modelled on principles akin to those of the French system, on the rationalistic and functionalistic doctrines of eighteenth-century theorists Lodoli and Algarotti, supplemented by modern treatises on geometry and mechanics, such as Rondelet’s Traité théorique et pratique de l’art de bâtir (Paris, 4 vols., 1802-17), and by the scientific approach of the École Polytechnique.¹³

Martelli also became an early proponent of the cast. He proposed the replacement of the statue of St George at Orsanmichele with a cast, and he suggested the same approach concerning the Marzocco, the heraldic lion symbol of Florence which had traditionally been located outside the Palazzo Vecchio. He was critical of the old school of restorers, whose operations at such sites as the Loggia dei Lanzi and the Palazzo del Potestà were, he felt, being carried out too hastily, lacking the proper degree of critical evaluation and research, and potentially injurious to science and to art.

The activities of Martelli cannot be subtracted from the cultural context in which he operated. The entry of the triumphant King Victor Emmanuel into the city in April 1860 had launched Florence into a new kind of Renaissance which found its expression in the history-painting exemplified by Stefano Ussi’s Cacciata del Duca

d’Atene, or Giuseppe Bezzuoli’s *Entrata in Firenze di Carlo VIII*, and in the heroic literature of novelists like the Marchese D’Azeglio, whose patriotic and historical literary themes furnished the Tuscan Risorgimento with some of its cultural energy. The same cultural revival spawned the first great international fair of this junior nation, the Esposizione Internazionale. This was one of the first initiatives of the provisional Government, which had been established after the departure of the Grand Duke and his family in 1859, and it was modelled on the Hyde Park Exhibition of 1851. It opened in August 1860, and Martelli, who had been to the Great Exhibition in London, produced with designs for some exhibition pavilions. Almost contemporaneously, work was under way on the completion of the Church of Santa Croce, which was to be adorned with a new façade by the architect Nicolò Matas. Shortly after, a competition for a new façade for the Cathedral was re-activated, in 1862. None of the 52 entries were considered sufficiently stupendous, and the event was subsequently re-launched, this time as an international competition, with a panel of judges that included Pietro Selvatico, E. E. Viollet-Le-Duc, and Gottfried Semper. This was in 1865, the year in which Florence celebrated the sixth centenary of the birth of Dante, amid much revelry and remembrance.

Poggi 1865-75

The architect Giuseppe Poggi (1811-1901) was another product of these times.14 His influence as a restoration theorist was perhaps a more lasting, and more widespread one, and he certainly left a deeper mark on the city than any architect of his day (Fig.

8). Poggi had been commissioned in November 1864 to prepare a report on the re-planning of Florence, the Piano Regolatore d'Edilizia & Piano Regolatore d'Ampliamento, submitted in February 1865. These Plans provided for urban improvements on a massive scale, designed to render Florence a modern European capital, to improve its transport and sanitation, to create new public spaces and monuments, and to eradicate all that was paltry and shabby - in a word, to re-invent Florence, and to create an environment which would stimulate industry, commerce, and especially tourism.

As a restorer, Poggi is another of those curiously ambivalent types who are so frequently encountered in the history of conservation. His output as a restoring architect was not great - Palazzo Strozzi was altered by him, but on a small scale; his extensions to Palazzo Gondi are barely noticeable, so perfectly do they imitate the style of the building to which they were added. As a theorist, however, he was to become something of a patriarch. This was a status conferred upon him in spite of, or perhaps because of, having presided over a gigantic programme of renewal which saw much of old Florence wiped away. As the journalist Ugo Pesci, recollecting the dizzying pace with which that transformation was effected, was later to say:

"I cannot proceed to record the extent to which, day by day, the material physiognomy of Florence was transformed in the six years between 1865 and 1870; it was a time in which one can say without exaggeration that every twenty-four hours something old vanished and something new appeared, and the works of demolition and reconstruction, carried out by the
Commune, the Government and many private citizens, were as continuous and fervid in the suburbs as they were in the centre of the city."\textsuperscript{15}

Poggi was indirectly responsible for many of the losses, and directly responsible for others (such as the demolition of the Medieval city walls). But in one of those paradoxes which is characteristic of the history of conservation in the nineteenth century, he was also the first to give due consideration to the shortcomings of a system of tutelage which could allow historic monuments to be treated in an unregulated, uncontrolled fashion, and one of the first to set out practical and ethical guidelines to prevent unwarranted violation in the future. The principles he espoused were as follows:

- Each building must be restored in the style which is proper to it, not only in its appearance but also in its structure;
- In the case of the restoration of a building constructed in several periods, it is proper to act with great circumspection before resolving to re-establish in the works a unity of style in accordance with the earlier parts. Whether it is appropriate to destroy modified parts must be determined by the particular circumstances of the case, and by (the nature of) the later constructions;
- If, in the course of restoration of a building it is found that the building has been subject, in later centuries, to modifications to its water disposal system, and other

\textsuperscript{15} "Non posso seguire a registrare quanto avvenne giorno per giorno nella trasformazione della fisionomia materiale di Firenze nei sei anni dal 1865 al 1870, durante i quali, si può dire senza esagerazione, che ogni ventiquattr'ore spariva qualche cosa di vecchio e appariva cosa di nuovo, ed il lavoro di demolizione e ricostruzione era costante ed alacre alla periferia come nel centro della città, per opera del Comune, del Governo, e di molti privati." Pesci, Ugo. Firenze Capitale (1865-70). Dagli appunti di un ex-cronista, Florence, Bemporad, 1904. pp.462-3.
questions relating to its performance, these improvements must be conserved and
given priority over the earlier arrangement;

- To conduct restorations in a proper way one must have an understanding not only
  of the types which relate to each artistic period, but again the style belonging to
each school, in an effort to understand the principles and practices which are
followed there. 16

Poggi's paper was widely acclaimed: among those who complimented the architect on
his treatise were Camillo Boito, the Minister of Public Instruction Ruggero Bonghi,
Francesco Azzurri, and the Milanese Giuseppe Mongeri. 17 The theoretical opinions of
Viollet-Le-Duc, expressed even more faithfully in Poggi's discourse, are now set out
as rigid parameters, a code of practice for architects to follow. In this document Poggi
had established an orthodoxy which would dominate restoration thinking for several
more decades. Thus, we see that in Florence prior to 1880 a range of views were
represented, all of which had inherited something from Viollet-Le-Duc and the
rationalist doctrine which he represented. We see also that extraneous factors were
poised to play a key role, influencing the course of the debate at that crucial interface
between theoretical principle and cultural necessity. Florence had become a new and
expanding metropolis and capital city, engrossed in its own civic self-perpetuation,
where the modernity of scientific rationalism fused with an essentially

16 Sulla Conservazione dei Monumenti architettonici ed interessanti l'archeologia [Extract of the Atti
del II° Congresso degli Ingegneri ed Architetti, Florence 1875], Florence, Tip. della Gazzetta d'Italia,
1876. p.20.
documenti d'arte, Florence, Bemporad, 1909. pp.320 et seq.
Fig. 8 The architect Giuseppe Poggi (from: Giuseppe Poggi. Ricordi della vita e documenti d'arte).
romantic outgrowth of territorial pride and creative potential, and theories of conservation were subsumed by this reality. The reconstruction of Florence under Poggi’s direction had been part of its restoration, the restoration of its monuments part of its reconstruction. The years 1865-75 saw a colossal expansion of public contracts for restoration - Santa Croce, the Bargello Museum, Dante’s house, the city gates (now isolated from their adjacent walls) - these were just the earliest examples of a trend which, in the early 1880s, was poised to wreak untold damage on the authentic character of the Medieval city.

English Observations on Florence, ca. 1860-80.

Throughout the 1860s the architectural press in Britain followed closely the regeneration of Florence, and the restoration of many of its most distinctive monuments. William Burges took an interest in the restoration of the Palazzo del Potestà, by Francesco Mazzei (1806-1869), in preparation for its inauguration as Florence’s answer to the South Kensington Museum, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello. Works to the Bargello were generally well-reviewed, and the conversion and re-opening of the palace attracted considerable attention, as did the exhibits which were displayed in its halls. The same journal was impressed by the restorations of the church of San Miniato, where internal and external works to the thirteenth-century mosaic decorations were under way, a project which engaged fully, in common with many other projects to churches and town houses during the 1860s, in that re-medievalization process which was characteristic of the mood of the times. Such

views, from the leading architectural journal of the day, may be predictable at a time when drastic restorations of Medieval castles, churches and monuments - like Burges' own rebuilding of Castell Coch or Scott's medievalizing exploits at Westminster and Chester, were carrying on with impunity.

The English Press responded with enthusiastic fervour to reports of the re-planning of Florence under Poggi's direction. The 'Improvements' at Florence were followed with interest from 1866, not least because so much English capital and energy was tied up in contracts for road building, housing, sanitary works and the like. In Florence, for example, the Glasgow firm of Laidlaw & Sons were contracted to install new water pipelines; the firm of Cubitt (Sir William and his son Joseph, Civil Engineers of Norfolk, rather than Thomas and Lewis, the London dynasty of building contractors) were involved in housing and civil engineering ventures. The history of English enterprise in Italy provides an opportunity to reflect on the peculiar caprices of Victorian commerce. The architect John Norton, for instance, who was contracted by an English consortium, the Cresswell Stephen Breda Company (which had taken in hand the clearance and redevelopment of land which had formerly been occupied by the circuit of Medieval walls around the city, and the construction of the new boulevards north and west of the city centre) to encircle old Florence with modern palazzi, was also the honorary secretary of the Arundel Society. In 1866 the Florence Land & Public Works Company was founded with the object of investing in new housing for the rising population, and new drainage and sanitation of a suitable

21 The Times responded to the demolition of the city walls with the euphemistic announcement "Florence emancipates itself from the embrace of superannuated fortifications." 'Italy, from our correspondent' The Times, 15 March 1866. p.10.
standard. Its president was Sir James Hudson, an English diplomat and collector of art who was a close friend of Layard. 22

There is no doubt that for the future, this aspect of Anglo-Italian culture was in many ways inauspicious. The protests against the demolition of old Florence in the 1880s and 1890s, culminating in the formation of the Society for the Preservation of Old Florence in 1898, have a certain oddness about them when viewed against this background. These protests, while originating with the Anglo-American community in Florence, targeted foreign commercial exploitation and the gravely destructive aspects of commerce and capitalism which, in part, had been imported from abroad. 'Ouida' and Stillman, the most vociferous protesters against the disembowelling of Florence and Rome in the closing decades of the century, set themselves up as staunch opponents of the evil, especially the foreign, speculator. 23 On a local level the effects are perhaps more difficult to measure, but the descent into Florence of so many foreign investors, many of them purchasing land and property, must have been an affront to local pride. This must have been all the more so in the 1870s, when, with Florentine pride and self-respect already dented by the transfer of the capital to Rome, the economic depression set in.

It is important to appreciate the cultural climate which shaped the Florentine outlook, and to recognise how cataclysmic had been the transformation of Florence during those decades. While all this was going on, the 'restoration debate' in England was in

full flow, with the result that the orthodox view of restoration was being challenged by a vocal minority which espoused radical anti-restoration views. Some of those who had known Florence in the pre-Unification days, returning to the city in the late 1870s, looked less favourably upon the effects of ten years or more of extravagant renovation.

J. Beavington Atkinson, visiting Florence for the second time in 1875 after an interval of nearly thirty years, found the city transformed. Though its streets and squares had survived broadly intact, he regretted the numerous “reckless” restorations which had taken place. Much in evidence were the effects of economic depression. The transfer of the Capital to Rome in 1871 provoked a financial crisis in Florence; the following decade in Italy was one in which industrial expansion ground to a halt and unemployment soared as the post-Unification boom turned to bust; rural depression led to soaring grain prices. Florence was one of the cities most badly affected by this catastrophe, with high rents and land taxes forcing many small businesses into bankruptcy. Amid the turmoil, a cultural crisis was precipitated, nostalgia versus renewal, a city caught up in the uncertainty of transition:

“Italy at this moment is divided between two opinions, distracted by two opposing parties; the one presses onward, even though to destruction; the other would, if it could, move backwards, though in equal danger of final overthrow.”

24 The leading representatives of the school at that time were Samuel Huggins, J.J. Stevenson, W.J. Loftie and William Morris, and their unofficial organ was the Athenaeum. Cf. Huggins ‘The Restoration of our cathedrals and abbey churches’ Athenaeum n.2276, 10 June 1871. p.278; Richardson, W.H. ‘The Ravages of Restoration’ Ibid. n.2607, 13 Oct. 1877. p.472; and the Editor’s remarks on Zorzi’s Osservazioni, cited in Part II, Chapter 1, note12.
25 J.Beavington Atkinson, ‘Florence as it was and as it is’ Art Journal, 1875. pp.133 -98. The author concerned himself primarily with the condition of moveable artworks, and with new museums such as San Marco and the Museo Nazionale.
26 Ibid. p.133.
By the late 1870s the optimism of the previous decade had evaporated. The benefits of urban regeneration were being offset against the losses that were incurred. Poggi's treatise on the conservation of ancient monuments was merely one symptom of a changing public mood which sought some means of bringing under control the explosion of the preceding years. Antiquaries and scholars began to dedicate themselves to the recording and investigation of a patrimony which was rapidly being eroded, among them Pietro Franceschini, who published *Appunti di Fiorentino Argomento* (Florence, Sbongi) in 1875. The author was a leading commentator on restauri and vandalismi, which he subjected respectively to praise and opprobrium in the columns of the *Nuovo Osservatore Fiorentino*. Guido Carocci was another. But if restoration became a public issue, those who were prepared to stand up and defend the baroque additions with which so many monuments had been disfigured were still few and far between.

'New Lamps for Old Ones'

I have made reference to W.J. Stillman, defender of Meduna, part-time correspondent of *The Times* and rival of the SPAB in Italy. Stillman, towards the end of 1879,

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27 On Franceschini (1836-1906) cf. Heikamp, Detlef. 'Appunti di Fiorentino Argomento: i restauri monumentali dell'ottocento nella critica di Pietro Franceschini' *Paragone-Arte* n.257, July 1971, Florence, Sansoni. pp.63-72. Carocci (1851-1917), journalist and antiquary, was the founder and editor of *Arte e Storia*, and went on to be the government inspector of Antiquities and Fine Arts for the Province of Tuscany in the 1890s. He played a leading rôle in efforts to preserve and restore Florentine monuments, including Santa Trinità, the Baptistery and other churches. Carocci made an especially significant contribution to the protest against the demolition of the Mercato Vecchio in the late 1890s. He collected many fragments of sculpture and inscriptions from the old city centre which were then housed at San Marco, and was the author of *Firenze Scomparsa* (Florence, Galletti & Cocci, 1897), a study of the Medieval monuments in the market district, carried out while demolitions were under way. Cf. Di Cagno, Gabriella. *Arte e Storia. Guido Carocci e la tutela del patrimonio artistico in Toscana*, Florence, Ponte alla Grazie, 1991.


29 Part II, Chapter 1, note 162.
became deeply worried about the new Florence, a city he had recently settled in. His trip to Venice was partly motivated by his experience of Florentine restoration, particularly at the Duomo, the cleaning and repair of which filled him with rage. Though only very distantly associated with the SPAB and its circle, Stillman does seem to have been in some measure responsible for bringing Florentine restorations to public notice. He implied, in his very first despatch on Italian restoration, published 12 November 1879, and again in his defence of Meduna which appeared in The Times in December, that things were much worse in Florence than in Venice. The Athenaeum too had delivered early warnings of imminent danger there. Stillman's article 'New Lamps for Old Ones' was his first attempt to set out his perspective on the restoration problem for the benefit of a readership already disposed, in the aftermath of the outcry over St Mark's, to action of some kind, though as Stillman himself wished to make clear, it should be action of a different kind from that which had been taken in the St Mark's case.

'New Lamps for Old Ones' was published in the summer of 1880 in Cornhill Magazine, a popular periodical which since 1871 had been edited by Leslie Stephen. Stephen was a friend of Sidney Colvin and a SPAB Committee member. Stillman, as we have seen, though well known to Morris, Burne-Jones and Rossetti, was somewhat distanced from the circle. A man of irascible humour, he maintained a

30 Again, responding to allegations that the Italian authorities had been negligent at St Mark's, a correspondent, writing from Italy, denounced the works then under way at the Duomo at Florence, and at S.Paolo fuori le Mura, in Rome, which he claimed were far more serious. Athenaeum n.2722, 27 Dec. 1879. p.855.
healthy irreverence towards Ruskin. It would be interesting to explore in greater depth his relations with the English Pre-Raphaelites and their circle.\footnote{Georgiana Burne-Jones has recounted how Burne-Jones was especially timid towards Stillman, whom Rosetti had suggested might be a good model for Merlin in Burne-Jones' painting of Merlin and Nimue, \textit{The Enchantment of Merlin}. Cf: Burne-Jones, G. \textit{op.cit.} Vol. II, pp.39-40. Of all the Pre-Raphaelites, only Rossetti was close to the American.}

We have seen how Stillman's views were conditioned by his experiences of Greek archaeology. While the criticisms of the Greek authorities contained in Stillman's letters to the American periodical \textit{The Nation} had been severe, his condemnation of the Italian restorers in \textit{Cornhill Magazine} went further. His most vitriolic remarks were directed, not at individual architects or at the general public, but against the Italian authorities. He insisted that there were Italians who shared the concern of the foreign community at the damage being wrought in the name of restoration, but pointed out that they had no access to those in influential positions, the "Gradgrinds and Dombeys" of the municipal councils. Journalists, on the whole, he felt were unsympathetic. While the Greeks had undoubtedly destroyed much of the character of Athens in the last 50 years, this destruction was nothing as compared with Florence:

"All that is built in Athens since 1830 might have been built in any new city in the far west of America where building stone was plenty; but all that has been reared in Florence since 1700 could only have been built where taste had reached an extreme of corruption."

The Florentine, he claimed, wanted his ancient monuments to be "as new as his last Paris hat." Worse still, it was useless to remonstrate, because once a programme of works is approved the Italians will not stop it.\footnote{Stillman, 'New Lamps for Old Ones' \textit{op.cit.} p.99.}
For those readers who had been closely involved in the St Mark's campaign, these words must have sounded ominous, playing on the mood of alarm which had been whipped up the previous winter, and perhaps pandering slightly to the latent snobbery of the English reader. Clearly these claims about the destruction of Florence could not go unheeded. As Ruskin's letter to Zorzi in the Osservazioni and Morris' letter to the Daily News had been the first widely published remarks to expose the brutality which had been perpetrated at St. Mark's, so Stillman's article seems to have been - though I can find no direct reference to it in any of the correspondence of the SPAB or in any of the subsequent reports and notices which appeared in connection with Florence - the stimulus for a drift of attention, at the SPAB and in the English press, away from St Mark's and towards Florence. Given the strong cultural relations now established between England and Florence, this was perhaps an inevitable development. The St Mark's protest for the first half of 1880 was in a state of limbo, but support for further incursions by the English protesters, encouragement from Zorzi, and the highly-charged mood among certain sectors of the press and art community, meant that Italian restoration could not be allowed to take its own course. And so began a series of interventions in Florence centred on restorations to two Medieval buildings, the Loggia del Bigallo in Piazza Duomo, and the Church of Santa Trinità in Via Tornabuoni. With the participation of the English anti-scrap movement - itself the self-conscious product of profound social and metaphysical uncertainties - and in the controversy which developed around it, is heralded a new and complex chapter in the history of Anglo-Italian cultural relations.
Loggia del Bigallo

In May 1880 the architect Giuseppe Castellazzi\(^{35}\) submitted a scheme for the restoration of the Loggia of the Bigallo, in Piazza Duomo.\(^{36}\) The building had in fact already been the subject of an intervention of the early 1860s, directed by Mariano Falcini, which had resulted in the re-opening of the angle-bay, previously walled up, and re-instatement of decorative marble cladding to the arch.\(^{37}\) Castellazzi's new proposals involved re-opening the first floor windows facing the square, with re-instatement of central colonnettes and cusped window heads in fourteenth-century style, and the reconstruction of the overhanging eaves cornice in timber and removal of a partial attic story extension. In addition, he planned to consolidate the frescoed frieze along the façade, filling in the lacunae with a neutral render-coat. By the standards of the day, this was a comparatively conservative programme, particularly in regard to the wall-paintings. The scheme was approved by the building's owners, and hailed in the press, but the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice dei Monumenti demanded further information. At this juncture Castellazzi, displaying an excess of confidence, submitted speculative drawings showing how he also planned to re-instate the marble decoration around the ground-floor arcades. A report was commissioned on 3 February 1881 from the architects Poggi and De Fabris, his

\(^{35}\) Giuseppe Castellazzi (1834-1887). Veronese by birth, Castellazzi studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice under Pietro Selvatico. He began his career as a restorer in Venice in the 1860s, and in 1874 he transferred to Florence, and was elected Professor at the Academy in Florence in 1877, and Director in 1878. See: DBI vol. 21. pp.656-60; Th-B. VI. p.145.

\(^{36}\) The Loggia, or Oratorio of the Bigallo was built in the second half of the fourteenth century by the Compagnia Maggiore di Santa Maria, a foundling charity. See: Kiel, H. Il Museo del Bigallo a Firenze, Milan, Electa, 1977. pp.3-6.

\(^{37}\) It was another of those restorations applauded by The Builder, which reproduced an engraving of the building in 1865. cf. The Builder, vol.23, 9 Sept. 1865. pp.644.
proposals were scrutinised, and his scheme was thrown out on the grounds that one ought not to try "to give new form and appearance to that which no longer exists."38

In the light of Stillman's full-blooded condemnation, it is of great interest that the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice should have adopted such a firmly anti-restorationist stance. Here was an instance in which two distinguished architects were making a case against restoration, and their views were being supported by the provincial monuments committee. Like the action taken by the Ministry of Public Instruction over St Mark's in early 1879, it is yet another indication of how fast attitudes had changed, and of how the criticisms of foreigners, while perhaps containing a kernel of truth, could easily be prejudiced by the temptation to indulge in generalisations.

The Nazione, one of the few Italian papers which, according to Stillman, "had a reasonable place for pleas of good taste and reverence,"39 had supported Castellazzi's original scheme, and even as late as February 16 1881 seems to have been ignorant of the modifications he had submitted. It looked forward to the plans being approved by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and hoped an appropriate grant would be forthcoming.40

38 Lorenzi, Donatella 'Giuseppe Castellazzi e il Restauro della Loggia del Bigallo', Quaderni di Storia dell'Architettura e Restauro dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze n. 3 Jan.-July 1990. p.39. De Fabris and Poggi submitted their report to the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice, and its contents survive in the form of an extract of the minutes of the Committee meeting of 26 February, ASCF Bigallo Série II n.1267, fasc.III. Lettere ufficiali e particolari. Lorenzi reproduces this extract, and the text Castellazzi appended to his drawings of the details of the scheme, ASCF Bigallo Série II n.1267, fasc. II. Corrispondenza, 25 gennaio 1881. See: op.cit. pp.47-8.
39 Stillman, 'New Lamps for Old Ones' op.cit. p.98.
A SPAB campaign

It is unclear how the news of Castellazzi's scheme reached Britain. It appears that William Morris drafted a letter addressed to the Prefect of Florence at an early stage, in January 1881. What is known is that the Prefect did not receive Morris' representation until March, when the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice had already heard Poggi and De Fabris' report and decided against Castellazzi. It is difficult to account for the delay. Morris' letter contested the assumption that the Bigallo was in need of major repairs, and condemned the proposals to tamper with its features "as though the lapse of time had passed it by untouched," re-iterating the Society's pronouncement on the impossibility of restoration. 41

Newman Marks wrote out Morris' text in full, and at least two copies of it must have gone out. One of these was sent on to John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, in Florence. Stanhope was a painter who had been closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement. It appears that from this moment on, he became the Society's key representative in Florence, the city where he had lived since the early 1870s. Stanhope had evidently signalled his willingness to play a part in the campaign by publishing Morris' letter to the Prefect in the Italian press, no doubt in the belief that this would have a greater impact in terms of mobilising public opinion. The text appeared in Gazzetta d'Italia a few days after he received a copy of it. The other copy made its

41 This letter is reproduced in Kelvin, *op.cit.* Vol. II, pp.4-6. The date of the letter, conserved in the Berger Collection, is in doubt. The date of 26 January is deduced by Kelvin from a reference in Morris' desk diary for that day, in which he records having written a letter for SPAB. However, the text which was subsequently sent to Spencer Stanhope in Italy, which is virtually identical, carried the date of 14 March, and the signature of Newman Marks, Secretary of the SPAB. It seems unlikely that the Society would have tolerated a delay of nearly two months before issuing its denunciation, and I would put the date of Morris' letter somewhere in February or early March. The earliest references to the Bigallo in the press are of April 1881, cf: 'Art Notes from Florence' *Academy* n.468, 23 April 1881. p.306.
Fig. 9 The Loggia del Bigallo in an illustration from *The Builder* (vol. 23, 1865. p.644.)

Fig. 10 The Loggia as it appeared, after restoration, on the front of *Illustrazione Italiana.*
way from the offices of the SPAB to the Prefect's office in Florence at about the same
time.42

The response of the Prefect, compared with that of the press which printed the letter
immediately, seems rather phlegmatic. The Prefect replied the day after publication of
the letter in the Gazzetta, informing the Society that he intended to refer the matter to
the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice. He mentioned also that the matter was
high on the agenda of the Prince Tommaso Corsini (the Mayor of Florence) and the
architect Castellazzi, but declined to notify the objectors that Poggi and De Fabris had
already concluded in the negative on Castellazzi's revised scheme a month earlier.43
And so, with the predictable pleasantries, ended the first exchange of official
correspondence between the SPAB and the Florentine authorities. A few days later,
scaffolding was erected around the building and Castellazzi's repairs put into effect
(Figs. 9 & 10).

Meanwhile, Stanhope observed the effects of the publication of the letter in the
Gazzetta d'Italia. Evidently the expectation had been that if the matter was brought to
public notice, it might stimulate some kind of discussion among the Florentines
themselves, and that from this sufficient public pressure might be brought to bear on
the Municipality to take action to prevent the programme going ahead, or at least to

42 A copy of the original text was not conserved in the archive of the Society. There is, however, an
undated draft, in William Morris' hand (ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo). The original can be consulted in
the Archivio dello Stato at Florence. It is reproduced in full in Lorenzi, op. cit. p. 48. For the Italian
version, see: Gazzetta d'Italia, 23 March 1881. Stanhope, in his acknowledgement of receipt of the
letter, says that he is "endeavouring to get it translated & published in the Columns of the Gazzetta
d'Italia: but doubt being successful." ALS Stanhope to Marks [?], 23 March 1881, ASPAB Loggia del
Bigallo.
43 See Appendix A.3.2.
ensure it might be modified in the details. But this was not the case. The letter seemed to pass unnoticed. Henry Wallis, perhaps reflecting on the comparative success which the St Mark’s campaign had achieved at a corresponding juncture, suggested later to Boyce that a letter to *The Times* might have had more impact.

If the publication of a SPAB protest letter in the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, and the apathy with which it was greeted, served only to illustrate the indifference of the Florentines, there were more encouraging signs: Francesco Azzurri, the newest member of the Committee, did not stand idly by, but wrote in June to reassure his English colleagues that the building was no longer under serious threat. Azzurri took the trouble to acquaint himself with the deliberations taken by the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice in the light of Poggi and De Fabris' report of February. He quoted word for word the recommendations of the two architects. In his capacity as President of the Academy of St Luke, he added that the Academy intended to support these recommendations in full, and to agree with the decision to appoint two independent inspectors to oversee the work. Finally, he added that the foreign press had been making inaccurate accusations about the works which it was his duty to contest.

Eventually, the English protest - on which the papers had so far been silent - was alluded to in *La Nazione*, though hardly in the form Stanhope had expected. Stubbornly persisting in its support for Castellazzi’s restorations, the paper cited numerous expressions of support which the scheme had received from abroad, and

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44 ALS Stanhope to Marks [?], 10 April 1881, ASPAB *Loggia del Bigallo*. See Appendix A.3.4.

45 ALS G.P. Boyce to Marks, 16 April 1881, ASPAB *Loggia del Bigallo*.

46 ALS Azzurri to Marks, 5 June 1881, ASPAB *Loggia del Bigallo*. See Appendix A.3.5.
ridiculed the "English society" which it accused of leaving its monuments to perish in complete abandonment:

"But then, it seems fair to ask why the very earnest English society does not think of restoring to the Acropolis of Athens those pieces of art of incalculable value which one of their great compatriots has transported to London?" 47

William Scott

At about the same time, a young architect named William Scott made his own study of the case. Scott, though not a SPAB member had earlier distinguished himself in connection with the St Mark's affair. He had seen Meduna's work, and informed readers of The Architect that the west front was in perfectly sound condition. 48 His own examination of the façade at St Mark's led him to the same conclusions as J.J. Stevenson. In early summer 1880 he sent a long epistle on the subject of St Mark's to the Architectural Association, in which he put forward a strong case for preservation through simple repair, availing himself of much Ruskinian rhetoric, condemning the "hopeless, hapless copyism" of the restorers, arguing that monuments belong "not to any one nation or set of individuals, but to all who can intelligently appreciate them." 49 But on the Bigallo works Scott did not share the views of Morris and the SPAB. Scott visited the architect Castellazzi who impressed him with both his knowledge and his humility. There were, Scott said, no structural reasons for

47 "Ma allora ci sia lento il dire perchè la tanto premurosa Società Inglese non pensa a ridonare all'Acropoli d'Atene quanto un loro grande personaggio connazionale ha trasportato a Londra in cose d'arte d'incalcolabile valore?" La Nazione, 16 June 1881. p.3.
48 "St. Mark's, Venice. Notes on the Proposed Rebuilding and Restoration' The Architect vol.25, 7 Feb. 1880. pp.94-5. He knew Street and may have been the source of some of the older architect's information on the façade.
dismantling the building; Castellazzi had adopted an eminently acceptable course of action and had no plans to reconstruct any parts in their original style.

"The professor (Castellazzi) was of course acquainted with the protest against the carrying out of the proposed works which the Society for the Preservation (sic) of Ancient Buildings had issued, and we cannot but agree with his suggestion that, had the Council of the Society taken the trouble to ascertain what was intended to be done, there might have been at least some slight modification of the manifesto. At any rate, Signor Castellazzi would have been delighted to afford every information in his power."

Scott admitted that Castellazzi had intended to open up the remaining ground floor arcades - a plan with which he disagreed - but said that there was no need for alarm: a "full and fair discussion of the matter" had yet to take place, and he was confident that competent individuals would be addressing that issue when the moment arrived. 50

Whilst anecdotal evidence on the case is scarce in comparison to the St Mark's affair, there can be little doubt, on the basis of the conduct of the English protesters during 1880, that the recruitment of support for the SPAB and its ideology was a key objective in the Bigallo protest. The Venice experience had begun to illustrate how much more effective the message could be broadcast if support for its underlying principles, and sympathy for the fate of historic monuments at the hands of the bureaucrats and civil servants, could be cultivated in artistic circles and among journalists. In this respect, the Bigallo protest must have been perceived as a damp squib. No firm or reliable liaisons were forged with antiquaries, architects or

newspaper editors, and there was therefore no prospect of successful infiltration. No Count Zorzi figure came forward.

As Scott demonstrated, the SPAB showed again the defectiveness of its judgement: it had acted upon unauthenticated claims, without proper information; it had deployed tactics which, though of some merit in England, had been shown to be ineffective in a continental context. In seeking to attain two related, but ultimately different objectives - the rescue of a specific 'casualty,' and the diffusion of a radical new ideology of protection - the Society misconstrued the first, and naively misjudged the second, exposing itself to further ridicule in the process.

In Britain, the effects of the SPAB intervention so far remained somewhat equivocal. As the upper tiers of scaffolding came down and Castellazzi’s works were revealed for inspection, one journalist wrote:

"The lowest story of the building has apparently not been touched, neither has the marble been cleaned or scraped ... There is evidently a decided tendency to be more careful in the treatment of works of art, showing that the protests in English journals have not been without effect; their chief value has been in encouraging the opponents of restoration among the Italians to make a stand against the whole system."  

51 The Architect, March 11, p.149. This piece of intelligence apparently came from Stanhope, who later wrote to say that his impression of the effect of the English campaign was mistaken: "When I wrote some time back to Wallis I expressed an opinion that the careful way in which the Bigallo had been treated might be partly owing to an 'awakened conscience' through the efforts of the society; but from what Miss Duffy tells me it appears to result chiefly from the fact that it is the work of the new commission who have started on new lines, & to whom the Society 'for the protection Etc.' is hateful to the last degree. Others assume ... that its (the Society's) professed object is to prevent ancient buildings being meddled with in any way whatever till they crumble to bits." ALS Stanhope to Webb [?], 24 April 1882, ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, I.
But the fact remained that the chief effect of the SPAB’s interventions in Italy had been to provide ammunition for those, like the journalists of La Nazione, who found the English interference unwelcome, unjustified, and conceited. To some English observers, the mood was one of embarrassment; the Society had demonstrated its inability to make reasonable, well-informed judgements about restoration in Italy.\textsuperscript{52} In this sense, the campaign perhaps had a greater impact at home, and if the failures abroad represented a setback, at least the generation of further controversy at home certainly helped the Society in its long and difficult struggle to earn respect of the public and the architectural profession.

**Other Florentine Restorations**

Perhaps it was the hesitancy which was brought on by these uncertainties which prevented the campaign against another of Castellazzi’s schemes, the restoration of the church of Santa Trinità in Florence, from gathering any real momentum, and this in spite of the fact that Castellazzi’s plans here were very much more radical. He proposed to remove a late sixteenth-century façade by Bernardo Buontalenti (Fig. 11), re-instating it in its original Romanesque style; to redecorate the interior chapels, removing seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century alterations; and to lower the floor (raised in the 1820s as protection against the flooding of the Arno) and re-instate the crypt. He was supported by the influential journalist and antiquary Guido Carocci, by the owners of the family chapels (notably the Marchese Bartolini-Salimbeni), and in general by the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice, but

\textsuperscript{52} One wrote of the Society: “now and again, in some moment of haste, I feel that I could not be sorry to see that diligent body transported to another clime, and to see a new base chosen for its operations.” ‘Restoration in Italy’ *The Academy* n.510, 11 Feb. 1882. p.108.
opposed by Marcucci, Royal Inspector of Excavations, Antiquities and Monuments for the region of Tuscany.\textsuperscript{53}

Although it was questionable as to whether the efforts of the SPAB in Italy were directly contributing to the safeguard of the cases in which it took an interest, the feeling that the English protests were doing some good increased, at least in some sections of the English Press, and the combative spirit held out against any subliminal doubts. The English protests became as urgent as ever. Perhaps the objective of recruiting support among Italians was more overtly stated, but hostility towards the Italian journalists, who had been so vociferous in their attacks on the English, persisted. The \textit{Athenaeum} reported on 24 September 1881 that the Basilica of Santa Trinità was to be restored:

"This is certainly a case in which a protest from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings might strengthen the hand of those friends of art in Italy who deplore this relentless destruction of their national monuments. One of the most regrettable features of the movement is the support it receives from the Italian local journals. They think only of the Government grant to be expended in their respective cities, and seem to be entirely regardless of the irreparable injury done to the most valuable objects of interest they can boast of. This policy is as suicidal as it is barbarous; for few will care to incur the dangers and discomforts of travelling in Italy when its monuments and frescoes are "restored" out of existence, or, what is even worse, degraded to base and lifeless travesties of their former grace and beauty."\textsuperscript{54}


\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Athenaeum} n.2813, 24 Sept. 1881. p.409.
The scenario was by now a familiar one: the impudence of officialdom; a hostile press and public; greed, ignorance and self-aggrandizement among the Italian professional class. English resolve, far from diminished, seems to have been strengthened since the scaffolding had been erected around the Bigallo in preparation for Castellazzi's works. At Florence, the Baptistery was now rumoured to be scheduled for restoration. 'An Englishman' wrote phlegmatically to the Editor of The Times, from Florence, protesting against the threatened restorations:

"The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings may probably send a strong protest to the proper authorities and will receive an urbane reply...and probably, also, as usual, the press will express their astonishment at the insolence of the English...and the result will be still that the restorations will be carried out as planned as long as money can be found for the purpose."

The author lapsed into the customary despair at the thought of how useless remonstrance would be, but urged further discussion of the subject in the press, as the only prospect of making progress. 55

Elsewhere in central Italy a catalogue of errors was being uncovered. According to a correspondent of the Athenaeum:

"Everywhere the same sort of thing is going on. At Siena the Palazzo Spannocchi has been practically rebuilt. At Cortona, I believe, a part of the Etruscan wall has been used by the sindaco to build a new octroi barrier. These functionaries are becoming as mischievous as English deans..."56

Fig. 11 Church of Santa Trinità: Buontalenti’s façade, ca. 1598 (Dr Hilde Lotz, reproduced courtesy of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence).
The response in the Italian papers - where any interest was shown at all - remained negative. Only in the *Fanfulla della Domenica*, a paper which would increasingly take the lead in challenging the Italian authorities to account for their misdeeds in the treatment of ancient buildings, was there any sign of concern at these rumours. The announcement in the *Athenaeum*, in which Santa Trinità and Santa Croce at Florence were singled out as examples as well as Siena and Cortona, was translated and printed in the *Fanfulla della Domenica* about a fortnight later: why have the Florentine, Sienese or Cortonese papers not refuted these allegations, the paper asked?

The reply contains the same observations we have identified in the previous chapter. Luigi Mussini, a painter and member of the Sienese Commissione Conservatrice fulminated at the “burbanza” (arrogance) of foreigners, but admitted that there were failures in the Italian bureaucracy too. The problem was that the *Genio Civile*, or Board of Works, was invariably put in charge of the restoration works, and it lacked technical ability. It was, Mussini claimed, a loop-hole in the law which should be amended. But it was above all the recollection of English defilement which prevented Mussini from accepting with good grace the English reprimand: let’s resist, he said, before describing the precise circumstances in which the walled-in arcades in the courtyard of Palazzo Spannocchi had been re-opened to create a serviceable space,

“the temptation to allude to artistic barbarisms of purely English doing, by using the noted parable of the mountain and the molehill.”

57 “la tentazione di alludere a barbarismi artistici di purissima fattura inglese, mediante la nota parabola della festuca e del trave.” *Fanfulla della Domenica* n.44, 24 Oct. 1881. A correspondent had replied from Cortona to deny the allegations a few days previously. The Florentine papers - predictably, in the light of the Bigallo affair - ignored the whole business.
In summarising these events, we may first consider the tactics used by the English protesters. Morris and his colleagues approached the matter in the same way as they had approached the St Mark's and Ravenna Baptistery affairs: the campaign began with a formal letter of protest to the Prefect; efforts were then made to bring the matter to wider public attention by printing the protest in the Italian press; the English press meanwhile provided a free forum for indulging in more general complaints against the Italians. The aim was to mobilise Italian opinion on the matter, generate controversy and, hopefully, support. But the effectiveness of the mission was called into question. Scott, for instance, objected that, once more, the Society had failed to make itself properly conversant with the proposals; English voices remained equivocal in their support for the campaign; Italians continued to find the English interference irksome - not to say hypocritical. The St Mark's protest had at least highlighted fears which had already been expressed by some Italians. But Castellazzi's plans were more popular among the Florentines than Meduna's had been with the Venetians. The re-opening of first floor windows, the re-instatement of a traditional eaves cornice, and the preservation of decayed wall paintings were not seen in the same light as Meduna's wholesale rebuilding of the west façade. A measure of the mood of the times is reflected in the almost universal approval which greeted Castellazzi's proposal to remove Buontalenti's Mannerist façade at Santa Trinità. In London the demolition of Christopher Wren's City Churches, though belonging to an unpopular period in art, had been eagerly contested. But in Florence distaste for the baroque and for eighteenth-century buildings was strong, and the assault on the
“barocchi” - with the recuperation of the glorious Medieval as its principal goal - was in full swing.

As the year 1881 drew to a close, William Scott offered a frank assessment of the SPAB’s two-year campaign to introduce the principle of repair-not-restoration into Italy: it had been a failure. This could be partly explained by the same kind of suspicion the Society had encountered in Britain - that its principles amounted to a morbid fatalism, that it preferred a dead monument to a resurrected one. But there was also an element of cultural jealousy - the Society being, in his words, “too English.” The Society must also hold itself responsible for part of the failure of the programme; in Scott’s view, the single-issue “protest” strategy was at fault. The Society’s correspondents were not, in the main, professional men, and the Committee had singularly failed to enter into rational discussion with the architects themselves. The Bigallo question, he said, was a case in point. Evidently, while talking with Castellazzi during the previous spring, Scott had not only ascertained that the latter was aware of the protests directed against him by the English Society, but had gone so far as to express his regret that the Society’s representatives had not contacted him with a view to entering into discussion over his methods.58

The Society was now obliged to lend serious consideration to ways in which it might conduct its Italian affairs to greater advantage. The fate of Florentine monuments was now too urgent a crisis to be allowed to wane, and some observers kept up the pressure on the Society to take action. For instance, a writer in The Academy,

reporting the latest meeting of the SPAB at which the question of promulgating the Society's principles in Italy was under discussion, used the opportunity to press home the extent of the restoration problem: the frescoes of the Cappella Bardi at Santa Croce; the Church of Santa Maria Novella; and even renovation of the Bargello (which was described as having been done-up "in the most glaring Cockney-gothic style") all demonstrated the colossal scale of the crisis. Members of the Society, wrote the contributor, had resolved to tackle the problem by trying to communicate with friends in the hope of getting more articles published in the Italian press. 59

SECTION 2: SAN GIMIGNANO

Before considering what course the English campaigns against Florentine restoration took in the years 1882 and 1883, I wish to consider another case in which the Society had become involved in the spring of 1881. This was the proposal to restore the Palazzo del Comune at San Gimignano, in the Province of Siena. The principal difference between this and other cases under examination, is that the SPAB was invited to intervene, in May 1881, by a city councillor of San Gimignano who was in a position to directly influence the outcome of the decisions that were being contemplated during the spring of 1881. The protest did not develop as a result of press reports, rumours or idle speculation, but was the consequence of sincere and genuine fear on the part of a small minority of persons about the prospect of the authentic remnants of the Medieval palace being swallowed up by a mania for medievalisation which, in San Gimignano, had a particularly poignant resonance. The fact that assistance was sought from the Society is significant in terms of assessing the

Society’s influence in the light of the campaigns which it had conducted at Venice, and was in the course of prosecuting at Florence; one may consider this intervention (in reality not exactly a campaign, as will be seen) as a modest sign that the efforts of the SPAB in Italy, contrary to Scott’s belief, were slowly beginning to yield the desired results.

San Gimignano in 1860 was still an isolated backwater barely touched by mass tourism. There was no railway, and to reach the town by road demanded an arduous road journey from Siena. Foreign visitors were few and far between. But the city did possess works of art of particular value, among them the fresco cycle by Benozzo Gozzoli of the life of St Augustine, of ca. 1465, in the convent of Sant’Agostino. In the late 1850s the Arundel Society had commissioned an Italian artist, one Mariannecci, to proceed to San Gimignano to make copies of these. Henry Layard, who had been to San Gimignano a few years before, subsequently warned that these works were “fast perishing,” in a letter to the Arundel Society’s Treasurer. 60

In tandem with the rediscovery of specimens of Florentine painting at San Gimignano, an interest in the Medieval architecture of the city was also developing. The Scots architect, Robert Anderson (1834-1921) visited the city while on a fourteen-month tour of France and Italy. He produced scale drawings of the façades and architectural details of several minor buildings in the Tuscan vernacular style. This was the period in which interest in the earlier variants of the Italian domestic style was on the

increase, and Anderson's selections at San Gimignano, Siena, Montepulciano, Orvieto and elsewhere reflect the serious interest then being shown by countless provincial architects in the buildings of Tuscany and Umbria. 61 In France, similar explorations were under way, the most thorough studies (both containing examples from San Gimignano) being the extensive surveys conducted by Aymer Verdier and Georges Rohault de Fleury, in which varieties of civic and domestic palazzi of central Italy were drawn and catalogued using a rigorously analytical procedure. 62

Of equal importance was the emerging popular appetite for the strange and exotic: San Gimignano's remote and isolated position had helped it to maintain a genuinely enigmatic Medieval air. Travellers from France, England and Italy itself were seduced by this newly discovered anachronism. The city offered both a relief from the increasingly stressful pace of life in the cities, and surroundings eminently suited to fantasy and reflection on the dignity and austerity of Medieval life. Gustave Gruyer, a French historian, whose purpose at San Gimignano was to examine and describe the important works of art there by Benozzo, Ghirlandaio, Benedetto da Maiano and other Florentine Masters of the Quattrocento, observed that the town "has lost nothing of its ancient physiognomy," 63 in 1877 the Illustrazione Italiana, a popular illustrated weekly magazine, carried reproductions of a set of picturesque engravings made by Francis Wey a few years previously, showing the city in its gloomy solemnity. 64 By the early

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64 Illustrazione Italiana Anno IV vol.1. pp.45-6 et seq.
1880s San Gimignano merited inclusion in the most up-to-date tourists' guide books, such as Joseph Bevir's volume on Siena. In 1893, Queen Victoria paid a visit during one of her tours in Italy.

Visitors to the city, bringing with them diverse anticipations of a mysterious Medieval citadel where time had stood still, helped to create the conditions in which the image transformed itself into the reality, and provided an early rationalisation for the 'medievalisation' of nineteenth-century San Gimignano, a process which would gather pace in the 1880s and 1890s.

This process had already been set on foot; the correspondence between a recognition of the glorious deeds of the past and the proper custodianship of the civic inheritance in a much-transformed present, had been intimated by San Gimignano's most influential nineteenth-century historian, Luigi Pecori. Writing in 1853, before Unification but at the dawn of the mass 'rediscovery' of San Gimignano, he had observed the monuments of San Gimignano subject to alterations and modernisations which appeared ignorant of the genuine historic character of the city, and which, consequently, were harmful to the future which was already inevitable:

"In so much as fame is dear to us, let us conserve intact the sacred deposit, let us endeavour to increase it further, restoring as far as possible to its former state that which lies hidden beneath baroque obstructions or beneath characterless vandalism, to the very great detriment of art; let us abhor most of all the blind mania of certain modern restorations which may erase the characteristic traces of those glorious ages which our monuments recall... Thus, while

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maintaining civic splendour we will bring benefits to this district itself, where each day a further growth in the number of its illustrious visitors will be recorded..." 66

Traces of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were seen by Pecori as detracting from the authentic Medieval character which tourists found so charming. He felt that an uninformed attitude to the city’s historic remains needed to be reversed in order to capitalise on the town’s appeal as a tourist destination. Pecori’s involvement demonstrates how the redefinition of ‘San Gimignano delle Belle Torri’ (of the fine towers) during the post-Unification phase of Tuscan history, a process shared to a lesser extent with other hill towns such as Cortona and Volterra, was closely linked to a revival of historical studies. San Gimignano the forgotten backwater became, in precisely these years, conscious of the events of its own great role in Tuscan history, in particular of its associations with Dante, Machiavelli, and other heroes of Italy’s glorious past. Fragments of local history such as these required all the diligence and imagination of Pecori and others in order to be excavated and reclaimed for the people’s benefit, and it is of great interest to note the unequivocal terms in which Pecori associates this cultural duty with the promise of economic gain. A consciousness of the past was certainly slower to develop in San Gimignano than in the larger cities. Perhaps it did not reach full maturity until the end of the century: in 1893 the Società Storica della Valdelsa was formed, at Castelfiorentino, and through

66 “Deh! Per quanto ci è cara la fama, conserviamo intatto il sacro deposito; ingegniamoci d’accrescerlo ancora, restituendo per quanto è possibile all’antico stato ciò che s’asconde sotto ingombri barocchi, o sotto vandalico scialbo, con detrimento grandissimo all’arte; aborriamo soprattutto dalla cieca mania di certi moderni restauri, che toglier possono la impronta caratteristica di quelle gloriose età che i nostri monumenti ricordano... Così mentre salveremo il decoro, promoveremo eziandio l’utile di questa Terra medesima, le quale vedrà ogni di più crescere il numero degli illustri visitatori...” Pecori, Luigi. *Storia della Terra di San Gimignano* [1853], new ed., Rome, Multigrafica Editrice, 1975. p.587.
its periodical *Miscellanea della Valdelsa*, records and memories of the ancient cites of Certaldo, Castelfiorentino, Colle di Valdelsa and San Gimignano were subjected to scholarly investigation; 1894 saw the first publication of the *Acts of the Commissione Senese di Storia Patria*, a regional historical society based at Siena but incorporating all the hill towns of the Province.

In the foundation of both these bodies a key role was played by Orazio Bacci (1864-1917), a local scholar whose contribution to the study of San Gimignano and its past was profound. Other illustrious citizens who played a significant part included Filippo Benucci, who, as Mayor of San Gimignano from 1874, presided over a sustained programme of public works which had as its twin objectives the recuperation of the Medieval city, concealed beneath countless layers of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century whitewash, and the promotion and facilitation of a tourist industry. It has been shown how the Commune, from 1875 onwards, engaged in extensive works of road repair and widening to cope with increased demand; meanwhile a distinguished local nobleman Ugo Nomi Venerosi Pesciolini, set about restoring his own family residence, opposite the Palazzo del Comune, into an exemplary specimen of a Trecento town palace.

Among the few published testimonies of the effects of this mood of civic self-awareness, are the letters of Pietro Vigo, a Livornese historian, to Guido Carocci’s *Arte e Storia*, the Florentine journal established in 1882. They demonstrate how the

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gentrification of a city now more fully exposed to modern metropolitan fashions was in conflict with this trend towards the recuperation of the Medieval. Evidently, the uneducated modernisations to which Pecori had alluded in the 1850s were still a source of controversy in the 1880s: in 1887 Vigo objected in strong terms to such gaudy embellishments as unsuitable white pointing, Persian blinds, coloured fake- rustication and square windows. On a return visit to San Gimignano some six years later, however, he was impressed by the re-instatement of Medieval arched window openings, the removal of external render, and the demolition of a ‘tettoia’ (pitched roof covering with overhanging eaves) which had formerly crowned - to its detriment - a Medieval tower in the Via di Castello.

Following the recognition now being given to the works of the Florentine School in San Gimignano, restorations of a more public, academic character had also begun. Cesani has described at length one such programme - the proposal (submitted by one of Castellazzi’s collaborators at the Bigallo, Gaetano Bianchi) to restore the wall paintings in the Chapel of Santa Fina in the Duomo, which Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle had opposed in 1876. The largest of these public initiatives was already drawing to a close in 1874: the restoration of the Ospedale di Santa Fina. Begun in 1865, it had originally been a small-scale programme of refurbishment of disused rooms for the purpose of providing accommodation for hospital personnel. The enterprise quickly grew into a much larger operation involving alterations to ground

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68 Arte e Storia Anno VI n.27, 1 Oct. 1887. pp.201-3.
69 Arte e Storia Anno XI n.16, 20 July 1892. p.124. The general authority of the neo-Medieval lobby during the 1890s has been well illustrated. See: Masetti, Maria Luisa ‘Fedelmente Infedele’ in: Il Sogno del Medioevo, Quaderni Medievali n.21, Bari, Dedalo June 1986. pp.161-86.
70 Cesani, op.cit. pp.48-71.
floor and entrance hall, and a proposed new façade. After an interval of some years, this phase was commenced in 1872. The architect was a Sienese, Giuseppe Partini (1842-1895). Known as the Architect to the Fabric of the Cathedral of Siena, to which he was appointed in 1866, and for which he carried out a major programme of restoration to the façade, Partini had already carried out important restorations at the Monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore (begun 1869) and the Castello Belcaro (1865-70). He was responsible for the restoration and re-planning of Palazzo Salimbeni, at Siena (1871-9), alluded to at the end of the previous section. At Santa Fina, Partini managed to persuade the Commune to approve yet another campaign of works in September 1876, this time to bring into use a number of service buildings associated with the Hospital. This final phase continued until around September 1881.

Partini’s activity illustrates precisely the situation which Camillo Boito and others had complained about, and which certainly lies at the bottom of the apparent ineffectuality of the Provincial commissions who were supposed to oversee works to historic buildings and protect the national patrimony from unsympathetic or destructive interventions. Since its formation in 1866, Partini had sat on the nine-member Commissione Conservatrice di Belle Arti per la Provincia di Siena. This body, of which analogous commissions existed in each of the Tuscan provinces, was the authority to which prospective architects and building owners had to submit applications for alterations to historic structures. In 1881 the committee was replaced by a new one, the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti ed Oggetti d’Arte per

72 Ibid. pp. 59-63 & 146.
la Provincia di Siena. Partini continued to hold a seat on this commission until his
death in 1895. Thus, like many architects, he was able to exercise a degree of control
from within what amounted to a very defective system in order to pursue his own
commercial interests. However his interests as an architect were bound to be, or at
least be seen to be, in conflict with the interests of sensitive custodianship. If proof
were needed of this conflict of interest, Partini had already demonstrated it in San
Gimignano in 1875 when, together with another architect, Luigi Banchi (also a
member of the Commissione Conservatrice per la Provincia di Siena), he proposed a
series of radical interventions at the church of the Cellori (or Cellole) which included
removal of the pulpit and high altar, and substantial alterations to the sacristy,
culminating in the restoration in stile of several later, Gothic windows to their original
Romanesque form. 73

It was in analogous circumstances to these that Partini became involved in a scheme
to carry out alterations to the Palazzo Comunale, the Medieval town hall (Figs. 12 &
13). Partini and other members of the Commissione Conservatrice di Belle Arti
visited the site on 31 January 1875 and made a number of proposals concerning the
restoration of the building to its original form. At the meeting of the Council of the
Commune on 5 May a sum of money was allocated for the project. On 9 February
1877 Partini was invited to submit a report on how the works recommended by his
commission in 1875 might be phased. Apparently he had already prepared a detailed
project by the beginning of 1878 which entailed the re-insertion of three windows to

73 Ibid. pp.364. Notice of the Commission's approval of the scheme appeared in Arte e Storia Anno V
the top story, facing the Piazza del Duomo. The contract was awarded on 25 September 1879 and the work for this phase substantially complete by January 1880.74

At this juncture, the next phase of works was approved in the Council. They were to consist of the removal of the eaves and pitched roof from the main building, and reinstatement of the crenellated parapet. The Council met on 30 April 1881 to decide on its final approval of this phase of the project, drawings of which Partini had submitted twenty-four hours previously for consultation in the Meeting Chamber of the Palazzo itself.

One of the Councillors, Niccolo Cannicci, raised a motion of protest. As the Minutes of the meeting report:

"Councillor Cannicci, painter, spoke first, and declared himself contrary to the present day obsession with restoring old monuments all too frequently, and tried to illustrate to the Council the advantages of conserving the monumental and artistic remains that exist in the district, and of agreeing only to those restorations required to prevent deterioration... convinced as he was, regarding the proposed restoration, that the result would be comparable to the case of restored paintings, when, in general, when the job is done, the artwork is no longer the work the author who created it, but of the restorer..."75

75 "Prese per primo la parola il Consigliere Cannicci, pittore, e si dichiarò contrario alla mania rinvalsa oggi di procedere al restauro con troppa frequenza dei vecchi monumenti, cercando di far rilevare al Consiglio la convenienza di conservare ciò che esiste di monumentale ed artistico di questa terra accettando i restauri in circostanza da impedire il deperimento ...convinto circa i progettati ristauri che debba accadere come nel restauro di un quadro che al termine del lavoro in generale l'opera d'arte non è più dell'autore che la produsse, ma del restauratore..." ASCSG Protocollo delle deliberazioni del Consiglio Comunale, 30 April 1881, Filza 1.18. pp. 77-9.
Fig. 12 The Palazzo del Comune at San Gimignano prior to Partini's intervention of 1881 (*Lombardi Foto*).

Fig. 13 The Palazzo after Partini's restoration (*Edizioni Brogi*).
Cannicci (1846-1906) was himself a painter.\textsuperscript{76} He claimed to have the support of numerous artists in raising these objections, but his protests went largely unheeded. A fellow Councillor, Giovanni Ridolfi, said that the works under consideration contributed

\begin{quote}
“to the magnificence of the commune, restoring to its former splendour one of the monuments for which our district is well known in Italy and beyond.” \textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

He made the further point that Partini’s proposals had received the full backing of the Commissione Conservatrice di Belle Arti di Siena, and that Cannicci’s objections could not therefore be sustained. It was moved to

\begin{quote}
“Proceed with the works of restoration of the Palazzo Comunale according to the project of Cav. Prof. Architect Signor Giuseppe Partini, declaring that, with the funds which will be seen to be left over from the accounts for 1880 and the sums set aside for the purpose in the budget of the current Administration, the crenellated parapet of this Palazzo Comunale shall be reconstructed and the second floor restored, with a vote of ten in favour and two against.” \textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

Charles Fairfax Murray met Cannicci in San Gimignano on Cannicci’s request, and wrote to inform the SPAB of the encounter.\textsuperscript{79} The letter was undated, but it seems

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{77} “...al decoro del Comune ripristinando al suo antico splendore uno dei monumenti per cui la nostra terra gode della fama in Italia e fuori.” \textit{Protocollo}, cit.

\textsuperscript{78} “...proseguire i lavori di restauro del Palazzo Comunale secondo il progetto del Cav. Prof. Architetto Sig. Giuseppe Partini decretando che, coi residui che si verificheranno nel rendiconto dell’anno 1880 e colle somme stanziate a tale uopo nel Bilancio della corrente Amministrazione venga ricostruita la sommità merlata e restaurato il secondo piano di questo Palazzo Comunale con partiti di voti palesi dieci favorevoli due negativi.” \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{79} ALS Murray to Marks, [April 1881] \textit{ASPAB Destructive Works in S.Gimignano}. See Appendix A.5.1.
\end{footnotesize}
from the contents that the two men met shortly before the 30 April meeting; Cannicci evidently remained optimistic, as some members had not made a final decision; Murray's own view was that the scheme might not materialise as the Commune, which he said was hoping to apply for additional funds from the government, was likely to be unable to finance the project. Cannicci asked Murray to intervene in an attempt to convince the waverers, possibly in anticipation of the issue presenting itself imminently on the forthcoming Council agenda. It was agreed that the best approach would be for the Society in London to address a "temperate" letter to the Council, to be translated and read publicly before the Council.

The Society's subsequent attempts to prevent Partini's works going ahead may already have come too late to be of any use. After the receipt of Murray's letter the preparation of the letter which he had requested to be sent to the Council of the Commune was undertaken.\(^8\) On 1 June Morris, who was to sign the letter, wrote to Newman Marks, the Society's Secretary, to say that he would not write the letter until he had seen a photograph of the building.\(^8\) Marks seems to have been much concerned about this delay when he wrote to Morris on June 8 (Morris having presumably seen the photograph at this point) asking Morris to approve the draft which had been prepared, preferably without the need for alterations, so that Marks could forward the letter to the Council without further delay.\(^\)\(^8\)

\(^8\) Marks replied to Murray to say that the letter to the Council was being prepared. ALS Marks to Murray, 27 May 1881. ASPAB Destructive Works in S. Gemignano. The letter itself, however, does not appear to survive.
\(^8\) Kelvin, op. cit. Vol II, p.48. The photographs must have been provided by Murray.
\(^8\) ALS [copy] Marks to Morris, 8 June 1881. ASPAB Destructive Works in S. Gemignano. Marks had been ill and unable to do much business. See: ALS [copy] Marks to Murray, 27 May 1881. Ibid.
By this time, perhaps over two months after the meeting of Cannicci and Murray at San Gimignano, any representation on the part of the Society was bound to be futile. The Council of the Commune met for its final session before the summer recess on 30 June. No mention was made to any letter of protest from the SPAB, nor indeed to any matters connected with Partini and the Palazzo Comunale. One is forced to conclude that the letter was sent off, only to be, quite simply, discarded. Partini may already have started work: the Giunta Municipale had agreed a few days previously to allocate a sum of three hundred lire to Partini “in respect of the amount owed to him for the project for the restoration of the Palazzo Comunale.”

SECTION 3: FLORENCE: THE PONTE VECCHIO AND MERCATO VECCHIO

The Mercato Vecchio

We left the Society’s Florentine campaigns in a state of limbo at the beginning of 1882. The Bigallo works went ahead smoothly that year. Those at Santa Trinità were held up by bureaucratic formalities, and eventually commenced, amid much wrangling, in spring 1884. The year ending June 1883, meanwhile, saw a resurgence of foreign activity on the part of the SPAB in London, which took the unusual step of listing the cases in which it had become involved. They included the monastery of Ara Coeli and church of Santa Francesca Romana, in Rome, and the Cathedral at Lucca, as well as monuments in Egypt, the Cathedral at Seville, Santa Sofia at Constantinople, and Heidelberg Castle. But the focus of attention remained Florence, where, acting on

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83 ASCSG Protocollo delle deliberazioni della Giunta Comunale, 22 June 1881. Filza 2.16.
information from a new member, Onorato Carlandi, the Society confirmed a rumour that had been circulating for some time in the press, namely that the destruction of the Mercato Vecchio, the old market in Florence centred upon the Piazza del Mercato, the Column of Abundance and Vasari's Loggia del Pesce, had "apparently been decided upon." Plans for the redevelopment of parts of the city centre had been devised in 1866, at the same time as larger-scale operations were put into effect under the provisions of the Piano Regolatore of Giuseppe Poggi, to demolish the old city walls and create the circuit of viali, together with new residential quarters. These plans, presented by the Uffizio d'Arte of the Municipio provided for the demolition of the Mercato Vecchio and widening of some of the surrounding streets with a view to creating a large piazza on the site. In 1869 a consortium of businessmen put forward a still more radical ideas for redevelopment, including a vast monumental piazza and substantial clearance of the Medieval street pattern. While substantial works were executed, including the widening of Ponte alla Carraia, which entailed the loss of an ensemble of Medieval bridge-chapels, the project for the re-planning of the old quarter ground to a halt with the onset of economic depression. It was taken up again in the 1880s, but by this time a slightly different set of motives prevailed: the economic crisis had seriously affected the quality of life of those inhabitants whose evacuation to the

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85 See Bibliobiographies.
87 Cf. Spadolini, Giovanni. Firenze tra Ottocento e Novecento: da Porta Pia all'età giotelliana, Florence, Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, 1983. pp.82-7. There was an exodus of middle class functionaries and professionals from the centre of Florence as the inner city began to decline. The inertia of central government in Rome prolonged the agony. The construction industry was badly affected as investors pulled out or cut their losses. The Florence Land Company itself crashed in 1872. On these events, and the social effects of the depression of 1871-80 on the city centre, cf: Fei, op.cit. pp.107-14.
suburbs had not yet been provided for (largely on account of collapse in the construction industry and tight fiscal policy on the part of the Commune). Prices rose sharply, as did unemployment in the 1870s. The area in question was densely populated by the poorer classes, and had now acquired a negative image, the haunt of petty villains, destitutes and political agitators. 88

Giuseppe Mengoni’s new market hall to the north-west of the Cathedral was scheduled to open at the end of 1881, with the result that the role of the old market in the economic and social life of the city was likely to decline. It was however rich in historic remains, with fortified houses, palazzi and churches dating back to the early history of the Commune, and squares and streets richly evocative of the turbulent and venerable history of the city. But these streets and monuments were in a neglected condition; dark, damp and overcrowded, without proper sanitation, they were certainly an unfit environment for habitation. What remained of their historic character was barely detectable beneath innumerable alterations and adaptations, while those monuments lying in the immediate vicinity of the market itself, such as Vasari’s Loggia del Pesce, and the Colonna della Dovizia, had become impregnated with the grime and ordure of centuries of use.

A small committee was formed in February 1881 to discuss possible ways of upgrading the area. 89 It was proposed at that stage to transfer the working classes to

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88 Numerous disturbances attributed to Anarchist groups too place in the 1870s, including a bomb in Via Nazionale in which several people were killed, and the programme of redevelopment which was being contemplated suddenly acquired a public order dimension. cf. Fei, Silvano. Firenze 1881-1898: la grande operazione urbanistica, Rome, Officina Editori, 1977. p.18.
the periphery and create a business district. In June 1882 another commission was formed, its members appointed by the Giunta Municipale, with the purpose of devising precise criteria for the *risanamento*, or upgrading, of the Centro. The scheme that was proposed was a rather unimaginative one: a rectilinear grid of new streets occupying the area enclosed by Via Tornabuoni to the east, Via Porta Rossa to the south, Via Calzaioli to the west, and Via Cerretani to the north - an area of perhaps 60,000 square metres immediately south-west of the Cathedral and Baptistery. Architects of the scheme were Ing. Del Sarto, of the Uffizio d’Arte, and Emilio de Fabris, Professor of Architecture at the Accademia di Belle Arti, and author of the Cathedral façade which was then under construction. The President of the Commission, of which De Fabris himself was also a member, was the Assessore, the Marchesse Filippo Torrigiani. The Piano Regolatore, or Development Plan, which they outlined was completed on 10 July 1882. On July 18 the plan was substantially approved by the Consiglio Comunale (Fig. 14). Meanwhile, the Municipal authorities had already begun - even before the Plan was complete - to demolish some of the buildings enclosing the old Piazza del Mercato Vecchio (Fig. 15).

**Italian reaction**

The Piano Regolatore proposed to erase innumerable narrow streets and unsanitary cul-de-sacs, allowing light and clean air to circulate, but also condoned an act of extraordinary vandalism - the demolition of 8 deconsecrated churches, 12 noble palaces, the former residences of 6 of the Medieval *Arti* or guilds, numerous fortified

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houses and the remains of several Medieval towers. At first, however, while plans were still at the embryonic stage, reactions in Florence were broadly positive: the ‘Ghetto’ had to go, and to substitute it with a modern, spacious, healthy civic square was a laudable notion. This was the stance adopted by Carocci, Director of the new artistic weekly periodical, *Arte e Storia*, published in Florence for the first time on June 3 that year.

But the initial euphoria quickly turned to scepticism. The Commune, under pressure from its accountants on the one side, and from the powerful Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti, a professional association of architects on the other, which argued for more demolition and a more rigorous grid-iron layout, had the Plan modified. The Commune was criticised for cutting corners, and trying to reconstruct the centre of Florence ‘on the cheap’. The modified version, approved on 9 September, was printed and put on sale in the city’s bookshops.

The reaction of Carocci mingled contempt for the sordid old ‘Ghetto’ with frustration at the city authorities for failing to seize the opportunity to create a genuinely monumental urban space. It combined a scholar’s enthusiasm for relics of the Medieval past with the zeal of the *sventratore* (literally, ‘disemboweller’). Support for the principle of demolition came also from a more senior authority: Giuseppe

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94 *Arte e Storia* Anno I n.16, 17 Sept. 1882. p.128.
95 It has been suggested that in Carocci’s case, this was not altogether a contradiction, but rather expresses a transitional phase in his development as a critic of restoration, and he subsequently took a stronger line. For a further discussion of this, cf: Di Cagno, *op.cit.* pp.29-44.
Poggi himself. He too was no devotee of the filthy Ghetto, and did not regard the buildings under threat as of special significance, although they possessed interesting and important features such as inscriptions and ornamentation. But when, in September 1884, Poggi abstained from the vote of the Deputazione Provinciale, of which he was a member, it was not because he had reservations about what would be lost if the demolitions went ahead, but because of his opposition to certain technical details which he felt would diminish both the utility and aesthetic quality of the finished scheme.

The least equivocal defence of the antiquities which were to disappear under the Plan came from Emilio Marcucci, Royal Inspector of Excavations and Monuments. In a letter published in Arte e Storia he too admitted the need to do something about the Ghetto, but he contested the view that the answer could only be demolition of so many important constructions. Moreover, he raised another point - namely that the Commune was acting as though the Commissione Conservatrice did not exist, since its members had hardly even been consulted.

It was, in fact, the pressure of public criticism, not only by the likes of Carocci and Marcucci but also in the daily press that forced the Commune to open the matter up,

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98 Sul Riordinamento del Centro di Firenze. Lettera indirizzata all’Onorevole Sindaco del Comune da R. Ispettore degli Scavi d’Antichità e dei Monumenti, Florence, Tip. della Pia Casa di Patronati, 1883 (Originally published in Arte e Storia Anno II, n.22). Marcucci stands out as one of the very few Florentines who adopted a genuinely conservative approach to historic monuments - views which regularly brought he and Carocci, who was in some ways an enthusiastic restorationist, to blows.
Fig. 14 Final scheme for the re-planning of the Centro (from: Commissione Archeologica Comunale. *Studi Storici sul Centro di Firenze*, Florence, Tip. G. Civelli, 1889).
Fig. 15 The Column of Abundance and Vasari's Loggia del Pesce, following clearance of the market square in early 1882 (Alinari).
permit greater discussion and invite alternative plans for the redevelopment which was almost universally accepted as a necessity.99

English Reaction.

I now come to consider the English reaction to all this. I have shown that the Bigallo affair had been inconclusive; English newspapers had capitalised on Florentine hostility and the SPAB was caught between the warning note signalled by William Scott, and greater clamour from the press to intensify its efforts, as it was believed had been done successfully in Venice. The San Gimignano protest of spring 1881 also came to nothing as Newman Marks' ability to respond to the demands of secretaryship declined (he was afterwards replaced by Thomas Wise). Since the end of 1881, as I have said, the SPAB had been looking at ways of strengthening its hand in Florence. It is in the context of the planned redevelopment of the Mercato Vecchio that we can observe how this was done.

Since the end of 1881 there had been considerable activity in connection with the Society's efforts to make contact with its friends in Florence with a view to determining upon a course of action. In April 1882 Philip Webb sought Stanhope's advice about how best to promulgate the Society's views in Italy. Stanhope replied that the publication of the Manifesto in the press would be more "dignified" and less "evanescent" than a remonstrance, adding that "although restoration is very rampant it is certainly more cautiously carried out than in past times."100 Another person of

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99 Between November 1882 and May 1883 six new projects, all of them published and available for public scrutiny, were considered, cf. Fei, Nascita e Sviluppo, cit. p.66 et seq.
100 ALS Stanhope to Webb, 12 April 1882, ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, 1.
whom advice was sought - by Stanhope on this occasion - was Bella Duffy.\textsuperscript{101} Duffy's view was that the Society should try to get someone like Brunetti, who was Secretary of the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice, to add his name to the Manifesto:

"In regard to the Manifesto (if Sign Brunetti will not take it up & that is doubtful) I can think of no way of dealing with it beyond publishing it in some of the newspapers."

She also advised that the Manifesto be extremely carefully worded, illustrating past and present examples of restoration, preferably with a preface by someone known in Italy, such as J.H. Middleton, the archaeologist.\textsuperscript{102} Webb's note to Duffy on the subject is typical Webb, and they are perhaps the most thoughtful and humble words on the subject of Italian restoration written by any Englishman at the time:

"Personally I feel that but little serviceable resistance can be made to individual works already entered upon by the Florentines or other Italians, but I believe that no nation is quite free from a reasonable susceptibility to the notice taken of it by honourable and hearty foreigners; and as the English Society was organised and is most strongly supported by educated artists, practical architects and able historical students, who have no other thought in the matter than the welfare of the infinitely valuable ancient monuments of the world, and is absolutely free from any mercenary bias, I am in the hope that this spirit will in time be appreciated by the Italians and other nations, and that all suspicion of motives will die out as the increase of communion between nations does away with the fear which is bred of ignorance. I should be glad if in your intercourse with cultivated Italians you could impress upon them that we in England would be sincerely glad if they would familiarise themselves with our monuments,

\textsuperscript{101} Bella Duffy, novelist and critic, author of \textit{Winifred Power (a novel)} (1883) and \textit{The Tuscan Republics. Florence, Siena, Pisa, Lucca and Genoa}, London, Fisher Unwin, 1892. She occasionally contributed to the \textit{Art Journal} on artistic subjects. She formed part of a circle of female Anglo-Florentines of the \textit{fin-de siècle}, which included Marie Stillman, 'Ouida,' 'Vernon Lee' (pseud. of Violet Paget), Helen Zimmern, and Ethel Smyth. An evaluation of their collective contribution to Anglo-Italian culture is now overdue.

\textsuperscript{102} ALS Duffy to Stanhope, Easter Monday 1882, ULCI \textit{Correspondence of Philip Webb}, I.
and help us with forcible supression (sic) from their side when the intelligent English are hard-pressed while striving to save what remains unfalsified in their own land (...)

He added:

(...) I feel satisfied that there is a minority in Italy who only want banding together to make a society of its own which would do more to save its invaluable antiquities than any outside element would though it might be helped by foreign sympathy."

A meeting was called in July for the express purpose of discussing Italian restoration and Stanhope was invited to attend. The idea was put forward that the SPAB might prepare translations of its Manifesto and send these, with a covering letter, to selected newspapers and individuals. This was a strategy which was obviously derived from the approach adopted, under Zorzi’s direction, by the St Mark’s Committee in the second half of 1880. The Society was perhaps hoping for similar results.

Ponte Vecchio

The threatened demolition of the Ghetto presented complex issues and counter arguments in which the interests of public health, amenity, and capital investment were intertwined in what has become, in the twentieth century, a familiar pris de position. The campaign of resistance which was quickly established among a sector of Florentine public opinion, and supported by the English community, raised legitimate objections on a series of levels to which, however, an equal and opposite rationale

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103 ALS Webb to Duffy, 12 May 1882. ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, 1.
104 ALS Wise to Stanhope, 5 July 1882, ASPAB Italian Restoration. His presence was obviously much desired, since the meeting was adjourned until 14 August in the hope that he would attend. ALS Wise to Stanhope, 17 July 1882, ASPAB Italian Restoration.
105 For Thomas Wise’s letter, and the list of persons and newspapers, see Appendix.A.6.
could be cited in defence. By the end of 1882 the predominant mood was that, whichever scheme was adopted, some of the records of old Florence would be expunged.\footnote{In December Carocci, in \textit{Arte e Storia}, began a series of studies of the most important of these monuments. So often, as we have seen, equivocal on matters of restoration, he prefaced his series with an emotional defence of these records of the past, and a dramatic premonition of the destruction that would be wrought under the blade of the “piccone demolitore” (breaker’s pickaxe). \textit{Arte e Storia Anno I} n. 27, 10 Dec. 1882. pp.209-10 et seq.} Amid the confusion and uncertainty about how the matter would eventually be resolved, members of the SPAB spotted something in the papers announcing the proposed destruction of the Ghetto, and Wise wrote to Stanhope to ask for more information.\footnote{ALS Thomas Wise to Spencer Stanhope, 14 Dec.1882, ASPAB Ponte Vecchio.} But the SPAB, wisely, did not pursue the issue at this stage.\footnote{Although the Annual Report for 1882-3 lists both the Ponte Vecchio and the Mercato Vecchio as cases in which the Society had taken an interest that year (SPAB, \textit{6th Annual Report}, 1883. p.29) I can find nothing to suggest that in this case the matter was taken any further. There is, however, a much more substantial dossier of material relating to the 1898-9 campaign, begun by the Society for the Protection of Old Florence and supported by SPAB, against the demolition of the \textit{Centro Storico}.}

A much more straightforward challenge which emerged in these years concerned the future of the Ponte Vecchio. The bridge, by virtue of its location, just beyond the area eventually proposed for demolition in the Masterplan of 2 April 1885, astride a river which was notoriously liable to flooding and for which new embankments had already been constructed, was implicated from the very beginning in the extension of the plan for the reconstruction of the city centre. The things that interest us here are: the manner in which these implications were confronted by the English community, and by English visitors and the press; and the intelligence gathering machine by which news of the scandal was diffused within that grouping.
The Ponte Vecchio being so much a symbol of Florence to the foreigner no less in the nineteenth century than in our own day, presents itself as a particularly volatile catalyst in the sequence of reactions we have observed in previous pages of this text. Inside Florence the problem of the demolition of the Centro and the serviceability of the Ponte Vecchio are inter-dependant. Outside Florence however, from Bellosguardo to Blackheath, the ‘Ponte Vecchio Question’ takes on a greater significance. In the context of this thesis, our approach to the monument presents a set of issues slightly different from other case studies under our consideration. It is not precisely concerned with an approved programme of restoration/demolition, already begun or shortly to be commenced, against which the anti-restoration lobby was able to mobilise, through the press and through the method of raising formal petitions, acting on information furnished by a cadre of agents in the field, a coherent campaign of criticism. No concrete plans for demolition of the buildings on the bridge, or partial reconstruction in their former style were ever approved during the period in question, although there was, from the early 1880s, a body of opinion which lobbied for such a course of action. Neither are we concerned here with a finite period of time, such as was the case with the Bigallo and San Gimignano. In the case of the Ponte Vecchio, we are concerned with a recurrent anxiety about the possibility of intervention. I wish to focus only on the year 1883, in which the Ponte Vecchio question first came to the fore. But it should be noted that, rather like the St Mark’s affair, the Ponte Vecchio question re-surfaced not once, nor twice, but three times before the end of the century. The issue is certainly connected with the same lack of trust towards the

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109 In 1886 the alarm was again raised in the press, following Stillman’s blithe announcement in The Times that the re-opening of the loggia on the north bank was projected to continue along the bridge also (The Architect vol. 36, 19 Nov. 1886. p.298). A drawing of the structure was made by J. Staines Babb, who happened to be in Florence at the time. (It was later published in The Builder vol.75, 17
municipal authorities which we have elsewhere encountered; it is certainly a consequence of the alarm which was justifiably raised in the early 1880s about the prospect of Florence being interfered with on a scale to rival Venice and St Mark's; and there is a sense in which this fear was fostered by alarmist revelations in the press. But as a case study, it also highlights the dangers which were implicit in the anti-restoration lobby's foreign protest campaigns - namely, the difficulties of gaining access to information about proposed works, and of establishing stable relations with a reliable source. At Venice, this had been overcome with the help of Count Zorzi. Our task here is to investigate, on the one hand, how these difficulties presented themselves, and on the other, to assess whether the protesters - again, we are chiefly concerned with the SPAB - found an effective means of tackling these practical difficulties in connection with the Ponte Vecchio.

The Lungarno degli Archibusieri and the danger to the Ponte Vecchio

The alarm at the possible demolition or partial demolition of the bridge had its origins in works to the adjacent Lungarno degli Archibusieri. Here the Vasarian Corridor, which connects the Uffizi Gallery to the Palazzo Pitti, emerges as a raised, roofed gallery from the south west corner of the Uffizi, and runs along the river bank about 50 metres before turning sharply through ninety degrees and continuing across the river, supported on arcades along the parapet of the bridge.

Dec. 1898. p558.) C. R. Ashbee, who subsequently became interested in preservation through his work for the London Survey Committee, expressed fears for the bridge in 1894 in a letter to the SPAB. When broader fears about the demolition of the city centre provoked an outcry in 1898, it was again claimed that the bridge would fall victim to the authorities' desire to erect a modern suspension bridge in its place, and a petition was organised to protest against the plan. (Florence Gazette year 9 n.7, 13 Dec. 1898. pp.3-4).
Originally, the section of the corridor along the via degli Archibusieri had been supported by an open loggia, but in the course of time the arcades had been filled in. Discussion had for some time been going on as to the possibility of removing the constructions which now occupied the interstices of the loggia, and reinstate it in its original form.

In 1865 a report was submitted to the Commune detailing a series of measures which might be put into effect to diminish the danger caused by flooding when the river Arno was in full spate. The motives of public health as well as safety were given a high priority, and the engineer in charge noted even then that some of the houses on the bridge itself were discharging excessive amounts of waste into the river. The proposals were not, however, acted upon immediately. In fact, no firm decisions were taken until 4 May 1879, when proposals for raising and strengthening the parapet, and removing the houses along the arcade, were approved. In September 1879 a contract was issued by the Corpo Reale del Genio Civile, and a budget estimate was prepared. At this point, the project had to begin its long journey through the bureaucracy, first of the city authorities, and then of the central authorities (by now transferred to Rome). Once the expenditure had been approved by the Giunta Municipale (in April 1881) the Prefect had to forward a copy of the contract of September 1879, costings, an estimate of the indemnities to be paid to shop-keepers whose property would be expropriated, and copies of the plans, elevations and sections prepared by the chief engineer, to the Public Works Ministry, the Ministero

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110 'Rapporto dei Lavori occorrenti ad impedire la introduzione delle acque dell'Arno entro Firenze dai fabbricati che corrispondono su detto fiume', 30 Aug. 1865 ASCF Affari del Comune, Filza Speciale I, 5246, Riapertura della Loggia degli Archibusieri.

111 ASCF Affari del Comune, Filza Speciale I, 5246, Busta 8857.
dei Lavori Pubblici. This was done in June 1882. Meanwhile, unusually high waters in the summer of 1880 caused further agitation. But technical and legal complications arose and the project was temporarily held up while elaborate negotiations continued during the winter of 1882-3 for expropriation of the dwellings beneath the loggia. In January 1883, a new set of drawings for a second project were prepared, in which it seems the idea of fully re-opening the arcades and restoring their original profile was proposed. Approval was granted on 30 October 1883. Work began on 25 May 1884 (Figs. 16 & 17).

The SPAB Protest of 1883

It appears that the Society was forewarned by one George Jeffery of imminent works. He had seen scaffolding being erected in January, and concluded that the bridge was about to be “destroyed.” One assumes that rumours such as this were circulating regularly at a time when the future of the city centre as a whole was so vigorously contested. Jeffery’s letter has been mislaid, but we can surmise at its contents from Thomas Wise’s reply:

“The Committee of this Society beg to thank you for the information conveyed in your letter of the 22nd Jan. to the effect that it is currently reported that the celebrated Ponte Vecchio is to be destroyed. In consequence of this news letters are now being written in the name of the Society to the leading English papers & two of our correspondents at Florence - Miss Duffy and Signor Carlandi have been communicated with...”

112 ASCF Affari del Comune, Filza Speciale I, 5246, Buste 8533 & 8857.
113 Dezzi Bardeschi, Il Monumento e il suo Doppio, cit. p.110.
114 I have been unable to establish the identity of George Jeffery.
115 ALS Wise to Jeffery, 6 Feb. 1883, ASPAB Ponte Vecchio.
Fig. 16 The Ponte Vecchio before restoration of the Lungarno degli Archibusieri, watercolour by an unknown artist (Kunsthistorisches Institut).

Fig. 17 The Ponte Vecchio and Lungarno degli Archibusieri around 1900 (Alinari).
There is in fact no record in the archives of the Commune of Florence of any scaffolding having been erected in December 1882 or January 1883, either along the Lungarno degli Archibusieri, or on the bridge itself. One must therefore consider what are the several possible explanations for Jeffery's claim.

Any application for works of any kind to the bridge would undoubtedly have been conveyed to the Commune. Even a minor operation such as the repairing of rainwater gutters required, in the first instance, an application to the Municipality. The Municipality would then respond with a number of stipulations of a technical nature, such as the type of scaffolding to be used, health and safety measures, specifications for materials and site maintenance, and so on. If the scaffolding had indeed been associated with an operation such as this, the application would be recorded in the Register of the Affairs of the Commune.

The most likely explanation, therefore, is that the scaffolding in question was associated with works to the Lungarno degli Archibusieri. As we have seen, approval for the demolition of houses and re-opening of the arcades of the loggia was not granted until October, so the scaffolding in question was probably related to the first project for the raising and strengthening of the embankment, and may in fact have

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116 ASCF Affari del Comune, Filza 959, Busta 7753 [Application by the Amministrazione della Reale Casa in Firenze, Direzione Tecnica, to the Municipio for permission to restore a section of gutter to the roof of the Vasarian Corridor, on the corner of Via Bardi, 8 July 1883. Letter of approval with stipulations, 12 July 1883.

117 In addition to the example in note 33, of July 8 1883, the Commune considered applications for cleaning of the bridge (lavatura) on only two occasions between 1881 and 1884. The first, a proposal by the Uffizio d'Arte which came before the council on 23 December 1881; and the second, a proposal considered on 26 November 1883. The documentation itself (Buste 12542 and 12343 respectively) appears to be mislaid, and only short references in the chronological Register of the Affari del Commune survive. Since neither date corresponds to the date of Jeffery's letter, it is unlikely that the scaffolding in question related to these proposals.
been in place for sometime pending a firm decision on the nature of the works to be undertaken. A further factor to be taken into account is the flood of October 1882, which caused considerable damage to property adjacent to the bridge, and no doubt had a detrimental effect also on the structures overhanging the parapet of the bridge itself.

A copy of Wise’s letter to Duffy is preserved in the archive of the Society. Wise reports Jeffery’s observations and fears, informs Duffy that the English papers and Signor Carlandi are being notified, and expresses the hope that Duffy will do what she can by bringing the matter to the attention of the Italian press.\footnote{ALS Wise to Duffy, 7(?) Feb. 1883, ASPAB Ponte Vecchio.}

In the absence of comprehensive documentation, only a part of the Italian authorities’ reaction can be reconstructed. Evidently the rumour that the bridge was under threat was widespread. On 28 February 1883 the Prefect of Florence, in response to a demand from the Minister of Public Instruction in Rome, asked the Mayor, Prince Tommaso Corsini, to clarify whether the rumours had any foundation, and if so, what was being proposed (Fig. 18). The Minister of Public Works was consulted, and the Prefecture was informed that no works of any kind were contemplated, and that

> “perhaps such a rumour might have come about as a result of the works under consideration for some time along the Via degli Archibuseri.”

I am not able to say whether the SPAB was made aware of these official exchanges. The SPAB remained convinced of impending disaster, remarking the following June,
in its Annual Report for 1883, that moreover the houses on the Ponte Vecchio

"will be pulled down, in order to lighten the weight on the failing piers; instead of what might easily be done by any skilled engineer, the underpinning and strengthening of the foundations, which have been partially undermined by the scour of the Arno."\(^{119}\)

CONCLUSIONS

Taking as a whole the period between the publication of Stillman’s piece in the *Cornhill* in 1880 and the attempt by the SPAB to engage in protests over the probable destruction of the Ponte Vecchio in early 1883, we may now begin to synthesise some key points.

First, a summary. The Ponte Vecchio case was the third occasion on which the Society had attempted to make its views public in Italy through the Italian press since fears about Florentine restorations had been expressed among English observers. On the first occasion, Stanhope had succeeded in publishing the letter to the Prefect in protest at the Bigallo. The consequence, however, had been somewhat negative, with Francesco Azzurri providing information which tended to show that the Society’s fears were exaggerated, William Scott offering frank, not to say harsh, criticism of the Society’s approach, and Stanhope even confessing to Webb that he was not at all sure that the more sensitive treatments being applied by the Italian authorities were the result of the censures of the English. At San Gimignano, the Society had stepped in too late to do any good. The Society seems to have shied away from embroiling itself in the Santa Trinità controversy. It began instead, with help from Duffy and Stanhope,

Fig. 18 Letter of the Prefect of Florence to the Mayor, 27 Feb. 1883. In the notes scribbled across the page, dated 5 March, the Office of Public Works instructs its officials to convey the assertion that no works are being considered, and that the rumour may have arisen as a result of works in hand to the Lungarno degli Archibusieri (Reproduced Courtesy of the Archivio Storico del Comune di Firenze).
to try and publicise itself in Italy using less antagonistic methods. But in connection with the Mercato Vecchio and Ponte Vecchio, we can observe that its methods, sources and influence remained wholly inadequate.

Clearly the Venice and Florence scenarios were quite different in certain respects. The former was directed at a specific building, with demonstrably unique properties. The Basilica of St Mark offered itself as a model against which certain speculations about the character of historic buildings might be tested, and the protests themselves reflected the academic character of the debate, as I have shown in a previous chapter. In Florence, though the SPAB tried to confine itself to individual works of restoration, its efforts were soon absorbed into swelling fears in which the entire future physionomy of the modern city was at stake. Champions of progress, as J. Beavington Atkinson had observed in 1875, struggled to assert their authority over the forces of those who would rather retreat into the comfort and security of the status quo. The same opportunities to explore the theoretical parameters of anti-restoration did not arise. In the account I have just given, we find the efforts of the protesters considerably enervated by an urgent need to find a sensitive way to press home the principles of anti-restoration on a fractious foreign population - by slow, and generally unsuccessful diplomacy - and by a preponderance of cautiousness on the part of the SPAB.

There are several key points that I wish to draw out. We have seen how the Venetian response to the English was conditioned by the feeling that foreign theft and depredation were the real evils with which the nation had to contend, and the palpable
sense in which national pride was threatened by the predatory designs of foreign collectors inhibited all possibility of rational intercourse on the merits of international help to protect the monuments of Italy. In Florence, the same reserves of hostility are present. But there was an additional factor to contend with: the earnest desire of foreigners to help out was compromised by an unsavoury tradition of foreign exploitation of a different nature, that of the speculators and entrepreneurs from north of the Alps whose descent into Florence after Unification had ushered in a new and violent phase of renewal and reconstruction, with all the forfeits that progress entailed. The impact of this transformation is not to be discerned in the reactions of Italians so much as in the laments of foreigners who had witnessed the effects. Some, like Stillman, found the Italians worse than the Greeks in their impatience to embrace the novelties of modernisation. The chief agents of this catastrophe were, in ‘Ouida’s view, the ruling classes of Florence who had made the masses “abject slaves of municipal despotism and of a barbarous civic greed.”¹²⁰ In all of this, foreign interlopers had played a part, from the Florence Land and Public Works Company to the sanitary reformers who pressed upon the municipality the need to bring Florence in line with London and Paris - a healthy, clean and efficient European city - even at the expense of its old buildings.¹²¹ These were imperatives which should interest the authorities not only because they meant better health for the populace, but because they held the prospect of increased tourism. Florence would be stricken by a cholera

¹²⁰ ‘Ouida.’ ‘Cities of Italy’ in: Views and Opinions, London, Methuen, 1985. p.87. It was not seen as a Florentine problem alone. There were a number of articles on the destruction of Rome, which had been in the throes of redevelopment since the 1870s. Cf. ‘Ouida.’ ‘Vandalism in Italy’ The Architect vol. 22, 16 Aug. 1879. p.87.

¹²¹ One of these was Sir Douglas Galton, who congratulated himself on having helped (in his capacity as consultant sanitary engineer to the Florentine Municipal Government) to reduce the risk of further epidemics by installing new drainage, upgrading the water system, and encouraging the “removal of old buildings.” The Architect vol. 46, 11 Dec. 1891. p.369.
epidemic in 1885, and typhoid in 1890. By this time it was already heavily dependent on foreign visitors for its economic survival.

In short, the Society’s problems at Florence from the early 1880s had more in common with its efforts to preserve the monuments of London, such as Temple Bar and the City Churches. In such a situation, when its energies were so tied up in largely futile efforts merely to get its principles published in the Florentine press, the hope of making a significant impact there must have been dim.

The Society was hindered in other respects. In all the cases I have been discussing, the chief problem was that of obtaining reliable information. As I have said, the Society did not have the benefit of a Count Zorzi to whom its cherished objectives might be faithfully entrusted. William Scott had made abundantly clear the failure of the Society to make any impression on the Florentine public as a consequence of failing to ascertain the facts surrounding cases like the Bigallo. Stanhope’s candid admission, in April 1882, that he had got it wrong when he claimed that Italians were showing an inclination to heed the English protesters, laid bare the ingenuous and fragile nature of the Society’s intelligence machine. There was no denying that the monuments of Florence were as much a part of the global inheritance as St Mark’s - Scott and Stillman as well as William Morris would have agreed on this - but in the final analysis, mere protests, however much they might bring international pressure to bear

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122 This involved the Society, notionally, in an altogether different issue, in which the ideals of conservation had to grapple with the demands of urban growth and planning policy - one of the social and moral dilemmas of the day for which Ruskin and Morris, if we are to accept the remarks made by Levine in his essay on the Pre-Raphaelite city, had no enthusiasm. Cf. Levine, G. ‘From “Know-not-where” to “Nowhere” in: Dyos, H.J. & Wolff, M. The Victorian City (2 vols.) London & Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973. Vol. II, pp.495-516.
on the Italians, were not a recipe for productive dialogue. I have shown that during the years 1882-3 the Society tried to get around this by diffusing its aims and principles in Italy, in the hope that these alone would work upon and edify the Italian mind. But it seems that it under-estimated the hostility, mentioned by Scott, which the Italians reserved towards its too dogmatic, too negative, and too foreign character. The efforts of its English collaborators in Florence would not in the short term be able to overcome this difficulty, as is implicit in Philip Webb's remarks on the subject to Bella Duffy, in May 1882.

Carlandi's recruitment was therefore a key development. Carlandi seems to have made himself useful on numerous occasions. The earliest reference I can find is to a letter written by Carlandi on 23 December 1882 to notify the Society of works being contemplated at the Churches of Ara Coeli and Santa Francesca Romana. I can find no evidence to shed light on how and where he made the acquaintance of the Society, but it seems very likely to have been a consequence of introductions he received to English artists while resident in London from the spring of 1882. In 1887 his assistance was again sought with reference to reports which the Society had received concerning other monuments in Rome. I will give some consideration to the possible reasons why there were no protests from London in connection with these cases at the end of this thesis. Meanwhile, suffice it to say that until detailed

124 See Bibliobiographies. Many of the Society's foreign links may have originated in this way. Lethaby implies, for example, that Adolphe Guillon's association with the Society came about through his friendship with Boyce (Lethaby, W.R. Philip Webb and his Work, London, Oxford University Press, 1935. p.165, note); Giacomo Boni's was through Webb, and Yriarte's may have been through the Colvins (Mrs Colvin was a translator of Yriarte's work)
125 ALS Wise to Carlandi, n.d. [1887?], ASPAB Italian Restoration.
documentary sources on Carlandi come to light, any attempt to assess his role will remain incomplete.
The list of members of the Committee of the SPAB in 1881 includes the name of T.V. Paravicini. In this final case study, I wish to investigate further the relations between Italy and the SPAB through a study of Paravicini and his activities, particularly with reference to the restorations of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in Milan. We are not concerned here with a campaign as such; the Society did not write in protest against these or other restorations under way at Milan in the 1880s. However, Paravicini's role is an important one. It is through Paravicini's activities as a writer and critic that the ideology of anti-scaphe was most faithfully translated into an Italian context. I have shown in earlier chapters that the impact of English ideas was dampened by the hostile reception those ideas encountered among the Italians. I have demonstrated how the interlopers drew hasty conclusions on the basis of unsubstantiated remarks, and how the network of supporters and collaborators upon which the SPAB depended tended to hinder rather than help the Society to gain a foothold among Italians who might be sympathetic to the principles invoked, if not the manner of their invocation. Paravicini's example introduces some additional questions that I wish to contemplate in the following chapter. His influence was regional rather than national, and in assessing Paravicini's contribution to the issues I have been discussing, it is first necessary to lend some consideration to the city of Milan, its historic and cultural value, and its condition in the late nineteenth century.
British visitors and their impressions of Milan ca. 1815-1860

The streets of Milan, in the years between the defeat of Napoleon and the expulsion of Austria from Lombardy in 1859, also played host to their fair share of more or less cultivated tourists from northern Europe. Many were en route to Genova, Pisa, Rome and Campania, either for health, learning or simply amusement. Others passed through on tours of the Veneto and the picturesque Swiss Alps

To the traveller in search of art, irrespective of his preparation, Milan certainly could not compete with the more favoured cultural resorts. Nonetheless, it possessed fine churches and monuments, ancient and modern. The Duomo was by far the most captivating of these, and successive generations of English visitors, standing in the piazza created by Napoleon Bonaparte, held it in awe. Samuel Prout illustrated both the interior and the façade in his volume of *Sketches of France, Switzerland and Italy*, published in 1839. Indeed, the Cathedral at Milan was regarded in England during the first decades of the nineteenth century as one of the finest buildings in Europe. The characteristic upon which the majority of cultivated visitors remarked was of the

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1 On the interests and habits of British travellers in Italy c.1815-30, cf: editor's introduction in Hale, J.R. [ed.] *The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers*, London, Faber & Faber, 1956. pp.56-99. Among those who first experienced Lombardy and the Veneto as extensions of Swiss travels were Goethe, James Fenimore Cooper, and Thomas Adolphus Trollope. One of the earliest tourists' guides to Switzerland was produced by Francis Coghlan, *Guide through Switzerland and Chamounix, or Tourist's Companion to the most interesting objects in the cities, towns, villages, valleys and mountains*, (London, A.H. Bally, 1838). One of the earliest authors to popularise exploration of the Swiss landscape among the leisured classes in the nineteenth century was William Brockedon, who crossed the Alps into Italy by over 40 different routs between 1824 and 1829, publishing a twelve-volume set of engravings, *Illustrations of the passes of the Alps by which Italy communicates with France, Switzerland and Germany* (1827-9), a work which he followed up with numerous editions of extracts from his alpine journals.

2 Henry Gally Knight was one of the first to conduct a thorough, illustrated investigation of Italian Gothic architecture, in his *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy* (see Part I, Chapter 2). His conclusion, that Pointed architecture in Italy was a half-learned language, still compromised by its classicism and lacking originality in thought and inspiration, made an exception of the Duomo at Milan, Italy's one example of genuine Gothic achievement. *Op.cit.* p.ix.
contrast between the sparkling, crystalline effect of the marble exterior and the romantically dingy and cavernous vaults within. Although Joseph Forsyth's fastidious intellect was immediately drawn to the disappointing effect of stalls, galleries, canopies and balustrades on the gracious lines of the construction, other visitors found the contrast magnificently sombre. At the Brera Picture Gallery one could contemplate Raphael's *Marriage of the Virgin*, and the works of Guido Reni (such as the much admired *St Peter and St Paul*), Domenichino, and the "curious" naïveté of the Lombard school of Gaudenzio Ferrari and Bernardino Luini. The dilettante of architecture might also visit Cagnola's Arco della Pace, completed in 1836.

Milan, furthermore, had its entertainments, most famous of which was the Scala theatre (opened in 1778). Though the Austrian authorities could be counted on to make difficulties with passports and border controls, these troubles were compensated by the availability of inns and hostels of a good standard, where the visitor from London could feel entirely comfortable.

Such comforts as were afforded by the well-paved streets and squares, the handsome neoclassical monuments and palazzi, the lure of fashionable society and the rich cultural and intellectual life which flourished in Milan did not, however, come

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4 W. Leitch Ritchie remarked "to one who is happily ignorant of the schools, there can be nothing in art, we think, more magnificent, more delightful, more odd, more fantastic, and more absurd, than the Duomo of Milan" *Travelling Sketches in the North of Italy, the Tyrol and on the Rhine*, Heath's Picturesque Annual for 1832, London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Browne and Green, 1832. p.134.
5 A.-F. Rio had deplored the absence of interest in these artists, caused by Vasari having totally neglected them. Rio, *op.cit.* Vol. II [1855], pp.251-6.
without a price which some, if not all, English visitors were keenly aware of. As a traveller, John Barrow, visiting Milan in 1840, observed:

Many churches, chapels and convents, and other religious establishments in Milan, have fallen to decay, or been diverted to purposes foreign from their original intention. Some of these were demolished, together with private houses, without hesitation or compunction, by Bonaparte, to make room for his Piazza d'Armi, his Forum, and his Amphitheatre."  

The re-use and, occasionally, loss of ecclesiastical buildings in Milan was a consequence of the suppression of the religious houses under Napoleon at the beginning of the century, and the subsequent transfer of ecclesiastical land holdings to the private buyer, and also a result of the gradual increase in population density, and adaptation of existing constructions to satisfy public needs. Contemporary travel guides and accounts refer to numerous examples: the convent of Sant'Ambrogio in use during the late 1840s as a hospital for "patients affected with loathsome diseases;" San Celso in ruins and San Giovanni in Conca deserted; Santa Maria della Pace converted into a military magazine and subsequently a factory.  

Serious scientific interest on the part of British scholars in the architectural monuments of the middle ages in Lombardy began in the 1850s. Thomas Hope had

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6 A Tour in Austrian Lombardy, the northern Tyrol and Bavaria in 1840, London, John Murray, 1841. p.136.  
9 Ibid. p.169. Two bays of San Celso were demolished in 1818 and the building left until 1851, when a new façade was erected leaving only the remains of the original at the east end. See: Mongeri, L'Arte in Milano: note per servire di guida nella città, Tip. Società Cooperativa, 1872. p.224.  
visited the region and his *Historical Essay on Architecture* is notable, among other things, for incorporating a fairly substantial analysis of the characteristics of Lombard architecture of the twelfth century in northern Italy, as well as the diffusion of the style in northern Europe. Volume two of the work contained illustrations of such examples as San Michele at Pavia, San Zeno at Verona, the Duomo at Piacenza, and the Baptistry at Parma. But Hope's interest in the region was exceptional; for research on his famous *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, published in 1855, James Fergusson was obliged to draw on foreign studies of Lombard Romanesque, in particular that of Friedrich Osten. In Ecclesiological circles, Benjamin Webb's *Sketches of Continental Ecclesiology* (1848) helped to raise awareness as to the availability of examples for the student of ecclesiology as well as of architecture in the North Italian region. He visited Milan, Como, Pavia, Lodi, Mantua, Verona, and Venice in the course of his journey, commenting on the plans and layouts of churches and basilicas, as well as function, ritual, and even condition. George Edmund Street visited Milan as part of his tour of Northern Italy in 1853, recording and documenting the vicissitudes of pointed architecture in the region. As a Gothic revivalist, his passions were not aroused by the churches of Milan (other than the interior of the cathedral), which he found to be mostly of a heterogeneous Gothic-Lombard-Romanesque character, and moreover only too evidently restored and modernised.

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13 Webb found the Cathedral at Milan "in a fine state of order and repair, large sums being annually expended in its support" (op.cit. p.203), but observed also the dilapidation and modernisation of churches not only at Milan but also at Pavia, Lodi (p.230),and Mantua (p.237).
14 Street, *Notes of a Tour*, cit. passim. Street was in search of pure examples of Italian gothic style. He found the fifteenth-century Gothic work at Santa Maria delle Grazie typical of a "tasteless, unreal and unsatisfactory school of art" (ed.cit. p.380); at S. Eustorgio, he found the church "abominably
As in other cases, it is probably accurate to say that some degree of sympathy towards the disappearing monuments of Milan’s Medieval past was stimulated by the reaction, among historiographers of Renaissance painting, to the fate of mural paintings at the hands of first the French, then the Austrian regime, and ultimately, the authorities of the kingdom of Sardinia. Though a few frescoes had been studiously preserved, after having been detached from the wall, at the Brera during the French period, the sad fate of many more during the dissolution and reappropriation of ecclesiastical estates, must have piqued the sentimentality of many an observer. Milan was privileged to possess, at the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, the Cenacolo of Leonardo da Vinci, a painting which was uniquely placed to accelerate this concern for the welfare of Italian heritage among the foreign community. In fact, concern for the condition of the painting goes back as far as the eighteenth century, and reflects growing interest in Leonardo. The rediscovery of the primitives in no way diminished Leonardo’s reputation - indeed, the alarming condition of wall paintings in less well-known churches of Italy must have had an impact on the concern for Leonardo’s virtually vanished masterpiece. The example of the cenacolo was another of those cases in which a work of art, clinging on to life by a thread, restored, mutilated and

modernised" (p.379); S. Ambrogio having “suffered much, either by repairs of restorations” (p.377); the nearby thirteenth century cathedral of Vercelli “modernised, and I believe not worth visiting” (p.385). Dr Neil Jackson has remarked how Street’s most Italianate churches borrowed from several North Italian models, but Milanese churches do not appear to have made a lasting impression. Cf: ‘Brick & Marble: notes on G.E.Street’s tours to the North of Italy’ unpublished paper presented at the Society of Architectural Historians (USA) Annual Conference, Montreal, April 1989 (I am grateful to Dr Jackson for supplying me wth a copy of his paper).

15 See Part II, Chapter 2.

16 Leonardo’s Treatise on Painting was published in English in 1802 (London, J.Taylor), and was followed by J.W.Brown’s biography, The Life of Leonardo da Vinci with a critical account of his works, London, Pickering, 1828. The National Gallery possessed a copy of the Cenacolo by Marco d’Oggiono, Leonardo’s pupil. So highly esteemed was Leonardo that nearly every visitor to Milan after the defeat of Napoleon had Santa Maria delle Grazie on his itinerary. Nearly all reserve some caustic remarks for the condition of the picture, the incompetence of the “daubers” assigned to restore its vanishing details, the whitewash of the clergy, and the wanton vandalism of occupying armies.
fragmentary, excited the enthusiasm of persons of learning seeking to construct a comprehensive historiography of the Renaissance. When Dickens visited “the dilapidated Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie” in 1844, he wrote of the painting:

“apart from the damage it has sustained from damp decay and neglect, it has been (as Barry shows) so retouched upon, and repainted, and that so clumsily, that many of the heads are, now, positive deformities, with patches of paint and plaster sticking upon them like wens, utterly distorting the expression.”

Milan was being swept along on a tide of industrial and commercial expansion, and a heightened sense of civic and patriotic sentiment had tended, during the years following Unification, to focus attention on the city’s artistic and cultural heritage. This patrimony was largely in poor repair. The monuments and works of art which European scholarship was now anxious to identify appeared, to the city authorities, as pitiful mutilations, mouldering and abandoned, and in the spirit of urban renewal, their resurrection was seen as an essential ingredient in restoring civic dignity and integrity.

Steady urban growth and the gradual emergence of a commercial and industrial infrastructure was accelerated by the arrival of the railways towards the end of the 1840s. After liberation, on 24 June 1859, urban improvements continued to have an impact on the historic core of Milan. In the 1860s the principal changes in the urban fabric of the city were the re-planning of Piazza Duomo; the commencement of the Galleria Vittorio Emmanuele, constructed between 1862 and 1867; and the completion of the Stazione Centrale in 1864 and its connection with the business

17 *Pictures of Italy*, London, Bradbury & Evans, 1846. pp.133-4
district north and west of the Duomo. Under French, and then Austrian hegemony, road improvements had already been carried out, and in the post-Unification period street-widening, and straightening, continued. There were sacrifices to be made: the Romanesque church of San Giovanni in Conca d'oro, partially demolished in 1879 in connection with the Via Carlo Alberto road scheme; the Porta Nuova, which was isolated from its context by the removal of contiguous structures in 1861, and subsequently damaged by the creation of pedestrian pathways through the walls of its 'towers'; the enclosed Medieval square which provided a setting for Palazzo della Ragione, between Piazza Duomo and Piazza Cordusio, opened out to form new urban spaces. The exigencies imposed by these rationalisations were predominantly practical - tending towards the more efficient movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved sanitation and services, and greater efficiency of commerce and mobility in a phase of continuing urban expansion. As such they were typical manifestations, though on a comparatively smaller scale, of a trend already established in large European cities such as Paris and London.

It was in this context that the area adjacent to the church and convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, a few kilometres west of the city, was to become the subject of a small-scale clearance programme which would, however, have far reaching consequences.

Santa Maria delle Grazie

The Basilica of Santa Maria delle Grazie was constructed, on the site of a devotional chapel of the Madonna, near Porta Vercellina, Milan, to form the centrepiece of a new
foundation for the Dominican friars formerly of Sant’Apollinare at Pavia, in 1463.\textsuperscript{18} Throughout the first phase of construction the Sforza dukes of Milan had been heavily involved as donors and supporters of the foundation. The craftsman responsible for the design was probably Guiniforte Solari. The nave and aisles, with their pointed vaults and Gothic painted decoration, were probably finished by 1490. Lodovico Maria Sforza, acceding to the dukedom, then proposed an ambitious rebuilding of the eastern portion - crossing, choir and sanctuary - the state of completion of which, under Solari or some other master - cannot be verified. It appears that the motivation was to provide a sumptuous mausoleum for Lodovico and his lineage, for which purpose a high, centrally-planned temple, was to be grafted on to the linear, low, Gothic body of the church. Bramante da Urbino probably had a hand in the design, though it is debatable as to how far his involvement can be demonstrated.\textsuperscript{19} The curious fact is not so much that the new structure is attached to the old in an awkward fashion owing to the juxtaposition of Gothic vaults with the massive semicircular arches of the new ‘tribune,’ but that the easternmost bay of the earlier nave was, so to speak, ‘bent’ upwards to accommodate the differential heights of the architectonic members. (Fig. 19). Documents brought to light in recent years seem to suggest that in 1499 Lodovico ordered the rest of Solari’s church to be demolished, or at least the


entire nave to be increased in height, and that his intentions were thwarted by the French invasion and his flight from Milan in September 1499.

In 1864 houses abutting the apses of the tribune and choir of the church were demolished so as to afford a more fittingly monumental aspect to the building. These demolitions helped to focus attention on the character, condition and historic value of the church itself. Initially, the question of the restoration of Santa Maria delle Grazie was closely linked to the intention, on the part of the Ministero di Pubblica Istruzione, to secure once and for all the preservation of Leonardo’s Cenacolo, in the refectory of the convent.

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20 Schofield, op. cit. p.56.
22 Cesare Cantù, ‘Il convento delle Grazie,’ Archivio Storico Lombardo, vol. 6 fasc. II, 1879. pp.223-49. Cantù gives a good account of the tragic history of mutilation and degradation of Leonardo’s fresco. On G. Bossi’s copy of the Cenacolo and his publication on the painting at the beginning of the century, cf. Ibid. pp.241-2; on the flight of monks to S.Eustorgio and use of the convent as, successively, barracks, prison camp and artillery store after the French revolution cf. Ibid. p.248. At the time of the Risorgimento the question of Santa Maria delle Grazie was by no means the first to occupy the municipal authorities and Milan’s leading learned institutions. For an analysis of preservation issues concerning other principal monuments from 1853 to 1884, focusing on the cultural, philosophical and political context, see: Bellini, A. ‘Conservazione, Restauro, Città’ in: La Milano del Piano Beruto, cit. pp.369-84 In spite of the future of Santa Maria delle Grazie having been a subject of ministerial and municipal concern since the unification of the kingdoms of Sardinia and the Sicilies in 1859, and the problem of the Cenacolo continually resurfacing since the departure of the French after the defeat of Napoleon, firm measures to tackle all these issues simultaneously were not deliberated until March 1881, and can be scrutinised in Atti della Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti e Oggetti d’arte e antichità della Provincia di Milano, n. XXVII, 18 March 1880, item 5. pp.126-8. The Commission itself was only constituted on 22 February 1877, prior to which the monuments of Milan were under the aegis of the Consulta del Museo Patrio di Archeologia, formed in 1862, which had limited responsibility, chiefly towards the preservation of museum collections and antiquities. On the Consulta and the Commissione Conservatrice dei monumenti d’arte della Provincia di Milano, cf: Savare, Giulio ‘La Commissione Milanese’ in: Treccani, Gian Paolo [ed.] Del Restauro in Lombardia. Procedure, istituzioni, archivi 1861-1892, Milan, Guerini Studio, 1994. pp. 235-64. For details of other deliberations of the Commission specifically affecting Santa Maria delle Grazie, see the summary by Bortolotto, S. & Massari, G. ‘Cronologia delle fonti ufficiali’ in: La Milano del Piano Beruto, cit. pp.413-502.
Giuseppe Mongeri\(^{23}\) noted the sorry condition of Bramante's apse following the clearance of dwellings around the basement by the Commune. Considering the church as a whole, he went on to regret how

"The signs of different ages having made their artistic contributions to the building are too much in evidence."\(^{24}\)

Portions of the building had lost something of their stylistic homogeneity as a result of alterations and additions (the addition of secondary doors to the façade; Bramante's main portico in a later style). The awkward junction of Bramante's cupola with Solari's nave, described above, posed a contentious question - the patron's intention must have been to see the Medieval nave and aisles brought together under a vast barrel vault, said Mongeri.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{23}\) Giuseppe Mongeri (1812-1888). One of the most important historians of art in nineteenth-century Milan. Had been a collaborator on the Rivista Europea (est. 1839), one of the first liberal, independent periodicals to emerge in the vibrant intellectual climate of the Risorgimento, and was appointed vice-secretary of the Provisional Government of 1848. As Secretary of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera (and acting President 1855-9) he reformed teaching at the School, and was strongly influenced by the approach of French, German and Belgian Art Academies. An enthusiast of the critical theories of Giovanni Morelli, he was Professor of Art History at the Accademia 1878-88. As a distinguished author he made regular contributions to the daily La Perseveranza on subjects ranging from the Cimitero Monumentale, to new building and church restoration in Milan in the 1860s and 1870s. He was a member of the Società Storica Lombarda (member of the presidential committee from 1883), and the Consulta del Museo Patrio Archeologico per la Conservazione dei Monumenti, the latter duty involving responsibility for monitoring works of restoration to Milanese monuments. In this capacity he submitted occasional reports on recent restorations for publication in the Archivio Storico Lombardo in the 1870s. He was subsequently appointed to the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti d'Arte e d'Antichità della Provincia di Milano. His published works on restoration and related subjects include: Illustrazione Storico-artistica dei Reali Palazzi di Milano, Milan, Tip. Alberti 1863; L'Arte in Milano: note per servire di guida nella città, Milan, Tip. Società Cooperativa, 1872; 'I Restauri della Reale Basilica di S. Michele Maggiore di Pavia', Bulletin della Consulta Archeologica Anno III, 1876. pp. 3-5; Dei restauri edilizi assistiti dalla Consulta Archeologica, Milan, Bernardoni, 1877; La questione dei restauri nell'arte, Milan, Bernardoni, 1878. An obituary and list of publications can be found in: Archivio Storico Lombardo Anno XV, fasc. 1, 31 March 1888. pp.201-19.

\(^{24}\) "I segni sono troppo manifesti dei tempi diversi venuti a porgergli il suo contributo artistico" L'Arte in Milano, cit. p.208.

\(^{25}\) Ibid. pp. 201-14.
The liberation of the exterior of the tribune thus presented the problem of a patchy and incomplete exterior, to which scholarly techniques of analysis, interpretation and eventual reconstruction would have to be applied in order for the building to recover its grandeur. But the application of those techniques of analysis and interpretation uncovered a highly complex building, something of a puzzle, for which ready solutions were indeterminate owing, not least, to a paucity of documentary evidence with which to unravel its history.

Colla's proposals for restoration

The architect Angelo Colla submitted a report on the church with recommendations for restoration as early as 1876. He acknowledged the difficulty of attributing the tribune to Bramante on stylistic grounds, and went so far as to suggest that Bramantino, a Milanese artist and contemporary of Bramante was the master responsible for the design. No documentation to support the claim was in existence other than the accounts of Vasari and Milizia, who attributed to Bramantino numerous architectural works in Milan, including the church of S. Satiro. According to Colla's


27 Canto et al, op. cit. pp.81-2. The attribution to Bramantino was supported by Chirtani, L. 'Milano Monumentale' Mediolanum 1, 1881. pp.211-97. Interest in the artist had been increasing, notably with the re-issue of his studies of the ruins of Rome in 1875.

assertion, which was based on stylistic analysis of the decorative character of the
structure in relation to other works by Bramante, the building lacked the classical
monumentality which the architect had demonstrated in his other works.

Colla found an explanation for the perplexing variety in execution and design in the
fact that, during periods of artistic advancement, artists are inclined to be
experimental, and that the political instability of the time would also have left its
mark.\textsuperscript{29} He noted some uncompleted elements - the aedicule which surmounted the
colossal pilasters; the cornice which should have crowned the summit of the cupola.
As a restorer he stated his position: the architect cannot be justified in seeking to
correct the work of previous ages, but that in such a case as this, where the artist was
clearly prevented from bringing his project to a proper conclusion, it is both possible
and desirable to carry the project through its final stages on the artist's behalf.\textsuperscript{30} Such
an undertaking must be distinguished from the merely technical operations of
copying. The restorer must develop an intimacy of knowledge with the style in
question, must wholly master its character, properties and internal logic. With this
knowledge comes the competence to complete the story.\textsuperscript{31} Originality is what
characterises great periods of art. To neglect those original contributions is to
misrepresent the history. It is not enough to just copy. The building presents two
characters, markedly different in style. There are serious implications associated with

\textsuperscript{29} "Tutto avvisa che, durante il lavoro, si variò di concetti e d'esecuzione, come avviene in un tempo
di transizione nel gusto e di torbidi nella politica" Cantù et al. \textit{op. cit.} p.69.

\textsuperscript{30} "...vuolsi quel rispetto all'arte, che sa trasportarsi ai tempi, non pretende correggere quel che già fu
fatto dai precedenti, e pensa quel che già grandi artisti, autori dei monumenti, avrebbero fatto quando non
fossero stati impediti da circostanze che forse noi ignoriamo." \textit{Ibid.} p.75.

\textsuperscript{31} "bisogna imbeversi degli elementi di un dato stile; penetrare il carattere, sapere come voglion
essere condotti; possedere incompetence il magistero." \textit{Ibid.} p.77.
Fig. 19 Section showing Solari’s nave and Bramante’s tribune (from: Cassina, F. Le Fabbriche più cospicue di Milano, 2 vols., Milan, Cassina & Pedrinelli, 1840. pl. 90)
the doubts as to authorship, Bramantino, Bramante, and Leonardo all being linked to the building in some way.\[32\]

The building therefore posed a problem which was commonly encountered in nineteenth-century restorations: it was a scientific anomaly, defying the laws of classification. Such a judgement, of course, is entailed by a fixed body of notions concerning the history of architecture. “The monument we have been studying” said Colla

“As history itself shows us, on account of its many vicissitudes and the disasters of Lodovico, is haplessly imperfect” (my italics).

He listed a catalogue of details, all supporting the hypothesis, from imperfect and truncated cornices, to the lack of pinnacles on some of the buttresses, and the presence of exceedingly rough and ready structural members such as brackets and copings.\[33\]

All the evidence points to the fact that Lodovico intended to rebuild the entire structure.

Colla’s practical solutions to this ‘unfinished’ piece of fifteenth-century redevelopment would have involved harmonising these minor components while still leaving their essential differences of style intact; but on the wider question of

\[32\] Ibid. p.79.
\[33\] “Il monumento che abbiamo studiato rimase, come c’informa la storia, per varie peripezie e per la catastrofe di Lodovico, sventuratamente imperfetto.” Ibid. p.83.
alterations made by later builders to the body of Solari's Gothic church, these must be
judiciously removed. For instance, in tackling the restoration of Solari's façade the
objective should be to recover its original aspect (but making an exception of
Bramante's portico, which should be allowed to stay because it is so good. See Fig.
19).

The real challenge of restoration, the one on which Colla is most evasive, centred
upon the problem of the harmonisation of two dissonant architectonic and decorative
entities at their most critical juncture - the crossing. Had the designer of the cupola
and choir intended to take his project further, to extend his intervention westward, re-
integrating the new with the old in a more radical, more ambitious manner?

Several factors, therefore, informed the body of judgements that were being put
together regarding the history of construction and the best form of technical
intervention to be employed in recovering the building's value both as a component in
a rationalised, historically sensitive urban structure, and as a legible episode in the
historical growth and perfection of architectural expression.

It must be re-iterated that much of the interest in the problems of Santa Maria delle
Grazie stemmed from the growing interest in Bramante da Urbino's early career as
architect to the Sforza dynasty in fifteenth-century Milan. Bramante's architectural
exploits in Lombardy had begun to receive particular attention since the province
conjoined itself to the kingdom of Sardinia, and the revival of Bramante research
occurred within the context of an intellectual culture dedicated to the recuperation of a
storia patria, or national history. Through studies such as Pungileoni’s *Memoria intorno alla vita ed alle opere di Donato o Donnino Bramante* (Rome, Tip. Ferretti, 1836), a profile of Bramante’s early career in Northern Italy, based on documentary research, had begun to emerge. *I Capi d’Arte di Bramante da Urbino nel Milanese*, by Dott. Carlo Casati, (Milano, Tip. della Soc. Cooperativa, 1870) added considerably to the body of research on Bramante in Milan, and contained documentary appendices on Santa Maria presso San Satiro, Santa Maria presso San Celso, Sant’Ambrogio and other works connected with him.

In a city such as Milan, transformed perhaps more than any city in northern Italy by industrialisation, a revived sense of local history was in some ways inevitable. A hallowed corner in the great intellectual edifice that was the historiography of the revival of art from the time of Nicola Pisano to the time of Michelangelo will have been cherished all the more at a time when the study and appreciation of the local Lombard-Romanesque style was not well developed.

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34 Vasari had paid scant attention to his work in Milan. Likewise Francesco Milizia, in his *Le Vite de’ più celebri architetti* [1768] had passed over the architect’s Milanese works.

35 Any attempt to evaluate the position of Bramante in nineteenth-century architectural historiography will necessarily entail a study of Heinrich von Geymüller (1836-1910). Such a study lies outside the scope of this work, but some elementary indications might be given: in his most important early work *Die Ursprünglichen Entwürfe fur Sanct Peter in Rom* [1875], Geymüller included a table of Bramante’s works (pp.105-15), based partly on existing documentary testimony and partly on recent research, chiefly his own. He accepted the attributions given in De Pagave and others, and was in agreement with recent scholars such as Mongeri and Caffi, who had amplified, on the basis of stylistic evaluation, the body of likely Bramante attributions. He classified all the works of Bramante according to a rigorously scientific system. According to this classification the exterior and interior of the tribune could be firmly attributed to Bramante on the basis of documentary evidence (although his primary sources are by no means as clear on the extent of Bramante’s involvement), and a considerably greater volume of work could be attributed to Bramante in Lombardy on the basis of style and design, particularly the ornamental language developed by the architect, than was then known. Geymüller was later to claim that Bramante had provided the inspiration for the revival of a classical language in the sixteenth-century French Renaissance, as exemplified by J.A. Du Cerceau. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Colla’s restoration scheme. See: Geymüller, H. ‘Bramante e la Restauration de Sainte Marie des Grâces à Milan’ *Gazette Archéologique*, 1887. pp.162-77. Also: Geymüller, H. ‘Nouvelles Observations sur Bramante’ *Gazette des Beaux Arts* vol. 2, 1874. pp.379-84. A good account of
Fig. 20 Santa Maria delle Grazie ca. 1900, showing the restored façade, incorporating Bramante's portico (Alinari).
From the point of view of the foreign traveller, the Bramante connection probably remained obscure. An English scholar, reared perhaps on Serlio, Vasari and Milizia, might be forgiven for believing Bramante’s work to be concentrated only in Rome. Bramante’s work outside Rome was not particularly valued by English historians, perhaps in part because Vasari barely even mentioned Bramante’s output in the North before he left to become the famous protegé of popes Alexander VII and Julius II.

Having sketched out in some detail the general context with reference to Milan, and considered at some length the nature of the problem of Santa Maria delle Grazie and its resolution, I would now like to focus more closely on the exact manner and degree to which English preservationists in the 1880s were involved in this scenario. I will not be talking exactly about a specific campaign to protect buildings like Santa Maria delle Grazie from restorations like those proposed by Colla, but rather about the possibilities which emerged for closer contact and co-operation between English anti-

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36 Considering again the much-visited church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, tourists’ handbooks are not especially informative of Bramante’s possible involvement in the design. Bossi’s *Guide des étrangers a Milan*, (Milan, Vallardi, 1819) makes numerous references to Bramante but does not associate his name with any parts of Santa Maria delle Grazie (pp.184-91); Giuseppe Caselli’s *Nuovo Ritratto di Milano in riguardo alle belle arti*, (Milano, Francesco Sonzogno, 1827) attributes the church more firmly to Bramante, but finds the building in poor condition, and there is little evidence of general interest in the artist’s Milanese oeuvre.

37 On the subject of England and Bramante in the nineteenth century, there evidently was an awareness of Bramante’s connections with Milan, but quite how such awareness developed is hard to trace. Bramante’s exploits at St Peter’s in Rome were widely known of: Serlio had published Bramante designs, and Batty Langley’s *Antient Masonry* of 1732 contained examples. The artist’s work in Northern Italy was less well recognised, if at all, outside the country, though there were published accounts of Bramante’s life and work dating from the sixteenth century. On Santa Maria delle Grazie, Samuel Rogers noted it’s “antient grotesque grandeur” (Hale, *op. cit.* p.164); Hope had paid tribute to Bramante as the author of the tribune of Santa Maria delle Grazie (Hope, *op. cit.* Vol.I, pp.534, 546); Joseph Woods found the awkward juxtaposition of nave and tribune at Santa Maria delle Grazie “one of the most picturesque compositions possible,” and had gone to Pavia partly to locate one of Bramante’s churches (Woods, *op.cit.* Vol.I, pp. 217 & 223). Street, however, was disinterested, describing Santa Maria delle Grazie as an “ugly dome” (Street, *ed.cit.* p.380). Ruskin never gave a thought to Bramante, and the Murray Handbooks of the mid-century contain only confused and indifferent attributions of spurious origin. Further studies might help to shed some light on the issue of the interpretation of Bramante’s works outside Rome by non-Italians during this period.
restorationists and their Italian counterparts. It may come as a surprise to discover that, with the exception of Zorzi and Venice, Milan turned out to be the city where such co-operation might have been most profitably developed. The key figure is Tito Vespasiano Paravicini.

Tito Vespasiano Paravicini

The architectural writer and scholar Tito Vespasiano Paravicini (1830-1899) had published works on Renaissance architecture in Lombardy, edited a short-lived periodical, L'Albo dell'Architetto, and established himself on the periphery of the architectural scene in Milan during the 1870s. During the period in question he was in the process of preparing the final volume, L'evo moderno, of a major three-volume work entitled Le Arti del Disegno in Italia, the first volume of which, by Pietro Selvatico, had been published in 1877.

As Professor Bellini has pointed out, he came to be regarded by those in the upper echelons of Milanese architectural society as something of a maverick who held strong views on restoration for which there was little sympathy among his peers. Paravicini had his own views on the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, and I would like to give these some consideration. His first known published writings on the issue, and indeed some of his earliest on the subject of restoration in general, appeared on 12 January 1879, in the form of a paper delivered to the Collegio degli Ingegneri ed

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38 See Bibliobiographies.
Architetti di Milano, 'Considerazioni sulla Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milano,' which was subsequently published in the Milanese periodical *Il Politecnico. Giornale dell'Architetto, Ingegnere ed Agronomo.*

*Il Politecnico*, established in 1853, was an important publication which carried scholarly and technical contributions by members of the building and engineering professions on subjects such as water engineering, roads, geodesics, mechanics and, increasingly, restoration. Its title recalled the extremely influential and pioneering science review *Il Politecnico* which, under the direction of the historian Carlo Cattaneo, had led the field in academic research during the 1840s and 1850s and made Milan famous as a centre of scientific activity. The periodical was also the chief organ of the Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti, a powerful society of professional men, which included Luigi Tatti, Boito, and Giuseppe Mengoni among its illustrious members. Among the numerous scientific societies of Milan, the Collegio made itself the main promoter of research and scholarship in connection with the growth and development of the metropolis, its archaeology and antiquities. Thus, the Collegio served as the forum for debate on the technical issues connected with building restoration, and the ethical issues which are engendered by them.

41 *Att del Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti di Milano XII, fasc. 1-5.* Published in *Il Politecnico* vol. 27, 1879, pp.213-7.

42 The first important paper on the subject, 'Sul Restauro degli Antichi Fabbricati,' appeared in vol. 9, 1861, pp.626-33.

43 Luigi Tatti (1808-1881). First President of the Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti and Professor at the Regia Accademia di Brera. See the monograph by Della Torre, S. *Architetto e Ingegnere Luigi Tatti 1808-1881*, Milan, F. Angeli, 1989.

44 Giuseppe Mengoni (1829-1877). Architect of the Galleria Vittorio Emmanuele, at Milan. Perhaps the best known contemporary Italian architect in England. Until his death in a fall from the scaffolding, he had been one of eight honorary corresponding members of the RIBA in Italy. Cf: Obituary *RIBA Transactions*, 1878, p.10.
Paravicini's views on restoration with reference to Santa Maria delle Grazie

Paravicini’s presentation to the Collegio degli Ingegneri e Architetti di Milano counselled in favour of a circumspect approach to the questions that the building posed. In a deliberate swipe at the architectural profession, he prefaced his analysis with a denunciation of the “inconsulti restauri,” from which the building should be protected, just as carefully as it should be protected from structural decay. To guard against this, he pointed to the necessity of a minute analysis of each part of the organism - its historical as well as structural character. Thus, careful analysis would show that the bays of the aisles of ‘Solari’s’ church are almost all different. ‘Bramante’s’ choir is decorated differently on either side of the crossing, and the lateral apses are clumsier in the detail of their decorative scheme. The timpana of the two-light windows are in a distinctive Lombard style which is most unlike anything by Bramante.

Most importantly, he casts doubt on the idea that the two different principal phases of construction should be harmonised, arguing that this was never the intention of the builders responsible for the 1490s rebuilding. On the contrary, the cupola and apse were merely a part of an unfinished campaign to reconstruct the entire edifice from one end to the other. Therefore, the implication must be that any talk of harmonising the two halves is to misconstrue and misrepresent the facts, facts which the building itself makes abundantly clear to the perspicacious observer. Such a judgement calls into question the necessity of any manipulation of components at the juncture of the two phases on the grounds that their uneasy co-existence is in any way to be interpreted as a shortcoming, a defect to be ironed out. It also undermines the
presumption which might underlie one possible procedure, that to which Mongeri almost alluded, namely that Bramante’s intentions might be deduced by analogy and therefore accurately plotted in a ‘corrective’ restoration or completion of unfinished business.

Having thus dismantled the basis of the proposition, Paravicini went on to identify those areas where the architect-restorer might legitimately apply himself: in essence, this concerns the last bay of the flank of the church, evidently added after the initial construction, and the problem of the granite blocks introduced into the construction at the base of the cupola to provide additional support in 1598. He synthesised the restorer’s challenge as follows, studiously avoiding the knotty problem of the internal juxtaposition of pointed vault and Roman-style tribune just west of the crossing:

“Can the last bay of the side of the church, evidently added after the original construction of the church, and which is used as a side entrance to the cappella maggiore, be conserved? In conserving it, should one decorate it in harmony with the relevant part of the flank, or with Moro’s part to which it is closely and logically connected? At all events, how can one harmonise Solari’s protrusion at the side with the cubic part of the Cappella Maggiore, without the existing deformity being so obvious?”

43 “L’ultima campata del fianco, evidentemente aggiunta posteriormente alla prima costruzione della chiesa che serve d’ingresso laterale, alla cappella maggiore, può essere conservata? E conservandola, devesi decorare in armonia alla parte relative del fianco, od a quella del Moro alla quale è strettamente e logicamente legata? Ed in tutti i modi, come si potrà armonizzare la sporgenza del fianco del Solari colla parte cubica della cappella maggiore, senza che appaia così evidentemente lo sconcio attuale?”

‘Considerazioni sulla Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milano,’ Il Politecnico vol. 27, 1879. p. 217
Paravicini and the English Architectural Press

The development of these ideas by Paravicini in relation to Milanese monuments in the context of a relatively small professional circle would perhaps be of considerably less value to the present thesis were it not for the fact that The Builder took a keen interest in Paravicini and his ruminations. The Milanese architect had in fact raised several issues which were of particular relevance to the restoration debate in England. Resumés duly appeared in The Builder of two of Paravicini's presentations to the Collegio - those on Santa Maria delle Grazie read at the meeting of the Collegio on 12 Jan 1879, and 'Considerazioni sul Ristauro dei Monumenti Architettonici,' read at the December 2 gathering. 46

Quite how The Builder came to be informed of these essays is a subject for speculation. There were no formal links between the Collegio and the English Journal. The Politecnico does not appear to have been one of those journals which received, through subscription or in exchange, English professional publications. The Collegio had no corresponding members in England who could have attended the meetings in question. 47 Paravicini's ideas were not seriously taken by the Milanese press, and he was in fact regarded with suspicion and hostility by most of the architectural establishment in Milan, so it is unlikely that his ideas would have been subjected to debate in the public domain. Surviving documents in the Fondo Paravicini do not indicate any correspondents in England with whom Paravicini may

have made contact by this date, but given his subsequent proximity to the SPAB and its supporters, and his evident interest in Ruskin, one must allow for the possibility that, even before July 1879, Paravicini had contacts in the English architectural establishment. The most probable explanation is that Paravicini himself sent a copy of his paper to the editors precisely because he expected his ruminations to be greeted with more interest in England.

In spite of the delay, the name of Paravicini and the set of ideas he had put forward for Santa Maria delle Grazie evidently came to the attention of the readers of Britain’s most popular architectural magazine at an early date, several months before the Italian restoration question - and the St Mark’s controversy - would hit the pages of the daily press. The arguments had a very pertinent ring at a time when Beckett’s work at St Alban’s, and its implications for the restoration argument, were a major preoccupation.

There were here several themes of interest to the English architectural press: firstly, the issue of harmonising two disharmonious structures, and at same time improving general aspect and setting for the purposes of necessary use - paying attention especially to errors and inconsistencies of design and decoration; secondly the question of completion, the imperfect monument-type, and the problem of determining criteria for refinement in the absence of documentary evidence to support a restoration to original form; a tertiary question, not to be gone into here, concerns Bramante’s contribution to the development of Renaissance architecture in Lombardy.
Paravicini & SPAB

Paravicini was clearly in touch with the prevailing anti-restoration mood in England, of which the SPAB had become the most prominent outlet, at a relatively early date. Indeed, he had already made direct contact with the SPAB and, though not highly esteemed in his own city, his relations with the Society had become vital to the Society's foreign policy.

Throughout 1880 and early 1881 the lessons of the St Mark's campaign were being carefully evaluated at the rooms of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. It seems to have been during this period that Paravicini made contact with the Society and its members. The initial connection may have been Zorzi, since the earliest reference to him that I can find is in the correspondence between Zorzi and Wallis relating to the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's. However, Paravicini's name is not among those of artists and architects recommended to Wallis by Zorzi during the period in which Wallis was recruiting adherents to the Committee, in the autumn of 1880. In any event, Paravicini was notified of the St Mark's Committee's plans and on March 12 1881 Paravicini wrote to Henry Wallis affording his full support for the Circular drafted by the Committee, a copy of which he had received.48

There is further evidence to suggest that Paravicini was known in England before 1880, in a remark made by Charles Fairfax Murray. It was referred by Murray that Henry Wallis had suggested to Paravicini in February 1881 that the Milanese

48 BM Add. MSS 38831. f.145
antiquary might consider becoming involved in establishing an analogous Society in Italy.\textsuperscript{49}

Murray had become, by the spring of 1881, Paravicini's proxy, with the Milanese antiquary conveying his concerns freely through Murray. On this occasion, Murray undertook to translate for the Society Paravicini's account of restorations at Milan, which included a candid appeal to the Society, from Paravicini, to take action against this even at the risk of "provoking national jealousies."\textsuperscript{50}

Beyond this letter, written in Murray's hand and kept at the archive of the SPAB, it is difficult to surmise the exact nature of the relationship which had developed in the preceding months. Almost nothing has survived of Murray's personal correspondence of the period, and still less of Paravicini's and Wallis'.

Murray's view of the question is of interest in that he shows signs of having accepted Paravicini's supplication cautiously. He told Marks that he had told Paravicini that

\begin{quote}
"public foreign protest and interference with Italian restoration (is) in no way beneficial and that on the contrary it irritates the national susceptibility to the point of making active enemies of those inclined to be friendly or neutral."
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{51}

It was a cautiousness borne out of experience of the drawbacks of the very vociferous, very public protests against the St Mark's restorations, which had so signally failed to mollify the same national susceptibility.

\textsuperscript{49} ALS Murray to Newman Marks, 3 May 1881. ASPAB Destructive Works in S. Gemignano
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. The original date of Paravicini's letter to Murray, which does not survive, is not known.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
Paravicini's approaches, in other respects, were warmly received, even if the Society had to admit that its strategy of public remonstrance must give way to the passive encouragement of analogous bodies in Italy itself which would be untainted by foreign interference. In the *Annual Report* for the year 1881, it was proudly, if awkwardly announced that

"the committee have received communications from its Italian correspondents and others, showing that many Italians feel most keenly the wholesale destruction which is going on amidst their ancient monuments; and the establishment of a society with similar aims to our own has been thought of by some of these gentlemen, but hitherto the scheme has taken no definite form."

**Paravicini and the influence of Morris**

Bellini has remarked how Paravicini developed a thesis which became, over the five-year period from 1879 to 1884, more and more conservationist, to the extent that he became the figure in whom are most genuinely echoed the sentiments of Ruskin and Morris, albeit within the context of Milanese academic culture, which remained assertively positivistic.

One can in fact go further than this, and point to a direct influence of Morris and the SPAB on the principles and practices which Paravicini was in the course of refining, and which he published between 1879 and 1881.

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53 Bellini, 'Note sul dibattito...' *cit*. p.897
Milano,' an article representing Paravicini's contribution to the question of the completion of a new façade for the Cathedral, Paravicini sets out his view of architectural history, and urges rigorous and systematic analysis of construction and style as the best guarantee against ill-conceived restoration. Central to his thesis is a notion perfectly exemplified in the case of Santa Maria delle Grazie - that monuments cannot be classified on the basis of style alone, but exist as an admixture, a conglomerate of epochs, styles, and artists:

"The history of architecture presents to us such a harvest of falsified periods, of misunderstood styles, of poorly classified monuments which are by the generality of men regarded as incontrovertible bastions and archetypes of a given period, that one of our most noted authors has compared the history of architecture to a ball of thread in the hands of a baby." 55

Only proper debate, he insists, can "shake from their foundations the most inveterate errors and deep-rooted prejudices." 56

He proceeds to offer an account of the constructional and stylistic properties of Milan Cathedral which rejects the hypothesis that the building was influenced by Northern European Gothic. Such a study, based on minute analysis of components in preference to generalised assumptions, should, he argued, form the basis of any future restoration programme, i.e. the completion of the building by insertion of a suitable façade. In a

55 "La storia dell'architettura ci porge tal messe d'epoche falsate, di stili fraintesi, di monumenti mal classificati, e pure dalla generalità ammessi quali capisaldi indiscutibili ed archetipi d'una data epoca, che uno dei nostri più accreditati scrittori paragonò la storia dell'architettura ad una matassa di refe stata in mano ai bimbi" 'Considerazioni sul Duomo di Milano' cit. p. 38.
56 "...scuotere dalle fondamenta i più inveterati errori e i più radicati pregiudizi." Ibid.
remark with a faintly Ruskinian ring, he appeals for the utmost consultation among experienced men so that the project:

"...might succeed in being solid and commendable in all its parts, in so far as possible, and so that our successors may find nothing in it upon which to reproach us." 57

It was in this spirit that Paravicini urged the would-be restorers of Santa Maria delle Grazie to take full account of the structural and decorative character of the monument, its variety and heterogeneity, before swallowing wholesale the speculations of historians eager to promote Bramante and Solari as sole authors. It is a notion which espouses a proposition not unlike the 'principle of equivalence' as a fundamental axiom.

Paravicini's next discussion of the restoration issue was read as a paper at the Collegio degli Ingegneri ed Architetti on 21 December 1879, at the height of the St Mark's controversy. In this article he begins to move more decisively towards a pro-conservation stance. Bellini has suggested that it is at this point that Paravicini's phraseology begins to show unmistakable signs of a knowledge of Ruskin's writings. There is no record of any form of correspondence between Paravicini and Ruskin, and no evidence exists to point to close relations with Zorzi, although, as has been said, Zorzi must have known of Paravicini before the latter became closely involved in recruiting fellow anti-restorationists to the St Mark's Committee. In any event, the idea of the architectural monument as document and testimony of ages has by now become central to Paravicini's methodology. He talks of the monument as a "page in

57 "...riuscisse l'opera solida e commendevole in ogni sua parte per quanto sia possibile, nè in essa nulla trovassero i posteri da riprovare." Ibid. p.40
the great book of history," presents a catalogue of recent errors committed by Milanese restorers, and poses searching questions: on the re-positioning of the altar of Sant' Ambrogio, may there not have been a good reason for it having originally been erected at an angle? On the regularisation of the pilasters to the facade of the church of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, at Pavia; on the decoration of the lower story of the salone of Palazzo Marino by the Municipal authorities, in a style out of keeping with the upper parts, he is highly sceptical. In these examples Paravicini observes a tendency for restoration to target precisely those monuments which are of greatest interest to the historian, those which display anomalies, irregularities, and imperfections which cannot easily be explained by science. In consequence these specimens are falsified, and historians of the future misled.

The following year Paravicini returned to the topic of restoration in an article entitled 'Appunti sul Restauro dei Monumenti', again published in Il Politecnico. This time, there is a marked change of emphasis. Paravicini has set aside his insistence on careful analysis of the parts, on scholarship, and on the need to respect all modifications, and alterations, fully embracing instead the language and precepts contained in the Manifesto of the SPAB. In fact, he prefaces his remarks with a free translation of the anti-scrape Manifesto. He cleverly avoids mentioning who are the authors of this denunciation of the restorers, even converting the collective pronoun 'we' in phrases such as "we think that those last fifty years of knowledge and attention have done more for their destruction than all the foregoing centuries of

58 'Considerazioni sul ristauro dei Monumenti architettonici.' cit. pp. 75-8.
revolution violence and contempt,”\textsuperscript{59} into ‘I’; he disguises the SPAB Manifesto as a personal meditation. He expands at length, using the ready-made SPAB philosophy as stepping stones for a sequence of observations on the decline of art, the impossibility of restoration, and the nature of forgery:

“... the idea of restoration implies in its very name how it is possible to remove from a building this or that part of its life with the sole aim of bringing the building back to the finest moment in its history, or to a unified style which it may never have possessed, with no guide other than a personal whim which identifies that which is to be respected and that which is to be demolished, in order to then fill the gap by imagining what the early builders might have done or what they had in mind. One might add that, in the course of this double process of construction and addition the entire surface of the building is necessarily spoiled, such that the appearance of age is removed even from those parts which are still left, and there is no way of allaying the suspicion on the part of the observer that it is a forgery.”\textsuperscript{60}

This was an ingenious strategy, a way of getting the anti-scrape method across with absolute anonymity. As far as I have been able to discover, there are no other published articles in Italian from this period which set out to achieve this goal. The paper shows that Paravicini assimilated the principles of English anti-scrape, and was happy to be an ambassador for the SPAB. In the course of the article, Paravicini makes reference to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. He praises its

\textsuperscript{60} “Mentre l’idea del restauro implica nel suo stesso nome come sia possibile togliere ad un monumento questa o quall’altra parte della sua vita al solo intento di condurre l’edificio ai tempi migliori della sua storia o ad una unità di stile che forse non ebbe mai senz’altra guida che il capriccio individuale che additi ciò che si deve rispettare a @PJL ENTER LANGUAGE = PCL
work in England and abroad, and expresses the wish that an analogous body might emerge in Italy, "where the need is felt perhaps more strongly than in any other place."\textsuperscript{61}

But it also reveals a personality whose approach to anti-restoration is highly sophisticated, with a heavy emphasis on the refinement of precepts in a practical discourse - Paravicini, like Zorzi before him, is no mere proselyte. As in the case of Santa Maria delle Grazie, his object is to devise principles which satisfy the specific requirements of the case. In this essay he is concerned with two such principles: firstly,

"the materials used in the construction can be important details in the history of the monument,"\textsuperscript{62}

he says, and proceeds to argue against the insertion of new grey granite in the plinth course of the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in total disregard of the original brick. (One is reminded of the assertion of Poggi to the effect that where structural considerations make it imperative, substitution of a more fitting material is permitted. According to Paravicini, the use of impermeable granite in preference to brick for the replacement shows a remarkable lack of understanding of the nature of Milanese soil and the problems of dampness); secondly,

"it is not possible to rebuild a monument in its entirety if it is not made from pieces which can be put together one by one, in such a way that the observer can be absolutely certain that, in

\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{61} Ibid. p.578.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{62} "La qualità quindi del materiale di costruzione può essere un dato importante per la storia d'un monumento." \textit{Ibid.} p.578}
CONCLUSION

Given the close correlation which existed between Morris’ and Paravicini’s views by 1880, it is perhaps surprising that Paravicini did not play a much more significant part in the SPAB strategy after that date - as significant even as that of Zorzi or Boni. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that Paravicini was perhaps the one Italian figure whose support for an Italian cell of the SPAB was public and unequivocal. His ideological position also became, as I have shown, increasingly orthodox. Murray’s support for him is quite clear, and the probability of his having established early contacts with the SPAB would tend to suggest a basis for practical collaboration. Yet he remained a low-ranking figure, merely another of the (albeit small) band of foreign sympathisers, and not a key protagonist.

The explanation probably resides in the fact that Paravicini remained an isolated figure, and his influence was perhaps never thought likely to be more than regional. Paravicini’s publications did not make the impact that Zorzi’s had made; he did not enjoy the friendship of Ruskin, nor did he command the kind of limited, but powerful support, that Zorzi - who earned the respect of a handful of important figures, Azzurri among them - commanded. Indeed, it is only in recent years that Paravicini has come to notice, and chiefly on account of the complex and advanced theories he devised (at

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63 “Non è possibile riedificare un monumento nella sua integrità se esso nonè formato da pezzi che si colleghino l’un l’altro in modo che l’osservatore possa essere intimamente convinto, che il monumento che gli sta innanzi non ammetteva sostituzione qualunque di parti, o spostamento alcuno...” Ibid. p.580
first independent of the English school, and later under the direct influence of the anti-scrape Manifesto), rather than because of any immediate impact he made on his contemporaries.

In the panorama I have sketched out in this study, Paravicini's precise practical role remains a limited one. His importance therefore lies rather in his readiness to assimilate English ideas, and his evident radicalness as a conservationist. Neither were lost on the English architectural press, which, as I have shown, found Paravicini's speculations of considerable interest, even while his own countrymen remained broadly unaware of his work, although even in this respect, Paravicini's role was certainly secondary when compared with those of Zorzi, Boni, and even Carlandi, who, while perhaps lacking Paravicini's philosophical energy, nevertheless made a more lasting and more far-reaching impact on the campaigns of the SPAB abroad. As a conservation theorist Paravicini was certainly some years ahead of his time. As a SPAB collaborator, his role was a minor one, not least because, for perhaps understandable reasons, the Society did not express particular interest in the Milanese theatre of operations, the zone of influence within which Paravicini was to remain confined throughout his working life.
PART III
FINAL CONCLUSIONS: THE SPAB IN ITALY

I have examined a range of cases, encompassing a six or seven year period, in which the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings became involved during its early years. I now come to consider the strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures of the Society’s foreign policy in respect of Italy, and the general impact of the protests on Italian public opinion.

We might say - with reservations - that the English campaigns against the restoration of St Mark’s Basilica in 1879 were a partial success. They may have prompted some members of the Venetian community to demand restraint, and there is no doubt that, partly because of the loose connection with Ruskin and Zorzi, the campaign had some supporters in Venice. Philip Webb, in Italy in 1884, certainly believed that the protest of 1879 had induced the Italians to treat their monuments with more circumspection, and that “slaughter” of the kind seen in former years was unlikely to happen again.¹ But the impact was perhaps in a different category to that made by Ruskin and Zorzi; they helped to deliver a new appreciation of Venetian history and its monuments which seems to have been much more readily assimilated. More detailed studies than have hitherto been made of Ruskin’s impact on Venetian culture as a whole would be of great advantage to us here, especially in terms of his influence on Giacomo Boni and Count Zorzi himself. The Memorials and Meetings of 1879, however, were seen as arrogant and mischievous

¹ALS Webb to H.W.Brewer, 22 April 1887. ASPAB Italian Restoration.
foreign interference, based on spurious reports and prejudicial in tone. My account shows clearly how and why this was so. In what sense, then, can we speak of the St Mark’s campaigns as a success?

I have made reference to the international dimension of the campaign. It was the first international effort to protect and preserve monuments which, towards the end of the century, were being seen not as national property but as world-wide heritage, not owned but held in trust by one nation on behalf of all. In this respect, the St Mark’s protest was a precursor to what has become, in the twentieth century, a familiar preoccupation guided and controlled by charters and agreements. But it stood in contradistinction to the values of liberty and self-government. The right of one nation to interfere in the affairs of another was, with the growth of nationalism, a sensitive matter. The Italian Risorgimento was not simply a movement aimed at the reclamation of territory, but a movement strongly underpinned by Mazzini’s doctrine of nationhood. As the historian E.H.Carr has pointed out, the interests of self-determination were at that time identified with the general well-being of mankind, and Mazzini’s philosophy of international harmony exemplified a notion of global equilibrium in which every country, acting autonomously in its own interests, acted also in the interests of all.2 Thus Italy, so recently brought together as a single nation, was naturally susceptible to claims made by foreigners on its national patrimony, at a time when the intellectual basis of statehood were the principles of sovereignty and of laissez-faire.

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We should not under-estimate the passions which were aroused by the trade in art treasures which drained the nation state of its birthright. Struggling against this, and armed with the principles of self-determination and freedom from external influence, the Italians reacted with undisguised hostility to the St Mark’s protest. It took time for the Italian press to accept the English incursion, but once the English mind had adjusted itself to this fundamental antagonism, the restoration question in Italy took on a new form. By middle of the 1880s, there were those who were anxious to emphasise the value of foreign intervention, to reassure Italians that utterances made in the interests of art were not to be construed as threats to political and economic freedom. The following, telling passage, quoted from a Venetian newspaper article of 1886, illustrates my point:

“Affairs of artistic or archaeological nature differ very much from those of a purely political or social character, and it is exclusively as artists or archaeologists that foreign critics have made protests or suggestions with regard to the treatment of relics of the past in Italy. We should be among the first to stigmatise as unwarrantable and objectionable any attempt on the part of our countrymen or any other foreigners to interfere in the political affairs of Italy, however strongly we might cling to the right to hold and express our opinions on these matters. But the treatment of an artistic monument or record of the past stands upon quite a different foundation, and may well be treated upon broader and more cosmopolitan principles.”

As an episode in international relations, the St Mark’s affair established an important and recognised principle which is still relevant in today’s world.

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The attempt to further the cause of anti-restoration in Florence and Tuscany was, on the face of it, a defeat for the SPAB. Italian reaction was too hostile, the Society's policy too blunt and too easily swayed by rumour and speculation. The absence of Ruskin - who did not figure in the debate about Florentine restorations - was perhaps a contributory factor in the sense that the campaigns to protect Venice benefited greatly from the patronage of the one English critic whose influence among many Venetians was unquestioned; without an evident and eloquent champion like Ruskin, the old Florence campaigners were seen as haughty foreign intruders plainly not worthy of more than a few sarcastic lines in La Nazione. The SPAB was even more remote from the real events than had been the case in Venice, and relied on the rigid and somewhat isolated Anglo-Florentine community for its information. During the St Mark's affair, the Society profited from the availability of English architects ready to go to Venice to corroborate claims and counter-claims, and took heart from the growing band of Italian and international supporters who were recruited into the movement. In Florence, however, conspicuously few Italians adhered themselves to the anti-restorationists' pretensions. Even in 1898 Florentine support for the expatriate Society for the Preservation of Old Florence (formed under British initiative, though later to incorporate a number of influential Italian writers and artists among its adherents) was limited at first to just a handful of conservative aristocrats, mostly members of the same literary high-society circles in which Lady Paget, 'Vernon Lee' and Herbert Horne were active. On this later occasion the spark which ignited the protest was to be a book, containing photographs of the old Centro, originally written by

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4 Even the most well-known of these, the Prince Tommaso Corsini, may perhaps have acted as much out of a sense of rivalry with the chief promoter of the rebuilding scheme, his political adversary and successor as
Carocci, and re-issued as a translation with the title *Bygone Florence.* The book served to increase English fears of the kind that had been circulating in *The Academy, Athenaeum* and elsewhere in reaction to reports from English observers standing before the Bigallo, the Ponte Vecchio, and Santa Croce. It was in response to the message of this book that Luca Beltrami would later find the following words of criticism, words which were as true of the English response to Florentine restorations in 1882 as they would be in 1898:

"Let us make no mistake - these foreign interventions are unpalatable to our self esteem, and let us not deny that, at times, the cries from across the Alps assume the aspect of a stunt, caused by an inexact and deficient understanding of local conditions. In the present case the agitation was, it seems, provoked by the publication of a collection of photographs of the now disappeared centre of Florence; it is certain that, in looking on those eminently picturesque views, and in thinking that all those old fragments have been lost, one feels a sense of regret ... it stirs in us an almost fanatical desire, under which the intrinsic value of the thing which has been destroyed tends quite readily to assume exaggerated proportions."

The contrast is clear: on the one hand the English remonstrance was seen in Florence as the expression of exaggerated foreign attachment to the picturesque remains of a city long

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Mayor, the Count Pietro Torrigiani.

5 The book, published in Florence by Galletti & Cocci and translated by the Anglo-Florentine Henry Huntington, was the English version of Carocci’s *Firenze Scomparsa* of 1897.

6 “Non ci nascondiamo come questi interventi stranieri si presentino, in generale, poco graditi al nostro amor proprio, e non negheremo neppure come, talvolta, i clamori oltramontani assumano l’aspetto di una montatura, causata da una inesatta e deficicnte conoscenza delle condizioni locali. Nel caso attuale l’agitazione oltrarnontana venne fomentata, a quanto pare, dalla pubblicazione di una raccolta di fotografie del vecchio centro di Firenze ora scomparso; e certo, nel vedere quelle vedute eminentemente pittoriche, e nel pensare che tutte quelle memorie sono scomparse, si prova un senso di rimpianto... suscita in noi un desiderio direi quasi morboso, per cui il valore intrinseco di ciò che venne distrutto tende facilmente ad assumere proporzioni esagerate" ‘Il Centro di Firenze’ *Corriere della Sera,* 23-4 March, 1899, and ‘Per la Difesa di Firenze,’ 4-5 April, 1899.
in need of re-invigoration, a superabundance of sentimentality on the part of mostly absent foreigners; on the other hand, in Venice, the same clamour had drawn further attention to the more questionable interference of an eighty-year old architect - whose work in any case was seen as the conclusion of an old Austrian programme - in a building in which the value of age, colour and the effect of time had been more minutely explored within a rigorous critical framework.

An additional problem which the protesters faced in Florence and Tuscany was that their efforts often came too late. The suspension of works at St Mark's had created a situation in which debate was seen as beneficial. The national government and press, as well as the local, were closely involved in the matter, and it was perhaps grudgingly acknowledged that the St Mark’s question, from an international point of view, was a case of Italy-on-trial - a test of national resolve, a public examination of Italy’s artistic credentials. In Florence and San Gimignano, however, the English protests were consumed by provincialism, incapable even of denting the carapace of Italy’s highly-evolved bureaucracy, let alone of reversing decisions which, in most cases, had travelled too far along the corridors of officialdom to be recovered. The Bigallo protest was too late, the Palazzo Comunale protest was too late, and the attempts to halt the demolition of the Centre of Florence had no hope of succeeding in the fervid climate of renewal which had gripped Florence in the early 1880s. The relatively successful outcome of the St Mark’s affair undoubtedly encouraged these subsequent campaigns, but it seems that the extension of the strategy to other parts of Italy merely confirmed how unique the Venice
situation was, and how difficult it would be to achieve the same results in the provincial towns of Italy.

However, in another respect - and this is true of all the campaigns - we can observe how the English attack served to highlight the deficiency of Italian public administration. As I have said, some papers were more attuned to this than others. Journals such as the *Fanfulla della Domenica, La Nazione, Italia Artistica, and La Riforma*, which became the chief protagonists in the internal debate which ensued, offer some clues as to the impact of the foreign protesters in this regard. Thus, when the French press began to express support for the English manoeuvre during 1880, the *Fanfulla della Domenica* commented:

"...we have reached the point where we hear a Frenchmen asking help of the English to monitor the conservation of Italian monuments. We ourselves can turn scarlet with embarrassment, but this will accomplish nothing. When we have lobbied the press, Parliament, and government to put an end to this opprobrium we will have done the last duty that remains to us; and if nobody moves, may the English and French come and guard the masterworks of our forefathers for us. The (foreign) superintendents of art will then fade away; their only office, that which they have diligently exercised, of slapping the government and citizens of Italy once a week, will no longer exist."7

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7 "...siamo arrivati a tale da sentire un Francese chiedere aiuto agli Inglesi per tutelare la conservazione dei monumenti Italiani! Noi, come noi, possiamo arrossirino sino alla punta dei capelli; ma con questo non si riuscirà a nulla. Quando avrem dunque scongiurato la stampa, il parlamento, il governo a por fine a questo obbrobrio, avrem compiuto l'unico dovere che ci spetta. E se nessuno si muove, vengano pure gli Inglesi e i Francesi, custodiscano loro i capolavori dei nostri vecchi. Il provveditorato artistico si potrà allora finalmente sopprimere: gli mancherà il solo ufficio al quale provvede con diligen te solerzia: quello di procurare al governo e ai cittadini d'Italia uno schiaffo per settimana."‘Cronaca del vandalismo’ *Fanfulla della Domenica* Anno II n.4, 31 Oct. 1880.p.3.
Italian newspapers were beginning to show greater concern for the monuments of Italy. This concern often took the form, as I have suggested, of fierce criticism of the Italian authorities. In Florence, the fiasco over the restorations of Santa Trinità, begun at last in 1884, played a considerable part in the process (La Nazione repeatedly attacked the Commissione Conservatrice over its hesitant handling of the restoration), whilst Carocci’s influential journal Arte e Storia provided a platform for heated discussion of wider issues (supporters of Castellazzi’s project at Santa Trinità and a small band of anti-restorers, including Emilio Marcucci, sparred over the implications for the monument at frequent intervals in the pages of the periodical); Webb thought the shortage of government funds for restoration a blessing, as indeed it was, but the Italians found it a shameful inadequacy when the sheer scale of deterioration throughout the kingdom was taken into account. Criticism of the absence of public funds for preservation went hand in hand with relentless attacks on the bureaucracy and committee-culture of Italy, which was ripe for reform. One commentator demanded to know:

"whether, in the beautiful, in the artistic city of Florence, the care and conservation of important monuments is being entrusted to the followers of the Mahdi or the glorious tribesmen of the Danakili."

"In Italy we have a real surfeit of monument inspectors and conservation committees, but generally speaking they inspect and invigilate but little, if at all."

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8 "...se nella bella, nella artistica Firenze, la tutela e la conservazione degli insigni monumenti viene affidata ai seguaci del Mahdi o ai componenti delle gloriose tribù dei Danahili." ‘Santa Trinità’ Italia Artistica Anno XV n.6, 8 April 1884. pp.1-2.

9 “In Italia abbiamo un vero lusso di Ispettori di Monumenti e di Commissioni Conservatrici che però non ispezionano e non veggano (generalmente parlando) che poco o nulla.” ‘I Restauri e la Custodia delle Opere d’Arte’ Italia Artistica Anno XVIII n.9, 12 July 1887. p.1.
another author lamented.

Perhaps the Italian press was driven in part by its need to take on the foreign press, to react against foreign interference which struck at the heart of Italian national identity, and to tackle its own problems in its own way. The European press in general began to take a more active interest in historic preservation during the 1880s, and we must allow for the probability - which was certainly felt among members of the SPAB - that this was in part due to the diffusion of the values of the anti-restoration movement through newspapers and journals across the continent. The Society claimed to have set an example which had been followed:

"It is a matter for congratulation that the example of the Society has done much to stimulate public opinion on the continent, or has led to a more accurate appreciation of the value of ancient buildings."\(^{10}\)

I would agree that the campaigns I have described in this thesis did provoke public opinion in this way; but it must be remembered that the Italian response was not in the main characterised by reasoned debate, discussion and respectful tolerance of foreign opinion, but by an extremely hostile, headstrong and negative compulsion to defy these foreign oppressors:

"Let us move ceaselessly to conserve our great art treasures as much as possible..."

\(^{10}\) SPAB. 9th Annual Report, 1886. p.57. In 1890 a slow but sure infiltration of the Society’s principles was again reported to the Committee. Cf: 13th Annual Report, 1890.p.59.
said Michele Caffi in a letter to Guido Carocci,

"let us ensure once and for all that foreigners can no longer write 'Italians do not respect their ancient buildings'...""11

I do not believe that the Society's principles, values and ethics - its repair-not-restoration philosophy and its principle of equivalence - were digested in Italy. Rather, it was under the influence of the Society and others who interested themselves publicly in the condition of Italian monuments, that Italy was provoked into confronting the failures of its own governments, local, regional and national, to attend to the urgent and compelling needs - financial, administrative and technical - of preservation. This process, once embarked upon, very quickly showed that it could yield the desired results. One correspondent of the Society, on a visit to Italy in 1888, expressed the view that in matters of preservation, Italy was

"the only power which exhibits any earnestness in the matter. Both France and England subsidise archaeological research, but their attention in Africa, Egypt and India is more directed to the evolution of ancient history than to preserving the priceless monumental record itself."12

By 1890 (partly for reasons I shall refer to below) the anti-restorers of England, we should not be surprised to note, were actively seeking advice from the Italians, and from Giacomo Boni in particular.13

11 'Pavia - monumenti e ricordi' Arte e Storia Anno II n.19, 13 May 1883. pp.146-7.
13 ALS Webb to Boni, 29 June 1890, ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, I.
Before coming on to Boni, there is another development which should not be overlooked. It must be understood that some of the principles of anti-restoration were being absorbed by foreign sympathisers in other parts of Europe, who increasingly banded themselves together into active private societies which were in some way based on the English model. One of the first of these was the Société des Amis des Monuments Parisiens, formed in 1885. The Société had close links with the SPAB through its secretary Charles Normand and through the painter Adolphe Guillon. Since the early 1880s there had been speculation at the SPAB that Italian artists might soon take control of the problem of restoration there. James Bryce had said, in his address to the Committee on the occasion of its fifth Annual Meeting, that he had heard

"that a Society is already being formed in Italy, at any rate Italian artists are thinking of forming such an organisation..." 14

Since the pace of destruction at home in the previous year still outweighed the speed at which the Society's members were increasing in number, one assumes that the Society would have welcomed any confirmation of this sooner rather than later, so as to be able to concentrate its resources on English campaigns. 15

But Italy was quite slow to join this trend. This is reflected on one level in the lack of artistic periodicals. With the exception of Arte e Storia, and occasional pieces such as Ricci's in Fanfulla della Domenica, there were virtually no artistic journals capitalizing

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on the gradually-evolving mood of disenchantment which I have described above. One of the first publications to take frequent interest in restoration was Archivio Storico dell'Arte, founded in 1888. In Rome, the Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale (founded in 1872) monitored excavation and reconstruction works the ancient parts of the city, and was occasionally critical of the Government's over-zealous interventions there; but it was not until the 1890s, with foundation of such journals as Marzocco in Florence, that Italian critics like Beltrami and Boito began methodically set out the parameters of a new restoration debate, markedly different from the outmoded discourses of Giuseppe Poggi and his peers. This debate would only subsequently be taken up in earnest by Illustrazione Italiana, Nuova Antologia, and other more established publications.

As for private societies, here too Italy was in no hurry to follow the foreign example. In December 1880 the Fanfulla reported that Prince Baldassare Odescalchi, a Roman aristocrat and distinguished collector of antiques, had put forward a motion to the Associazione Artistica Internazionale to the effect that the Associazione

"might set up a commission to study the question of the conservation and restoration of national monuments, and propose to the government the most adequate means and the best and most conscientious method of restoration as is required by the said monuments."16

16 "...nomina una commissione perché studi la questione della conservazione e del restauro dei monumenti nazionali, e proponga al governo i mezzi più accossi e il migliore e più coscienzioso sistema di restauro quale viene reclamato dai monumenti medesimi." Fanfulla della Domenica n.49, 5 Dec. 1880. Odescalchi became a member of the SPAB, and the Society's seventh Annual Report notified members of his efforts in presenting a memorandum to the Italian Government on this issue (SPAB. 7th Annual Report, 1884. pp.38-9). Odescalchi's precise influence, however, is difficult to gauge without a far more detailed study of his life and correspondence, a major undertaking which I have been in no position to carry out.
The writer called on provincial and regional societies to follow this lead, but the effect seems to have been negligible. It was not until 1890, and the foundation of the Associazione Artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura, that Italy had a non-governmental organisation dedicated explicitly to the protection and preservation of architectural monuments - and then only in Rome. Ultimately, government and legislative reforms outpaced the process, to the extent that we can correctly assert that private activity made almost no real impact on improved recording, analysis and conservation in Italy as a whole (though isolated instances of the impact of private societies in individual towns and cities could be cited).

Thus we see that Italy, not only in the press but also in the formation of private Societies, began to take control of the issue of restoration. In so doing, Italy rendered foreign interference increasingly redundant.

In response to this situation, we can see that by 1886 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings already reacted in a much more judicious way to reports of Italian restoration. In considering the approach adopted by the Society in the cases that were brought to its attention in 1887, we find additional factors which help to explain the declining urgency of the Italian restoration question - the 'fading away' to which the writer in Fanfulla alluded - which was felt in England at the end of the decade.
One indication of this can be seen in the way that W. Thackeray Turner, Thomas Wise's successor, handled the correspondence he received from H.W.Brewer, an architect and member of the Society, in connection with several cases which were brought to his attention in 1887. Brewer was alarmed at the presence of scaffolding inside the Cathedral at Orvieto, and disturbed by the effects of recent restorations to frescoes at Assisi. He communicated his concern to the Society in March 1887.\textsuperscript{17} Carlandi was immediately informed.\textsuperscript{18} Brewer wrote again to express his fears over the restorations under way at the church of St John Lateran, in Rome, in May.\textsuperscript{19}

Webb had visited Assisi in 1885 and been satisfied with the works in progress there (see above), and the Society took no further action. In answer to Thackeray Turner's request for confirmation of the Roman works, a correspondent (either J.H.Middleton or Carlandi) was able to report that remonstrance would be useless as the monument was under papal jurisdiction, but that

"if anything can be done the local Soc. in Rome will do it. They are quite alive to the danger."\textsuperscript{20}

Here we touch again on the timing of Webb's visit to Italy in the winter of 1884-5, which came at a crucial moment. Webb's visit had what I believe to have been important consequences for the Society. Firstly, it exposed one of the Society's few architects to the real condition of Italian buildings and the manner of their restoration. Webb, I suspect,\textsuperscript{17 ALS Brewer to Turner, 17 March 1887, ASPAB Italian Restoration.} \textsuperscript{18 ALS Turner to Brewer, 1 April 1887, ASPAB Italian Restoration.} \textsuperscript{19 ALS Brewer to Webb, 2 May 1887, ASPAB Italian Restoration.} \textsuperscript{20 ALS Turner to Brewer, 20 May 1887, ASPAB Italian Restoration.
found plenty to criticise, but also reasons to be hopeful, and he probably found that things were no worse in Italy than they were in England. He was reassured to find workmen at the upper church of S.Francesco at Assisi repairing deteriorated wall-paintings quite "carefully" and "scientifically," using a neutral render of lime and sand.\textsuperscript{21} He wrote to George Price Boyce expressing growing confidence in the way Italy was now handling its ancient buildings, though he considered that there was still room for improvement:

"I believe that they really are a little more careful in Italy than they were, but much mischief still goes on. - To show the kind of stupidity in the Italian mind as to buildings, I will instance a thing I noticed the other day. I was going into Santa Croce again one afternoon and found masons at work rubbing down the marble work of the new front there, which was only finished a few years ago, to make it look quite white again; some tone of time was actually improving the look of the dull modern work, & it was too much for the neat & weak modern mind, so they set themselves to grind it off.- however, there is but little spare money in the country and things are not being done here on the large scale they are in France. I believe that St Mark's at Venice is safer now than it was before we made the row."\textsuperscript{22}

The second key development which Webb's tour ushered in was his meeting, and subsequent friendship, with Boni. Unlike in its previous interventions, the Society had by the mid-1880s established a working rapport with Carlandi. Carlandi's value to the Society increased substantially once he had taken up permanent residence in Italy again, in 1886, after several years in England. But Carlandi was a painter, not an architect. Of greater importance, therefore was the recruitment of Giacomo Boni to the Society's

\textsuperscript{21} ALS Webb to Brewer, 22 April 1887. ASPAB Italian Restoration.
\textsuperscript{22} ALS Webb to Boyce, 5 Jan. 1885. BM Add. MSS 45354. f.214.
Fig. 21 Giacomo Boni, aged 32 (Courtauld Institute).
ranks. Boni had joined the Society in 1885. He was known personally to Philip Webb, Charles Fairfax Murray, George Wardle, John Ruskin (who employed him as a draughtsman in the early 1880s) and W.D.Caroe. He successfully defused the Society’s concern over the Lion Fountain at Venice in July 1886, reassuring the members that he had taken the matter in hand. With the publication of pamphlets on restoration such as L’Avvenire dei Nostri Monumenti (1883) and Vecchie Mura (1885) Boni showed himself eminently capable not only of representing the Society’s interests in Italy but of far surpassing its effectiveness by virtue of his own reasoned, scientific and searching method of inquiry into the problems of old buildings, repair and restoration.

The relationship developed over the ensuing decade and therefore falls outside the scope of this thesis, but its significance in terms of the future course of Anglo-Italian relations at the SPAB cannot be overstated. It is worth remarking that when Boni was appointed State Inspector of Ancient Monuments in 1888 he asked Webb to send him copies of the Society’s Manifesto and Statutes which he planned to use in the preparation of a draft law for the protection of monuments. There can be no more decisive proof that the Society was taken more seriously in the 1890s than it had been in the 1880s. Boni’s role in this is

23 ALSS Turner to Boni, 23 July 1886 & Boni to Turner, 28 July 1886, ASPAB Venice, the Lion Fountain.
24 Boni’s methods did not always meet with the approval of the SPAB. J.H.Middleton was critical of his approach to the treatment of mosaics, which Boni had set out in a recent pamphlet “which tells one little or nothing, except, alas, that even Boni would not object to new mosaic being put in the old pavement.” ASL Middleton to George Wardle, 22 Sept. 1887. ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, I.
25 Boni’s influence at the SPAB, at the RIBA, and on restoration theory in England in general is the subject of a thesis in itself. Eva Tea’s assertion that by 1890 Boni, by virtue of having won the confidence of Webb and others, had engineered a turnaround in British attitudes to Italian restoration, is one which I have no hesitation in endorsing. Cf: Tea, E. Giacomo Boni nella Vita del suo Tempo (2 vols.), Milan, Ceschina, 1932. Vol.I, p.222.
26 ALS Boni to Webb, 19 May 1888, ULCI Correspondence of Philip Webb, I.
irrefutable, and his value to the Society in the 1890s should be clearly stated: the announcement of Boni's promotion was greeted with immense gratification by the SPAB, and in the closure of this important, hazardous and ultimately decisive chapter in the evolution of conservation philosophy, it was another defining circumstance.

I have sketched out in my thesis only the early beginnings of a preoccupation with Italian restoration which continued into the next century. In subsequent studies, the role of Boni will, I hope, be more thoroughly assessed. The importance of Philip Webb as one of the Society's most influential strategists (and one of its few architects) is already due for serious examination. Carlandi will perhaps remain a shadowy figure unless and until more details about his life and friendships are unearthed.

In conclusion let us simply remark that by 1890 the Society's first objective in Italy - that of raising awareness as to the damage being wrought by ill-conceived restoration - was almost wholly redundant. The climate of opinion in Italy had changed since 1879; latent opposition in Italy to unnecessary works of restoration was now ripening, and the torch was now firmly in the hands of the Italians themselves. Through the activities of Boni in the field, and through the development by Camillo Boito and Luca Beltrami of firm criteria for restoration and conservation works, Italy would make great strides over the succeeding decades. In the provision of legislative measures to protect the historic estate, Italy has shown far greater commitment to the question than most other European countries.

countries. British interest in the Italian restoration question, however, has scarcely diminished. The concern which has of late been shown in such undertakings as the stabilization of the Leaning Tower at Pisa, the cleaning of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, the restoration of Collosseum, and, most notably in the future of Venice through the work of the Venice in Peril Fund, show that foreign involvement in Italian conservation issues is as pronounced today as it was in the 1880s, and the lessons learned through Italian experience continue to provide important models, shaping the progress of conservation technology and philosophy alike.²⁸

²⁸ A recent article by R. Covington illustrates the breadth of interest in Italian work, and highlights some of the prevailing concerns of the foreign community in relation to Italian practice and, especially, to the administration of Italy's cultural heritage by government agencies. 'Letter from Italy' Art & Antiques vol. 15, May 1993. pp.78-81.
PART IV
APPENDIX A.1: DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO ST MARK’S, VENICE

A.1.1 Memorial of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to the Italian Minister of Public Instruction, 10 November 1879.

To his Excellency the Minister of Public Works of Italy.

We the undersigned, architects, artists, men of letters, and others, lovers of art and students of history, having been informed that the rebuilding or renewal of the Great Façade of St. Mark’s Church, at Venice, is under consideration, venture most respectfully to address your Excellency, and to express a hope that you will give your attention to some consideration as contained in the following memorial, which we make bold to lay before you on the ground of the universality of the interest in a building which has always been a centre of attraction for people of taste and cultivation.

In an admirable picture by Gentile Bellini, preserved in the Academy at Venice, there is, as you are doubtless aware, an accurate representation of this miracle of art as it then existed; and, comparing this with the building as it is now, we can see clearly that the façade has suffered little from the ravages of time since the end of the fifteenth century. Almost the only notable change is the substitution of comparatively modern mosaics for the ancient ones; though even of these a beautiful and perfect specimen is left us in the doorway at the north end of the façade. The delicate carvings and mouldings are as sharp and clear as if only finished yesterday; the shafts of rare marbles, collected with such care and pains, are still in their places; the marble slabs that cover the walls have not fallen down; and, in short, the whole front remains for us a storehouse of instruction in the history of style, and in the practice of architecture.

But furthermore, the lapse of time has done more than merely pass harmless over the invention and incident wrought out by the original builders; rather it has glorified them; it has cast a veil of beautiful tone over the surface, which no device of man’s hand could accomplish; it has softened whatever was crude, without hiding anything that was delicate; it has, we may say, restored those rare and laboured stones to nature without taking them from art.

Nor is that all. If this excellent work of art so kindly dealt with by nature had been preserved to the world with scanty or no records of its origin it would be precious indeed; how much more precious is it then, being as it is a very hive of history and tradition; a relic of the wonderful state of Venice in the days when she was the link between the East and the West, and the foundress of European commerce. What a treasure the world has in this lovely building, schemed by men whose noble and dramatic lives have made their names household words at every hearth of the civilised world!

And if this art, history, and beauty of surface still exist in the building, and make the square of St. Mark’s one of the classical spots of the earth, how lamentably rash must any alteration be. We are compelled to ask, what is there to restore, when all that architects, painters, and historians seek for is there in full measure? And if such restoration were desirable, it would be impossible. And in the vain attempt at it, the total loss of that beauty of form and surface, and the historical interest which the building now possesses, would not be risked merely, but certainly incurred. For every age has had its own style of art, bred of its own thoughts and aspirations, and every change in these latter has immediately received its due expression in art. The imitation of the workmanship of past times, therefore, must be carried out by those whose daily lives, in common with those of all modern workmen, are passed amid thoughts strange to that
workmanship. They cannot understand its forms, which are repellant to their instincts; the rudeneses, of which most medieval work is full, seem ridiculous to them; its excellencies are not those they have been aiming at; they work, therefore, fettered doubly, by their own traditions and by those of the past. The very central point and reason for existence of the ancient work is missed by them, and they produce a mere caricature of it. The building dies under their hands.

The loss of the time-softened surface of an ancient building by the process of renewal is obvious enough, and it might have been thought that no less obvious would be the loss of its historical interest as a genuine document: indeed, this is allowed universally in the case of buildings that are beyond a certain age. No one, we imagine, has suggested the restoration of the Parthenon, of the temple of Philae, or the Circles of Stonehenge; yet we fail to see that the past of Venice is less a part of history than that of Greece, Egypt, or England, or that the study of it should be denied to the lovers of freedom and progress.

We also beg to remind your Excellency that the rebuilding of the façade would certainly necessitate the destruction of the historically interesting and artistically unrivalled mosaics that at present adorn the ceiling of the portico. We say destruction, because though the restoration of several parts of the mosaics of the interior has been attempted, the result has been the loss of all beauty and interest in those parts, in spite of the skill and care which undoubtedly have been employed in those restorations.

On all grounds, therefore, we believe that any rebuilding of the façade of St. Mark's Church, any renewal of its beautiful and venerable surface, will be an irreparable misfortune to art.

As to the soundness of its structure we are not in a position to express any definite opinion, but we are confident that, if it be threatened, it is within the power of science to devise a remedy which would restore its stability without moving a stone or altering the present surface in the least.

If, on the contrary, that surface is tampered with, all will disappear for which the surface is now valued, nor will it ever be possible to bring it back again.

Such, your Excellency, are our firm convictions on this matter, and they urge us to plead earnestly with you for, at least, delay and further consideration of the question - a prayer that we feel sure will be widely echoed throughout Europe and America among cultivated people.

In conclusion, we beg your Excellency to excuse us if in pressing any point, our words have been too warm, since we trust you will believe us to be actuated by that gratitude to Italy, our instructress in the Arts, and by that sympathy both with her past and present life, which is universal in all civilised countries, and is felt in none we believe more strongly than in England.

Comments

The Memorial, dated 10 November 1879, was prepared by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. It is fair to assume that Morris, and perhaps Henry Wallis, were its main authors, though J.J.Stevenson, Philip Webb and others could have had a hand in it.

Copies were sent out to prospective signatories the same day by William Morris, who began to receive replies the following day, November 11. The Archive of the Society (St
Mark's Venice files) contains copies of the Memorial, a great number of letters of adherence, and a handlist of all the signatories, running to several thousand names. The Memorial was published in The Times, 19 Nov. 1879. p.8, and The Architect vol. 22, 15 Nov. 1879. p.289. On 22 November Edward Poynter contacted Morris to say that he had completed a translation of the Memorial, with help from (Sir Arthur?) Acton. (ALS Poynter to Morris, 22 Nov. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's). It was presumably a translation, possibly this one, which Newman Marks forwarded to Augustus Paget, together with a list of signatories, on 2 December (see Part II, chapter 1).

The Memorial was initially addressed to the Minister of Public Works before it was pointed out that the correct authority should in fact have been the Ministry of Public Instruction.

Reference to Bellini's painting, Procession in St Mark's Square, in the Academy calls to mind John Bunney's role. It is unclear whether he was consulted on the wording of the Memorial - he wrote that "it will scarcely do to make known the contents of the memorial among Italians" (ALS Bunney to Morris, 16 Dec. 1879, ASPAB Venice St Mark's, quoted in: Unrau, op. cit. p.198) - but Bunney had been working on a large canvas for Ruskin illustrating the present appearance of the façade, a project for which Bellini's painting provided a valuable documentary precedent. Ruskin had commissioned the painting in January 1877 and it was completed by 1882, Ruskin having intended to pay for the painting using funds from his Memorial Studies collection (I am grateful to Ms
Julie Milne of Sheffield City Council Arts & Museums Department for providing me with information on this commission).

The tone and content, in so far as it emphasises the impossibility of restoration, and the irreconcilable nature of old and new workmanship, owe much to Ruskin's introduction to Zorzi's Osservazioni intorno ai restaueri interni ed esterni della Basilica di San Marco. Of some interest, however, are the references in paragraph 6 to the Parthenon, Philae and Stonehenge. Here, the 'universal' principle referred originates in a distinction, first made by Freeman, and later elaborated by Scott, between antiquities and Medieval buildings in use - the former being structures which have essentially ceased to perform as architecture in the functional sense, and the latter, ideally at any rate, corresponding to ancient buildings which retain their functional value, such as Medieval churches. The Memorial repudiates such differentiation on the basis of utility, re-iterating a 'monument-as document' approach identical with that expressed by J.J.Stevenson in his paper 'Architectural Restoration: its principles and practice' Sessional Papers of the Royal Institute of British Architects 1876-7 vol. 27, 1877. pp.219-35.
A.1.2 Letter of George Edmund Street to the Times, 21 November 1879.

To the Editor of the Times,

So much has been said about the contemplated restoration, renovation, or possible rebuilding of the western facade of St. Mark's, that I fear the fact will be overlooked that already a great part of the church has been dealt with, and that consequently the protests which are now being made and the memorials which are being signed are in no sense whatever conjectural, but are strictly warranted by what has already been done. Already St. Mark's has been for many years in the hands of restorers; and where they have been at work, they have almost absolutely renewed the marble work, and have absolutely renewed the precious mosaics and the not less precious pavement. The exterior of the north wall of the nave was refaced some years ago. The old carved stones were cleaned up, and the marble slabs with which the wall was faced were all either replaced by new or cleaned and polished afresh. Every atom of the lovely colour given by centuries of exposure was carefully removed, and the consequence was that for years we artists have ceased to look at this north wall with any interest or admiration. In 1877, when I was last in Venice, the south side of the nave was being similarly treated, and, as a matter of course, the result is said on all hands to be the same in its disastrous character. At the same time I was shocked to see that the whole north aisle of the nave had been repaved with new materials not after the old design in pattern, and laid with an exactness in every direction which contrasted most painfully to my eye with the old and beautiful surface of the floors of the rest of the church, softened in colour by time, exquisite in design, and in one particular - the undulating surface - though not quite unique, very nearly so, and not more rare than lovely. Some, indeed, may choose to maintain that this waving surface was only the result of accident, though it was strange that walls and piers should all be upright and without bulges or settlements when the pavement between them was so contorted. But, be this as it may, the result was beautiful; and no artist exists who will not grieve with me over the destruction of such an incident in this marvellous building. Unhappily, the work once begun is going on. I hear that even now the pavement of the north transept is being taken up with a view to renewal, and it is almost too late for the most powerful protests to stay this mischief. No less sad is the fate of the mosaics on the walls and roofs, if we may judge of what will be done by what has lately happened. The Baptistery roof and part of its walls were covered with mosaics. The works in progress on the outside of this part of the church caused a settlement in one of the vaults. In 1877 I saw this shored up. In 1879 not a particle of the old mosaics have been left on the walls or vaults. The whole is new. The old material - imperishable in itself - was seen by several informants lying in a large heap of rubbish. Another bought for a few lire a large and perfect fragment of exquisite workmanship. The idea of those in charge of the work is evidently that a good copy of an old mosaic is quite as good as the old mosaic itself. This cannot be true. For, first, it is quite impossible to copy such work with more than the roughest approach to accuracy, and in the next place the modern mode of manipulation is so entirely unlike the old that even a rough likeness to the old work is not secured.

Well, Sir, I fear to make my letter too long; but I think it will be allowed that with such facts before us in the past we are amply justified in anticipating the very worst in the future, unless some great change comes over the practice of those who have the charge of this once glorious church. It is difficult to name any building in Europe to which the same considerations apply with greater force. If we heard that the interior of the Sistine chapel was to be cleaned and repaired, and that all the frescoes on its walls and roof were to be repainted in careful imitation of the originals, would not the whole world be justified in protesting? Yet there is absolutely no difference in principle between such a work and that which has already been done at St. Mark's. The whole essence of the interest of such works is the human and historical interest of the decoration of the walls. At St. Mark's we have this throughout. Every portion of the surface is covered with work which can never be repeated - the work of the painter, of the sculptor, of the mosaicist, of the maker of pavements. Such work cannot be renewed. It is destroyed in the process. All restoration is at least a risk; but when it concerns only such members of a building as were in the first place executed to order by a number of mere labourers, it may be done, if done carefully. But the work which shows in every stroke the invention of the man who did it can never be dealt with, as it has been at St. Mark's, without the entire loss of all that made it precious. For these reasons it seems to me that all of us, whether in Oxford, Cambridge,
or London, who are moving in this matter are fully justified in what we are doing and only to be blamed for not having spoken in the same way long ago.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE EDMUND STREET

14, Cavendish Place, Nov. 18.

Source: The Times 21 November 1879. p.11.

Comments

Street's letter was published in full in The Times and in The Architect vol. 22, 29 Nov. 1879. p.314. In his later years Street visited Italy twice, in May 1877, and spring 1880 (on the second occasion travelling via Venice to Rome, Tivoli, Subiaco, Olevano, Palestrina, Albano and Frascati (see: Street, A.E. Memoirs of George Edmund Street, London, John Murray, 1888. p.259). On the first occasion he saw parts of Meduna's newly restored south façade, unveiled the previous year. After his departure Street seems to have been kept informed by a third party, possibly William Scott. The letter was Street's main contribution to the debate. The opinions he had formed by this date were not significantly altered by what he observed when, in spring 1880, he made a visit to Venice to see for himself what had occurred at St Mark's. The contents of Street's letter are in other respects quite Ruskinian in flavour, tending to support the doctrine of restoration as an 'Impossibility,' the value of a building residing chiefly in the "marks" of artist's genius which it comprises, these being unique and exclusive incidences which cannot be falsified by modern workmanship.
A1.3 Letter of Francesco Azzurri to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 24 October 1880. [Translation from the Italian].

Insigne Accademia Romana delle Belle Arti
Denominata di S.Luca
N. 270
Rome, 24 October 1880

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 4th inst. together with a manifesto of the Committee, constituted therein, for the Preservation of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. I am personally grateful for the scrupulous care which you demonstrate towards me in inviting me, as President of the illustrious Roman Academy of St. Luke, to add mine to the many respectable names which have adhered to the views and intentions of the most worthy Committee, and the Academy expresses again its gratitude and offers due thanks. For the rest, however, I must point out that our Academy is obliged by its own statutes to monitor the conservation of our national monuments: and thus (it) had not been idle in respect of St. Mark's also, having presented to the Royal Government, in the manner deemed by the Academy most appropriate, the observations felt to be pertinent to the case. This was done taking fully into account, as is required from an institution of such nobility and antiquity, both the various considerations of the Academicians, and the limits prescribed by particular codes and conventions.

The Academy does and will continue on this course, not ceasing in its insistence that the very greatest care and the prudence of the government be assigned, not only to caring for and maintaining in sound condition the Basilica of St. Mark, but also to bringing to an end the alteration and destruction, by virtue of presumed building improvements, of the special character of the City of Lagoons. The Academy, however, believes it can trust fully in the wisdom of the Royal Government, which, concerned as it is for our artistic glory and traditions, not to mention the historic importance of every single relic left to us, will employ without fail all the measures which are vested in it by law, so that the just remonstrances of our Academy and of public opinion in Italy and abroad will have their effect. The Academy, therefore, bound as it is by its statutes and by its own conditions and precedents, would not be able to join in official adherence to what is primarily a private initiative. But the honourable Committee can be sure that the Roman Academy of St. Luke, as a faithful interpreter of the national sentiment and aspiration, will invigilate wholeheartedly the zealous preservation of our monuments and great relics. Furthermore the Academy, which welcomes into its bosom artists and distinguished men of all nations (having never made distinctions or privileges on the basis nationality or creed) is pleased to see that outside Italy too there are worthy and estimable men taking a lively interest in our arts and monuments, as the honourable Committee testifies.

Pray be pleased to accept my most respectful sentiments,
The President
Francesco Azzurri

Source: BM Add. MSS 38831. f.92.
Comments

In this letter Francesco Azzurri, the President of the Academy of St Luke, declined to join the St Mark's Preservation Committee, but at least showed himself willing to take part in the debate and to consider the remonstrances of the English St Mark's campaigners. The President's response, arrived at after the meeting of the Council of the Academy on 29 October, was reported in The Times - a fact which testifies to the importance of his reply in the midst of such hot-tempered and derogatory objections on the part of many Italians (see: The Times, 9 Nov. 1879. p.5).

A.1.4 Letter of Count Alvise Pietro Zorzi to Henry Wallis of the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's, 30 November 1880. [Translation from the French]

Venice 30. 11. 80

Dear Mr Wallis,

I am about to make you a proposition which you will like, I am sure, and which will be accepted by all the members of our Committee who wish to achieve their objective and save St. Mark’s.

Our Committee, in which feature so many famous names, both foreign and Italian, having already made known its views through publication, should declare that, having full and complete confidence in the independent members of the Academy of St. Luke, who represent the international interests of art, acknowledges the said Academy as central (organ) to which all due remarks and observations must henceforth be addressed for the purpose of pursuing together our common goal.

I give you my word that in this way we will achieve a great deal: the pride of my compatriots will be assuaged and instead of begging for names this way and that, we will have the whole of Italy on our side - and France, and Germany, because each of these nations has many illustrious names among the Academicians at St. Luke's. In this manner also the murmuring will cease and we will have a stronger hand with the Italian Government for getting what we want.

Here are two further names. In a few days time you will have the newspapers which talk of us and our Circular.

I would be most grateful if you could possibly let me have the issue of the Athenaeum which mentions me.

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I have received the Times and the Dayley [sic] News and I thank you for them. I thank you also for your helpful intentions [intentions amicales] with regard to my work in archaeology and the arts, and I will certainly benefit from your friendliness in the fullness of time.

Warm regards,

A.P. Zorzi

Source: BM Add. MSS 38831. f.120.

Comments

Zorzi's letter to Wallis, in French, as was most of his correspondence with the St Mark's Committee, was the culmination of a strategy aimed at camouflaging the objections raised by the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark's behind a more acceptable device - namely an official enquiry emanating from the Academy of St Luke.

Since July 1880 Zorzi had dedicated himself to two duties: the translation of the Circular into a seemly form of words, and the recruitment of Italian support to lend substance to the ostensibly Italian protest which he planned to make. He had begun in the latter task by writing personally to individuals whom he felt would support the initiative if, rather than an incursion by the English, it were seen to be an affair of international concern in which Italians were playing an instrumental role. But on reflection he decided to invite Wallis to write directly to named individuals enclosing a copy of the Circular, translated by Zorzi - with minute attention to the form of words - into Italian. The list of over thirty names and addresses which he enclosed included: Azzurri; the Prince Baldassare Odiscalchi; Senator Giuseppe Fiorelli, Director of Antiquities and Excavations at the
Ministry of Public Instruction; Prof. Bettocchi of the Genio Civile, or Board of Works; Luigi Rosso, Professor of Architecture at the Venice Academy; Pietro Saccardo, Director of Works at St Mark's from 1879; and a large number of artists, mostly working in Venice (ALS Zorzi to Wallis, 15 Sept. 1880, BM Add.MSS 38831.f.69). Azzurri's response (see Appendix A.1.3) was the cue which Zorzi needed to activate such a plan. The two further names were additions to the list he had earlier forwarded to Wallis.

I have been unable to locate the newspapers in which Zorzi had the Circular published. These may have been Roman publications, as there is no reference to the Circular in the Venetian papers Gazzetta di Venezia, L' Adriatico, and Rinnovamento.

His request for a copy of a piece in the Athenaeum might refer to a short notice which the Athenaeum had just published (n. 2769, 20 Nov. 1880, p.681) of a 'statement' by the St Mark's Committee, with signatories' names appended, and in which Zorzi was described as "the Conte Zorzi, whose able pamphlet on this subject was epitomised in these columns soon after its publication." He may, however, have been asking for a copy of the original review of Zorzi's pamphlet, Osservazioni intorno ai restauri interni ed esterni della Basilica di S. Marco, which appeared in the Athenaeum n. 2611, 10 Nov. 1877, p.605.
APPENDIX A.2: DOCUMENTS RELATING TO J.W. CLARK'S VISIT TO PADUA, AND THE BAPTISTERY AT RAVENNA, 1880

A.2.1 Letter of John Willis Clark to the Secretary of the SPAB, Newman Marks, 6 August 1880.

Stanhope Terrace
Cambridge
6 August 1880
Arena Chapel

Dear Sir,

About a fortnight ago I spent a few hours at Padua. In going into the Arena Chapel I found a scaffold set up therein. Conversation with the foreman of the workpeople - a very intelligent fellow, who seemed quite alive to the importance of the building - elicited that the municipality had just bought it, & were preparing to restore the façade to the appearance it presents in the fresco of the Last Judgement at the West end. As regards the interior he assured me that it was not the intention to attempt any restoration, only to protect the pictures from falling down, which he said it was feared they would do. However a rail was to be set up all round, to prevent visitors from going too near them. If this account be true, no harm will be done; but after all the mischief that has been done in Italy already, —— —— My —— in writing to you is to suggest that some member or agent of the Society should be commissioned to watch the work, & report from time to time on what is really going on.

At Venice itself the Ducal Palace is being treated in a manner that if proceeded with will obliterate its history & destroy its beauty. The ‘Adam & Eve Angle’ showed signs of decay. Cornices slipped out of place - the base of the pillar just above the angle had crumbled into small pieces & generally that corner was in such a condition as to require re-setting. Not content with this however they are now engaged in recarving the capitals of the lower range of columns; I (sic) three weeks ago I saw a workman engaged in copying the corner capital -(the one with the signs of the Zodiac) - which wretched copy is to be put up in place of the old one. The capitals right & left of this have been similarly copied, the copies are then coloured to look old ! The originals are to be kept in a museum, I was assured, which is a comfort. I have with me careful notes & drawings & I could draw up a popular or a technical article on the subject. I should be glad however if you could find time to advise me as to the best way to make these wickednesses public. Our protest has saved S. Mark’s for the time being and we might do something for the Ducal Palace: though somewhat late in the day.

Yrs very truly

J.W. Clark

Source: ASPAB Padua Arena Chapel.
Clark’s letter illustrates the effects of the pervasive mistrust which the St Mark’s campaign had unleashed. His suggestion that the Society send forth a ‘member or agent’ to monitor developments at the site may well have been acted upon, as we know from Tolomei that Charles Fairfax Murray visited the site thereafter.

Of supplementary interest are Clark’s observations on the restoration of the Ducal, or Doge’s, Palace, at Venice. Works began here in 1873, and were continued after 1876 by the engineer Annibale Forcellini. The project entailed the complete shoring of the arcades along the two principal elevations and renewal of almost all the capitals and decorative carving, most of which had split following the oxidation of iron ties used to bind the fabric together at impost level, or been crushed by differential stresses produced by inadequate piling. The nature of Clark’s concerns over the monument follow the established pattern: the inferiority of modern carving and the mendacity of attempts to simulate old work - in this case by artificial colouring. This was not a case which was followed up with any great conviction in England. The SPAB perhaps felt that, as regards Venetian restorations, it had made its point clearly enough, and the need for major engineering works to stabilise the Palace were in any case more easily justified. After the completion of the works at the Doge’s Palace, The Times actually published an unusually praiseworthy account in 1889, seemingly by Stillman, in which he stated that the completed restoration “merits the highest praise that can be given to a work of its kind.” (‘Restoration of the Ducal Palace (from our correspondent)’ The Times, 16 Sept.)
In 1898, however, the Daily Chronicle and The Times reported that the building was still unstable. The architects’ proposals had been sharply criticised by the Superior Council of Fine Arts, and the Government, alerted to the danger, sent Camillo Boito to report on the situation. Questions were even asked in Parliament (cf: The Times 19 Dec. 1898. p.5). It is of particular interest to note that the English press, on this occasion, confined itself to a mere notice of the action taken by the Council of Fine Arts, and subsequently (cf: The Times, 21 Dec. 1898. p.5) to transmitting the rebuttal issued by the architects [Berchet and Rosso], who claimed that there was no danger of collapse. The fact that there was no public protest in England, as well as the nature of the action taken by Italian officials when alerted by what was by now a much more pro-active Superior Council of Fine Arts, demonstrate the degree to which the climate of opinions had changed radically since 1879.

It might also be mentioned at this juncture that it was during a visit to the Palace in 1884 that Philip Webb met Giacomo Boni, then a young assistant architect on the project. Their friendship blossomed in succeeding years and Boni became not only a Committee Member of the SPAB in 1885, but also one of the most supportive and useful Italian correspondents the Society would have, giving valuable advice and information, without bias, on cases such as the question of the pavement of St Mark’s Basilica, Orvieto Cathedral in spring 1887, the Lion Fountain in St Mark’s Square in July 1887, and the Campo Santo at Pisa in December 1891 - all cases in which the Society’s fears about imminent destructive restoration were satisfactorily allayed. The friendship which
developed between Boni and Webb, and to a lesser extent Murray, George Wardle and J.H. Middleton, as revealed in Webb’s correspondence with Boni, now at the Library of the Courtauld Institute in London, was to have a very great impact in terms of helping to generate trust, co-operation and understanding in the years after 1886 and in helping to create the conditions in which instances such as that of 1898, described above, were far less inflammatory (see conclusions).


Mr S. Russell Forbes
Archaeological and Historical Lecturer
on the Antiquities of Rome
93 Via Babuino, 2° P° Roma

July 21/80
Newman Marks Esq.

Dear Sir

I have just returned from a visit to Ravenna. I find that the proposed works at the Baptistery originate from a local engineer named Lanciani and that other engineers and the Municipality are opposed to the scheme. The building in question and others are under the protection of the government as Historical Monuments, and that (sic) Sig. Lanciani has simply proposed to the government to raise the building, like they moved an hotel in America. As far as I can learn the government do not think of doing it.

An excavation has been made round the base of the Baptistery to examine the state of the foundations and to strengthen them, by new brickwork.

The construction of the building is bad, like all brickwork of that date, and I should say that any attempt to raise the edifice would cause it to collapse; on the other hand if let alone or foundations simply strengthened it will, in all probability, last as long as it has already stood.

I could find no trace of decay in the mosaics, nor of separating from the walls, but on the vault at the left of the figures, two pieces of back ground have been knocked out, this I am told was caused some two years ago by some scaffolding used by the workmen when two of the old entrances were bricked up. I understand this damage is to be repaired.

I believe the Sig. Lanciani in question is some relation to Sig. R. Lanciani of Rome who is secretary of the Archaeological Commission at the Capitol and that through him the correspondent of the Times got the substance of his letter.
As far as I can learn it is only a proposal to the government and the government as yet have taken no steps in the matter; the sending of any body, on the Society's part, to Ravenna seems to me would only amount to an interview with Sig. Lanciani the father of the scheme.

The question asked there (sic) where is the money to come from. The Municipality have not the money and if it had would not spend it in the way proposed, and the government must get a grant from parliament so the question would have to be discussed.

I should very much like a copy of the Times containing the letter which if you could send me or let me know the exact date so I could write for it, I would be obliged.

Believe me
Faithfully yours

S. Russell Forbes
24 Via della Posterna, Fano, Italia.

Source: ASPAB Ravenna Baptistery.

Comments

Forbes' mission in Ravenna was to ascertain the precise facts of what was proposed at the Baptistery, and to establish what the Society might achieve if it were to send an official delegation to the site. Arriving in mid-summer, Forbes naturally was able to achieve next to nothing himself. The SPAB must have been reassured to know that the raising of the Baptistery was now unlikely to go ahead, but it remained an open case.

Lack of progress with the works and the interest shown the following year in new cases at Florence and San Gimignano seem to have led the Society to abandon its interest in the Baptistery shortly after this, and the building was left undefended until 1883, when Corrado Ricci took up the protest initiated in England three years earlier.
A.3.1 Extract of a draft Letter of William Morris to the Prefect of Florence, 14
March 1881.

To &c &c &c

The Prefect of Florence &c &c &c

Sir,

The Committee of the S.P.A.B. having been informed that it is intended to restore the beautiful structure [commonly] known as the Bigallo in Florence, cannot help feeling uneasy at the intelligence, in view of the many "restorations" which have been inflicted on Ancient Monuments of art throughout Europe: the Committee therefore begs most respectfully to lay the following observations before you -

Premising that we are sure that this restorations is prompted by the most laudable feelings, that the superintendence of the works will be entrusted to competent hands, & that the protest the Committee feels itself bound to make is made against principles not against incidental shortcomings:

It appears that the Bigallo is in no need of substantial repairs, & that the threatened "restoration" aims at reproducing ancient features now lost or injured; it is intended, in short to make it appear as if it had been recently in the fourteenth century, as though the lapse of time had passed it by untouched while it has changed so completely the manners of men & their ways of thought and their civil and domestic life. This Committee more than doubts the desirability of this transformation (if it could be effected) and has no doubt that it is impossible to effect it. Every stroke by which the ingenious masons of today will carry out the conjectures of the learned architect on the intentions of the ancient builders will reveal the fact that they are living in the 19th, not in the 14th century: the painter who will be employed to restore the remains of frescos on the walls will surely feel ashamed that while he is obliterating what is left of the thought of his long dead brother in the Arts, where he is expressing no thought of his own: when all is done, the Bigallo will be, as far as its surface is concerned, a modern building with the openly ridiculous pretence of being an old one; it will no longer have any share in the past of Florence, so full of sad and glorious memories; it will be an academical toy, a mere study of medieval architecture, a thing good & useful to be done on paper by students and learned men; but fatal & destructive to art when carried out at the expense of an example of the past art, a relic of the past life of a mighty city...
A.3.2 Letter of the Prefect of Florence to Newman Marks, 24 March 1881

[Translation from the Italian].

Florence, 24 March 1881

Dear Sir,

I feel the necessity of tendering to you the most hearty thanks for the courteous observations contained in your letter of the 14th inst. concerning the projected restoration of this Loggia del Bigallo, and I pray you to convey concurring sentiments to the English Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Not being able, with full knowledge of the issue, to pronounce on this very important subject, one worthy of the utmost consideration, I will present the memorial of the said Society to our Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti and appeal to it to pay the matter its full attention.

I do not doubt that the Commissione, which includes the most celebrated Florentine artists, whose glorious names are known in Italy and abroad, will deal with the matter in accordance with the wishes of this distinguished Society, and this earnest hope is supported by the thought that persons of exquisite taste and artistic sentiment, who possess a genuine love for our ancestral remains, namely prince Tommaso Corsini Mayor of Florence, and Comm. Giuseppe Castellazzi President of the Academy of Fine Arts of this city, also have an interest in the affair.

Please accept, Sir, my great respect and observance,

The Prefect

To the honourable
Mr Newman Marks
Secretary of the Society for the
Protection of Ancient Buildings
9 Buckingham Street
Strand, W.6.
London

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo
Comments

The Prefect himself chaired the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti, as he was statutorily required to do. The only comment that need be added is to repeat, as mentioned in the text of the chapter on Florentine restorations, that the Prefect’s letter was written after the Commissione had resolved the question by stipulating certain conditions by which Castellazzi must abide at meeting of 26 February. The Prefect declines to go into the details of what his Commissione had recommended with regards to the Bigallo, though Francesco Azzurri (see below) later informs the Society of these.

A.3.3 Letter of J.R. Spencer Stanhope to Marks, 21 March 1881.

Villa Nuti
Bellosguardo
March 21 1881

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the copy of the letter of the Society to the Prefect of Florence & I thank them for the same.

If I can make any use of it for promoting the purpose for which it is written, I will gladly do so. I am at the present moment endeavouring to get it translated an published in the columns of the Gazzetta d’Italia: but doubt being successful.

I am Sir
Yours faithfully
R. Spencer Stanhope

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo

Comments

Morris had ordered copies of the letter to the Prefect to be distributed among all foreign members. This was Stanhope’s reply.
A.3.4 Letter of J.R. Spencer Stanhope to Newman Marks, 10 April 1881.

Villa Nuti
Bellosguardo
April 10 1881

Newman Marks Esq.

Dear Sir,

I beg to return my acknowledgements to the Society for the honour they have done me in according me a vote of thanks, though I am not sensible of having done much to deserve it.

I regret to say that only a few days after the publication of the letter to the Prefect a scaffolding was put up; & all hopes of rescuing the building are at an end.

I also was disappointed at observing contrary to my expectation that no notice has been taken of the letter to the Prefect in the daily papers; at least of those issues that I have seen & should any notice have been taken that I have missed seeing; it can (?) be of but a slight character & the chance of the question being at all ventilated in the papers appears to be at an end.

I will endeavour to ascertain whether there are any schemes afloat for the restoration of other public buildings, as the only chance of stopping such restorations is to take the matter in hand before a committee has been formed or money collected for the purpose.

I remain Sir
faithfully yours
R. Spencer Stanhope

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo

A.3.5 Letter of Francesco Azzurri to Newman Marks, 5 June 1881 [Translation from the Italian].

Insigne Accademia delle Belle Arti
Denominata di S. Luca
N. 617
Rome, 5 June 1881

Honourable Mr. President

I have the honour, as a member of this Society, to inform you that this illustrious Academy has not been slow to occupy itself with the restorations which are under way at Florence of the building known as the Bigallo. The restoration scheme for the Bigallo devised by the Architect Sig. Castellazzi was submitted to the local Royal Commission for the Conservation of Monuments which examined it and approved it subject to the following conditions.
1. That the plaster on which are painted historical scenes or fragments of historical scenes, be strengthened and consolidated.

2. That the traces of the coloured architectural elements which surround the historical scenes, the windows, of which the proposed restoration is approved, and in the area of the overhanging eaves, be diligently investigated.

3. That once found, great moderation be applied in bringing those traces to light, so that prominent additions do not contrast too coarsely with the feeble remains of the historical scenes, of which, if possible, all the major features must be preserved.

In view of these considerations, which demand that one cannot and should not make an old work, largely destroyed by time, appear to be something new, the Commission did not approve the proposed construction in marble of the two arcades, the outlines of which are traced in stone, and declared itself resolutely opposed to giving to the restoration the semblance of a newly created work of art; rather, using the resources of art, the modest conservation of that which exists should be provided for.

In the wake of this, our Academy, finding the propositions of the R. Commission to be wise and pertinent, undertook to support them in its communications with the Government, adding to them the proposal made by the Commission itself to nominate two distinguished and respected artists to monitor the progress of the said restoration.

Both have been accepted by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and it has nominated the distinguished architect Sig. Commendatore Emilio de Fabris, Sig. Ciseri and Sig. Commendatore Professor Poggi to monitor the restoration.

The Ministry insists that the restoration be conducted according to the standards laid down by the Commission, and has given the strictest instructions on this point.

I wanted to inform your Honourable Selves, and the Committee of the Society, of all these facts so that you may be certain of our solicitude in ensuring these restorations proceed in best and most reasonable manner, and to strengthen the good and cordial understanding which must be our mediator, as the foreign press is giving inaccurate reports which we Italians must always refute or deny, jealous as we are of the conservation of our national monuments, which are our glory and which comprise our artistic heritage.

Please accept my most sincere sentiments,

The President

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo

Comments

This is a translation from the Italian of a letter conserved in the Archive of the SPAB (The Archive also contains a different, hand-written translation, made for the benefit of the Committee).
The recommendations referred in Azzurri’s letter are those contained in the extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice dei Monumenti, of 26 February 1881, the full text of which is reproduced in Lorenzi, op.cit. p.47.

Azzurri was at pains to point out that the Academy had given its full support to the Commissione’s recommendations, and also to convey the facts of the matter to the Society and to refute any speculation in the press that Castellazzi’s more radical notions had earned the support of the authorities. The Commissione, as can be seen, had drafted quite stringent conditions which Castellazzi was to follow. These were issued at the end of February - before the English protest was published in the Gazzetta d’Italia. Azzurri’s communiqué should be seen as an honourable effort to mitigate the clamour against the English, whose unwelcome assertions had earned the opprobrium of the Florentine press.


9 July 1881
The Bigallo, Florence

To the Illustrious
Sig. Commendatore Azzurri
President of the St. Luke’s Academy at Rome

Illo.Sig.

The Committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings desires me to thank you heartily for your interesting letter concerning the Bigallo at Florence; the Committee is much encouraged by noting that in Italy especially, the declared principles of the Society seem to be recognised more & more & more every day among people of cultivation, & it hopes that frank & open discussion on these principles and their application to special works, will be rather called for, than deprecated, & will advance the Cause of progress in the Arts.

The Committee further desires me to communicate to you the following notes it has made on the Conditions under which the repairs of the Bigallo are to be carried out.
The 1st seems to the Committee highly satisfactory, as it appears to imply that the paintings or fragments of painting will be preserved absolutely in their present condition.

As to the 2nd & 3rd Conditions: the Committee hails with satisfaction the idea that search is to be made for the traces of painted decoration that may surround the pictures; but the principles of the Society would be against the piecing of lost sections with new work: the Committee would think it desirable that where any break has taken place in the continuity of the ornamentation, the missing part should not be replaced by imitative work, but that the ornamentation should be left in its present state, as historic evidence of its age, & the technical handling of the period it was executed.

The Committee heartily agrees with the Academy in condemning the proposed reconstruction in marble of the two arcades, the nucleus of which can be traced in stone.

The Committee in congratulating the Academy on having secured the appointment of learned and intelligent supervisors of the work, trusts it will not be taken amiss if it once more argues the importance of the maxim that the less that can be done, to an historical (?) building, the better: the hope that this maxim will soon be widely accepted, is the very cause & reason for the existence of the Society.

Thanking you once more for the kindness of your communication & the support it indicates for the cause we have at hand.

I have the honour to be
III. Sig.
On behalf of the Committee of the Society
Your very obedient servant

Newman Marks Secretary

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo

Caffè Florian, Venice
December 16 1881

I am sorry not to have replied sooner to your letter of 3rd inst. in which you courteously pay me the compliment of asking for further expression of my ideas on the question of Restoration at Venice. The fact is I wrote a long letter last week, soon after the receipt of yours, but on reconsideration thought it might not be quite what would be of use to you or what I ought to send, not being a member of your Society. Hence the delay for which I apologise. Excuse me if I now write too frankly.

So far as I am aware the action taken by the SPAB has not succeeded here in Venice & elsewhere in Italy, in saving any buildings whose restoration has been resolved upon.

First: - The Society... is to all intents and purposes, too English, that is to say, from an Italian point of view too foreign, both in its composition and its action, to do other than raise opposition among Italians who are painfully sensitive to anything like criticism or as they call it interference.

Second: - The Society... is associated with a 'let it alone altogether' or 'do nothing' policy which in the large majority of instances such as in the case of buildings the property of the State or required in any way for public use is quite impracticable even if it were desirable and though it may perhaps cover a theory of protection will not result in preservation.

Third: - The Society, if I am rightly informed, has actually contented itself with 'protesting' against whatever works were proposed to be done without first enquiring of the authorities themselves what was intended, without attempting to discuss the principles or details of the scheme, and without having fuller information on the subject than was to be got from its ordinary correspondents, mostly non-professional men, who could not in all cases be in a position to give precise and full particulars.

Fourth: - The Society has I think placed itself at a disadvantage in dealing with the question of restoration by acting solely upon what I may call negative principles, and, while opposing the existing system of things offers nothing practical in its place.

Not recognising the fact that old buildings must and will inevitably from time to time become the subject of alterations to fit them for modern uses, or repairs to keep them from falling (and this whether rightly or wrongly, whether we will or no) it does not offer any suggestions as to the way in which such works should be carried out, nor seek by reasonable discussion to eliminate the more objectionable features of a scheme, modify others, and yield on certain points so as to gain a hold on what I conceive to be its legitimate position and office as a society to which difficult or disputed questions with regard to the treatment of old buildings in modern times could with confidence be referred. Not that the Society is at present qualified for this work, but it could easily become so if thought desirable.

As a result of these considerations may I make one or two suggestions: -

1st: - that if possible something like an Italian branch of the Society be formed, or an Italian committee, or at all events that any communications that may be addressed to authorities and so forth should, if only in the first instance, be made by Italians, those of course acting entirely with and under the direction of your own committee.
2nd: - that the Society should, on hearing of any proposed Restoration, endeavour to obtain full information direct from responsible authorities, accompanied if possible by drawings etc., and then upon this make suggestions for modifications where possible or desirable and thus raise a discussion on points of detail. This would perhaps involve a modification of the Society's present programme, if not of its very creed, but would, I believe, be in the end more practically useful.

The case of the Bigallo in Florence is a typical instance: the architect in charge of the works, Prof. Castellazzi, assured me that if the Society had communicated with him in the first instance, he would have been willing, nay delighted to have laid before it full particulars of the proposed works, discuss the details and consider any proposals that might have been made for their modification.

It seems to me that the most important thing of all is to get the question of Restoration better understood by people generally, not only here in Italy but also in England. You may say, perhaps, there has been discussion enough, but I maintain that something more is required than a mere struggle between the present Restorationists on the one hand, & those who disapprove of all attempts at Restoration on the other. Firstly, it is absolutely necessary to recognise that works of alteration or repair will sometimes be done to old buildings. Secondly, it is necessary to show by careful and logical reasoning that what is called Restoration is an absurdity and indeed an impossibility even in theory while in practice it is a shameful wrong. To this end would it not be possible to have published some sort of a pamphlet going carefully into the question and written by such a person and in such a way that it would excite public notice, serving at once to reopen a discussion on the subject, and secondly as a sort of Declaration of the principles of the S.P.A.B. If such a pamphlet were written & proved satisfactory it could be translated into Italian and other languages and circulated widely.

Until something of the kind is done, until those who have control over old buildings are instructed as to the manner in which they ought to be treated, it is quite useless 'protesting' to them or any other people against what they really believe to be a right and indeed a highly praiseworthy proceeding. It will be within your own observation and recollection that the greatest harm done in England has been done by the most devoted archaeologists and admirers of ancient architecture. With regard to the form such a Pamphlet as I have suggested should take, I think it might be considered as having for its avowed object if not for its title "the giving of some Rules or Principles for the treatment of old buildings in our times" Nearly 2 years ago I wrote a paper giving some of my own thoughts upon the subject & it as read for me at the Architectural Association by Mr. Hebb. If you would ask him to show it to you it might serve to illustrate still further than this letter what I think & feel upon this very important matter. I am sorry not to have a copy to send you but it was published in full in the 'Builder' June 5 1880 In this I tried to argue as well as I could upon fundamental principles & if something of the kind carried much further and written by an accomplished literary man were brought out either by your Society or perhaps only with its aid I believe it would be of service.

4th. - Whatever is done should be done quickly as the mischief is going on all the time & soon there will be nothing else to save. With regard to Venice especially the main object should be to protect the West front of S. Mark's, and it would be desirable to have definite & accurate information from responsible persons as to what is proposed. As I stated in my letter to Mr. Hebb there is at the present moment a scaffold at the South End of the upper portion of the façade but I have not heard whether these works are likely to be extended.

In conclusion I beg you to excuse any apparent egotism you may think to have discerned in this letter, and to believe that though I have not always been able to agree with the Society in its mode of procedure or even in its principles I am only too happy to do all in my power to aid in the 'Protection of Ancient Buildings'

Very faithfully yours
APPENDIX A.5: LETTER OF THE SPAB TO ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS.

Egregio Signore

Dalla parte del Commitato (sic) della Società di Londra per la conservazione dei Monumenti Antichi ho l'onore di mandarla una lettera per dichiarare lo scopo e l'opinione della detta Società.

Nel (sic) Autunno prossimo speriamo di pubblicare nei giornali Italiani qualchi (sic) articolo intorno a questo soggetto importante.

Ho l'onore di dirmi(?)
Suo dev.mo Serv.

(signed) Thomas Wise
Segretario della Società per la conservazione dei Monumenti Antichi

This letter was sent to the following:

List of Persons & Newspapers to whom the preceding letter was sent

Newspapers

| La Fanfulla | Rome | La Gazzetta del Popolo | Florence |
| La Fanfulla della Domenica | " | La Rassegna | Rome |
| La Gazzetta d'Italia | " | Il Telefono | Leghorn |
| La Rivista Europea | " | Il Pungolo | Milan |
| La Nuova Antologia | Florence | Il Secolo | Milan |
| La Nazione | " | Il Pungolo | Naples |

Persons

| Professor Villari | Signor Arct. Pelosini |
| Professor Comparetti | Signor An. Ferrigni |
| Signor F. Gioli | Signor Pancrazi |
| Signor Cesare Fantacchiotti | Signor Brunetti |
| Signor Arct. Samerini (?) | Signor Piccini |

Source: ASPAB 'Italian Restoration'
The above is a transcript of a copy of a letter in the SPAB archive detailing the Society’s actions in respect of plans to broadcast its manifesto in Italy. The covering letter in Italian [above] states that the Society is pleased to enclose details of its aims and opinions, and that it hopes to publish further information in the Italian press in the autumn of 1882. There is no record of any of the addressees having replied.

The second page of the letter, comprising a list of newspapers and individual recipients, was presumably retained for reference and circulated for the benefit of English readers. The journals in receipt of the letter were, presumably, identified with the help of the Society’s members and correspondents in Italy, such as Spencer Stanhope and Fairfax Murray. The most important of these was the Fanfulla della Domenica, founded in 1879. This was one of the few weekly papers to take an interest in artistic affairs, and through its column ‘Cronaca del vandalismo’ it was in the vanguard of promoting good practice in restoration. It was ambivalent in its view of the English protesters, printing a mock heroic poem in January 1880 which began:

"E a te sien grazie, Anglia, che vigile
là dai tuoi foschi sassi ciclopici
Con pio affetto Vesuvie f, rosegui
della sorella Adriaca..."¹

¹ “And may thanks be to you, Anglia, as you observe with pious devotion, from beyond your dim cyclopean boulders, as your Adriatic sister is rendered defenceless”

Fanfulla della Domenica, Anno II n.1, 4 Jan. 1880, p.3
It later also condemned the "blind indignation" and the "rigidly aristocratic disdain" of the English (Anno III n.3, 16 Jan. 1881. p.3), but it was indefatigable in its denunciations of the State and was apt to see in the SPAB an ally in its quest to "unmask the Roman tartuffes" (cf: 'Cronaca del Vandalismo' Fanfulla della Domenica, Anno II n. 4, 31 Oct. 1880. p.4). The Gazzetta d'Italia had had its uses - it had agreed to print for Spencer Stanhope the remonstrance against the restoration of the Bigallo. The Nazione, published daily in Florence since 1859, had a record of involvement in the restoration polemic, most often expressing support for restoration schemes, mixed with disdain for the apathy of the bureaucrats of the regulating authorities. It had, for instance, been an enthusiastic supporter of Castellazzi's scheme at Santa Trinità since it was first announced in early 1881, but became a harsh critic of Castellazzi and the Commissione Conservatrice at the beginning of 1885 when both became more circumspect in their approach to the interior renovation of the chapels. The Nazione supported also the proposals for the Ghetto, which it followed with particular interest after the publication of the Royal decree ratifying the provisions of the Piano Regolatore of 2 April 1885. Nuova Antologia, published in Florence since 1866, was a kind of Italian Revue des Deux Mondes and had occasionally provided a platform for serious critics, such as Camillo Boito, to launch an attack on the incompetence of the State in restoration matters. Rivista Europea, however, never showed the slightest interest in pursuing such matters, only once making reference to what it described undemonstratively as a "movement" (movimento) launched in England against the restoration of the façade at St Mark's. (Rivista Europea, 1 Feb. 1880. p.502). Of the remainder, only Il Pungolo had involved itself in the restoration
question during the years 1879-1882, and it is odd to find more sympathetic publications such as L'Adriatico absent from the list.

The individual persons to whom the letter was sent is a motley collection, and chiefly associated only with Florence. Professor Pasquale Villari (1826-1917), of the Istituto di Studi Superiori (later the University of Florence), was a distinguished art critic and historian whose relations with the foreign community were especially close. Domenico Comparetti (1835-1927), historian and philologist, occupied the Chair in Greek History at the Istituto di Studi Superiori in Florence. Cesare Fantacchiotti (b. 1845), was a Florentine sculptor of some distinction, originator of numerous figures carved for the new Cathedral façade, and for his portrait busts of foreign dignitaries. He had been a recent exhibitor at the Royal Academy in London (1879 and 1880). Francesco Gioli (1846-1922) was a Tuscan painter, born near Pisa, chiefly known for his interpretations of patriotic and historical subjects. He was made Honorary Professor at the Florence Academy of Fine Arts in 1883 and, like Fantacchiotti, was known in England on account of having exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1880.

Antonio Ferrigni, or Ferrigno (b. 1863), was a young Neapolitan genre painter who exhibited abroad, at Berlin, London and elsewhere, on several occasions in the 1880s, notably at the Italian Exhibition in London in 1888. The architect named Pelosini could possibly be the Venetian Emilio Pellesina, a busy and apparently well-known engineer responsible for numerous new buildings, among them the Lido Baths. With the exception
of Brunetti, who was Secretary of the Florence Commissione Consultiva Conservatrice dei Monumenti, I have been unable to identify the three others - Samerini (?), Pancrazi and Piccini, who were possibly minor technicians, officials or civil servants.
A.5.1 Letter of Charles Fairfax Murray to Newman Marks, April (?) 1881.

Newman Marks Esq.

Dear Sir

On Tuesday last I rec'd a letter from Sig. Niccolo Cannicci of San Gimignano [sic] asking me if I could help him in any way to protest against the contemplated restoration of the front of the Public Palace of that place. I proceeded to S. Gimignano the following day & saw Mr. Cannicci. I have lent him the printed pamphlet & letter rec'd from Sig. Paravicini of Milan which he thought might help him in his object of convincing the town council of which he is a member that he was not alone in the opinions he had expressed contrary to the proposed restoration.

At the end of a long conversation he came to the conclusion that a temperate letter addressed by the Society to the "Onorevole Consiglio Municipale of S. Gimignano" might have a beneficial effect seeing that various members are still undecided in their opinions & might be therefore disposed to aid him in his objections. I therefore communicate his wishes at once to the Society & have no doubt that Miss Duffy who so ably translated your last letter would translate this also. It will be necessary to address the letter through me or somebody here, that Sig. Cannicci have timely warning of the date of postage to move for its production & that it be read publicly in case any attempt be made to suppress it - I will send tomorrow a photograph of the front in its present condition. It is proposed to renew the armorial bearings add battlements &c.re in fact to rebuild the front entirely on the supposed ancient plan. - I hope however that it will fall through from insufficient funds as they hope for some help from the Government which they are not likely to get but much harm might be done with what money they have. I hope to have an opportunity of visiting Pisa in a few days & will then report on the Campo Santo fresco restorations.

I remain D' Sir
yrs faithfully
Chas Fairfax Murray

Today they have commenced the demolition of the that (sic) tower above the roof of the Bigallo.

Source: ASPAB *Destructive Works in S. Gimignano*. 
Comments

The letter, in which Murray notifies the SPAB of his meeting with Cannicci, shows Murray attempting to help Cannicci by making available to him the supportive correspondence he had received from Paravicini (see Appendix 7). Curiously, the only known letter Murray had received from Paravicini at around this time was the one he received on 2 May, which he partly translated and forwarded to Marks on 3 May (see A.7.2.). If this was the letter he lent to Cannicci, then Murray’s meeting with him would have been after May 2 1881, by which time the Town Council had already determined the future of the building at its meeting on April 30. Cannicci gave the impression that the restoration was by no means decided upon, which therefore leaves open the possibility that further exchanges between Murray and Paravicini, no longer extant, may have occurred (see introduction to Appendix 7). Bella Duffy’s support for the Society’s work in Italy was substantial. The other letter to which Murray refers, also translated by Duffy, was probably the one received by Stanhope in connection with the Bigallo, which Stanhope had published in the Gazzetta d’Italia (See A.3.3).
APPENDIX A.7: DOCUMENTS RELATING TO MILAN

AND PARAVICINI

Note on the Correspondence of Tito Vespasiano Paravicini

Below are reproduced several pieces of unpublished correspondence on Milanese monuments by Paravicini now dispersed in numerous locations. They date from July 1880, May 1881 and May 1885 and are the only surviving fragments of correspondence between him and the English anti-restorationists. One conspicuous absentee is the letter to the SPAB of April 1882, which was summarised in the Athenaeum n.2841, 8 April 1882 pp.451-2, and The Times 12 April 1882 (The latter, in the form of a letter to the Editor from William Morris, is in: Kelvin, op.cit. Vol. II, pp.107-9). The original letter now appears to be missing, and in the interests of completeness I reproduce below (A.7.3) an extract from the Athenaeum. As mentioned in Appendix 5, there seems to be some evidence to suggest that Paravicini may have had other exchanges with Murray, though I can find no trace of these in England.


Milan, (?) July 1880

I have kept quiet for a long time awaiting the results of the new dispositions given by Commendatore Senator Fiorelli, in his role as Director General of all the museums, art galleries, excavations and monuments of the kingdom, upon the conservation of monuments.

In those dispositions Fiorelli, while recognising the need to conserve monuments in their entirety, admits that they can be restored, stripped of parts added, and put back into the state in which they must have been by the addition of the destroyed portions. In conclusion, Fiorelli vacillates between the just demands of
modern archaeology and the old ideas; and in fact, he leaves the field open, and legalises the customary vandalisations.

I hoped, moreover, that after all that has been written on the errors and mutilations of St. Mark's at Venice, the question of the conservation of monuments might enter a new, more reasonable phase. But I had to convince myself that when men have to be dragged before the Commissions, one is wasting time and effort without obtaining any advantage.

In a letter to the College of Engineers and Architects of Milan I tried to persuade my colleagues that the parts reconstructed now in a monument are always modern additions, of no importance, and are vandalisms when they replace other parts. In publishing my memorial in its Proceedings the College of Engineers took pains to point out that it accepted no responsibility for those ideas, which is to say that the committee of directors was against it. Yet there are among them two members of the Commission for the Conservation of Monuments for the Province of Milan, the engineer Celeste Clericetti and the engineer Archimede Sacchi, both of whom are Professors at the Polytechnic, and [also] the architect Camillo Boito, member of the Superior Council of Fine Arts and Professor at our Academy, who has the job of approving projects of restoration and conservation of monuments.

It is very true that Boito, in a conference held at the castle at Turin, expounded the ideas which inform the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and this would have been a good step had he not rounded off by sending a big invoice to the government for the restoration of monuments and proposed the usual forgeries.

Here lies the explanation for why, in the restoration of the Castle at Pavia, by the Engineer Savoldi, professor at our Polytechnic, ornamental additions to the windows have been made even though one can be certain that the present ones are genuine, and in this way other additions are being carried out, which falsify history and disfigure the monument. And yet the project was welcomed and praised by the Superior Council of Fine Arts, and by the local Monuments Commission, and was singled out for special acclaim by the Professor of Art History at our Academy of Fine Arts.

Nor should one be surprised that the aforementioned Professor Clericetti recommended to the government the demolition of the present aedicule of S. Satiro, a mid-fifteenth century construction, in order to rebuild it as the eighth-century original must have been.

It is indeed saddening that the Italian Government wastes considerable sums of money in order to ruin our monuments, worthlessly. Proof of it lies in the battle which is going on over the restoration of the Palazzo Municipale at Piacenza, which is entrusted to the painter, [Angelo] Colla. He wants to alter the roof structure and covering over the great hall and to do it he will not abstain from ruining the whole façade with over three hundred holes required for the installation of scaffolding.

The only means of bringing these vandalisms to a halt is to bring them under public scrutiny in foreign newspapers, denounce them before the Archaeological Councils, and show that its is unacceptable to operate in Italy using the coercive methods of which the Monuments Conservation Committees avail themselves, supported by the Superior Council of Fine Arts, which is accountable for the vandalisms which are being committed and the vexations which they bring.

Architect Tito Vespasiano Paravicini

Source: William Morris Bequest, BM Add. MSS 45345 f.89
Comments

Translation from the original Italian of a letter to William Morris. It is of interest especially for its criticism of Camillo Boito, whom Paravicini considers to be a member of the guilty élite of public servants who are accountable for the sorry condition of the restoration industry in Italy. Boito’s own theories on restoration, which appeared in published form around 1883-4, whilst they came to be regarded as the most influential theories of the late nineteenth century on subsequent developments in Italian restoration, did not agree with Paravicini’s in numerous respects. Boito had no dealings with the SPAB and no particular respect for its methods. Although Boito supported the notion that all periods and styles possessed historic significance, he was the first to argue in favour of a material differentiation between old work and structurally necessary new interventions, which he said should be executed in a different material, with no attempt to reproduce decorative forms (a principle which can be traced back to the activities of Valadier and Stern in Rome during the Napoleonic phase). He based his system on abstract scientific principles, classifying monuments according to type (antique, medieval, and modern), with a different approach for each of these, and ranked in order of artistic quality (baroque and eighteenth-century additions being of less merit). Boito succeeded in transforming Italian restoration, both in theory and in practice, largely by virtue of having operated within the system, which he was able to manipulate to great effect. Paravicini’s views of his early career (Boito was appointed to the Consiglio Superiore dei belle Arti on its creation in 1876, and already had a distinguished teaching
career behind him) are of interest in that they suggest a personality who was very much of the 'establishment.'

The letter illustrates the difficulties which Paravicini faced in finding a suitably independent channel through which to make his case, and demonstrates the internal workings of a system he was so anxious to change, in which restoring architects are also appointed to supervisory commissions, and able freely to pursue personal interests from behind a cloak of public duty. In unequivocally exposing these conditions, Paravicini demonstrated the need for foreign pressure to be brought to bear, in a public arena, to encourage the reform of this system.

Of particular interest is the fact that Paravicini wrote to William Morris, evidence perhaps that he had followed the St Mark's affair, and possibly made himself known to someone such as Charles Fairfax Murray or Count Zorzi with a view to making contact with Morris. There is no record of Morris having replied.

A.7.2. Letter of Charles Fairfax Murray to Newman Marks, concerning Paravicini, May 1881.

Firenze 106 Via de’ Serragli
3 May 1881

Newman Marks Esq.

Dear Sir,
I rec. yesterday an important letter from Sig. Tito Vespasiano Paravicini of Milan in which he asks my opinion on the possibility of establishing a Society in Italy for the Prot6 of the Anc5 Buildings as suggested to him by Mr Henry Wallis in February last. : after mentioning that the state of his health had prevented
him from replying sooner he speaks of the restoration in progress in Milan & the damage done to the two
gates Porta nuova & Porta Ticino some years since.

At Porta nuova The upper part of the flanking towers as demolished & 2 doors opened in the basement &
bas reliefs & memorial stones inserted from other localities.

At Porta Ticino the towers were destroyed & rebuilt in another position of different material & form. the
pointed arch was introduced unknown in Lombardy at the time of the ancient construction. windows were
added & a battlement in the German I translate the rest as literally as I can manner.

"there have been & are actually in course of restoration two of the most interesting Basilicas that Milan
contains that of S. Ambrogio & that of S. Eustorgio

"the restoration of the first infuriated" the architect Aymer Verdier the ciborium had not then been
"touched which inclined to the apse of the church common in character to others of the same epoch

"In the restoration of the second it was thought well to destroy an ancient façade & add another entirely
"different in design. For all these changes & others too numerous to record I protested many times by

"letter now to the R. Lombard Institute now to the College of Engineers & Architects of Milan & by

"articles inserted in the city journals naturally without fruit except isolation & prohibition to visit the

"restorations in progress -

"Not long since I was asked by a lady to accompany her on a visit to the Certosa of Pavia for the purposes

"of showing its monuments to an English lady who had been recommended to her - We were all surprised

"at the alterations which had been committed under the title of restoration The pavement in coloured brick

"so characteristic of the time had been destroyed & substituted by a marble one - the inclined planes that

"led to the lavatory (lavabo) & old sacristy also of coloured brick levelled & marble steps substituted & I

"cannot enumerate how many other things - We protested at the moment - which provoked a newspaper to

"print a laudatory article on the restoration - I then wrote to the "Roma Artistica" noting the importance of

"the monument & the necessity of the restorers at least respecting its characteristics & parts - The "director

"of the journal thanked me & promised to print my article but in the meantime the protest against "the

"restoration of the Bigallo at Florence caused them to draw a veil over the restorations of the Certosa.

"What is to be done? Do you believe that a protest in Italy will be anything but a dead letter? With

"Government, Provincial & Communal Commissions that permit the total rebuilding of an edifice with

different material & substantial alteration even in the general lines is it possible to hope for any good -

"And under such conditions is it possible to find citizens who will meet in society to protect the

"monuments certain of systematic opposition?

"I think in the actual condition of things the London Society alone can exercise beneficial influence it will

"raise perhaps national jealousies but the just objections & reasonable remarks will spur the Italians to

"operate in such a manner as not to merit them.

"praying you to excuse me if I have been too prolix - I have the honour etc etc

(Signed) Tito Vespasiano Paravicini

* made him red hot

In my reply which is somewhat lengthy I have noted that the condition under which the English Soc.
labours are not any better than those that exist in Italy & that with us it is impossible to appeal to any
Ministry of Instruction who if he [sic]chooses to exercise it has power to stop almost any public works, &
that many Italians exist in each of the principal towns who object as much as ourselves to these restorations
& that if such were banded together & were able to show that they had reason on their side might at some
future time find that they were able to impose their opinions on the majority. I have recommended him to
make the acquaintance if possible of the Cav. A. Tolomei of Padua & note to him any objections he has to
make to the scheme of restoration at the Arena of which he has charge.
I think the Cavaliere A Tolomei would join our society - if asked willingly. You can write to him in English which he reads perfectly - he is personally known to both Mr Ruskin & Lord Layard. I should be much obliged if in any case you would send him a prospectus of the society.

Ill. Signore
Cav: A Tolomei
Padova
is sufficient address if any architect who is a member of the society were to go there & communicate personally with him he would be well received & any practical objections to his plans listened to with attention.

Believe me Y" very [?]
Chas. Fairfax Murray

Newman Marks Esq.

P.S.
I have stated to Sig. Paravicini that I am convinced from experience that public foreign protest & interference with Italian restoration is in no way beneficial & that on the contrary it irritates the national susceptibility to the point of making enemies of those inclined to be friendly or neutral whatever is done I think should be private.

Source: ASPAB Destructive Works in S. Gemignano.

Comments

This letter, containing observations by Paravicini which he communicated to Murray at Florence, poses numerous questions which cannot yet be answered concerning Paravicini’s involvement with the SPAB. The reference to Wallis suggests that Wallis had asked Paravicini directly to become involved in SPAB activities in Italy around the time he was invited to participate in the St Mark’s Committee, but how this proposition was made is not recorded. He was not among those recommended to Wallis by Count Zorzi in 1880, though Zorzi must have known of him. Murray’s comments on Paravicini’s letter illustrate the former’s reservations about active foreign interference, and demonstrate conclusively a fundamental shift at the SPAB away from direct action in
favour of a softer, behind-the-scenes approach to promoting anti-scrape ideology abroad. Clearly Murray saw his role as to facilitate co-operation between Italians such as Paravicini and Tolomei (who Murray had met perhaps as early as July 1880. See Part II Chapter 2) with a view to supporting independent efforts to form a private lobbying group to campaign from inside Italy. (Tolomei, as mentioned earlier, did not join the SPAB).

The restorations of Porta nuova and Porta Ticino had been among the earliest undertakings of the Italian government in Lombardy, the latter having been a restoration by Boito of 1861-5, involving the widening of the gateway and reinstatement of gothic crenellations, in accordance with his view that medieval monuments of civic importance should be restored to a semblance of their original form rather than merely stabilised as antiquities. A more detailed account of the works to these monuments, and the works to Sant' Ambrogio and Sant' Eustorgio, with invaluable documentary references can be found in Bortolotto, S. & Massari, G., 'I monumenti e la città. Cronologia delle fonti ufficiali' in volume one of Rozzi, Renato [ed.] La Milano del Piano Beruto, op.cit. pp.413-502.

Aymer Verdier (1819-1880) was a French architect, a pupil of Labrouste, and a member of the Commission des Monuments Historiques from 1848-76. He had worked under Viollet-le-Duc's direction as diocesan architect at Beauvais and Amiens, but was perhaps best known in Italy for his drawings of Italian domestic architecture in F.Cattois and A.
Verdier's Architecture Civile et Domestique au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance (cf. Th-B. vol. 34. p.233).

The letter again illustrates how much Paravicini was isolated by his peers, a factor which must be taken into account when reckoning his interest in the SPAB and the favourability he showed at this time towards the idea of maintaining external pressure on the Italians form outside the national frontiers. Murray's conviction, that foreign protests are counter-productive, was evidently at odds with this idea.

The restoration of the floor of the Certosa di Pavia, as mentioned in chapter 4, was a programme of works which preoccupied Paravicini between 1881 and 1884, on several accounts. The replacing of coloured brick paving with modern marble work of poor artistic quality, the lavish expense on new fittings and fixtures rather than on funding a works department to ensure the stability of the fabric should not be compromised, the neglect of a crumbling façade and niggardly replacement of windows in a different style on spurious historical grounds all added up to a stupendous piece of mismanagement upon which he remarked "What is the worth of modern embellishments if the old is left to decay? Historic monuments are conserved for the importance they possess, not for the importance they might have as a result of new expenditure. Is the Certosa of Pavia to be a museum of modern art? (Paravicini, T.V. 'I restauri di monumenti e la Certosa di Pavia' Arte e Storia Anno III n.38, 21 Sept. 1884. pp.297-8).
VANDALISM IN ITALY

The distinguished Milanese antiquary, Cav. Tito Vespasiano Paravicini, has sent a letter to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in which he describes the wanton acts of destruction from which old buildings in the north of Italy have suffered during the past year, and the further injury that is threatened in the future.

The Cav. Paravicini points out the sad fact that the buildings which have suffered the most irreparable injuries are precisely those that have been under the special care of the Italian Commission for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the universities. The list he gives is long. A few examples will suffice to show the serious nature of the harm which has been done, and is still doing.

The architect to whom was entrusted the task of freeing the Porta Ticinese, in Milan, from the houses which were built up against it and partly concealed it, took the opportunity to pull down and rebuild in a new position the fine old medieval towers which flanked the gate. The baldacchino and high altar of S. Ambrogio, dating from the ninth century, were set not at right angles to the axis of the church, but slightly oblique towards the south - a characteristic of early Lombard churches. This interesting peculiarity has been obliterated, for the altar and its canopy have been pulled down and refixed with geometrical correctness in the usual position.

It is also proposed to pull down Bramante's portico on the north side of S. Ambrogio, on the ground that it is not in keeping with the early character of the rest of the church. A project is now on foot for facing externally with new stone-work the church of S. Maria delle Grazie, which is a fine fifteenth-century monastic edifice, built of richly toned brick with ornaments modelled in terra cotta. The new façade is quite different in design to the old simple brick and terra cotta. Another serious loss is that of the church of S. Babila, which has been completely rebuilt, nothing whatever of the old building being preserved. S. Calimerio, S. Maria Incoronata, and S. Maurizio are threatened. This last church is enriched with some of Luini's best fresco painting, which would certainly not escape if the proposed reconstruction were carried out.

The Cav. Paravicini mentions many instances outside the city, the most serious, perhaps, of which is the brutal treatment that the Certosa, near Pavia, has been undergoing. All that remained of the fine old terra cotta mosaic pavement in the transepts of the Certosa has been destroyed for the sake of laying down a new marble one. The rich and delicate terra cotta ornaments of the outside have been daubed over with thick red paint, filling up the interstices, and blunting their sharpness. The walls throughout the cloisters and the cells of the monks have been whitewashed, without any regard for the remains of old fresco painting which covered them in many places. Cav. Paravicini has done all he could, by giving lectures and writing newspaper articles, to arouse some feeling of indignation among his countrymen, but as yet he has met with little encouragement or support. He appeals for assistance and sympathy to the English nation, in the hope that some effective protest may be raised against such a treatment of works of art which are among the most valuable of their kind.

Source: Athenaeum, n.2841, 8 April 1882 pp.451-2.
Comments

The observations contained in the lost letter seem to echo those which Paravicini made in earlier years, in which had had not been afraid to criticise the Commission and the Academy for their lack of responsibility. The Porta Ticinese restorations, as mentioned, had been carried out in the early 1860s by Camillo Boito, a member of the Milanese Commission, but remained highly controversial (see A.7.2). The alterations at Sant’Ambrogio had been one of the subjects of Paravicini’s letter to the Collegio degli Ingegneri of December 1879 (‘Considerazioni sul ristauro dei monumenti architettonici’), published in Il Politecnico. The proposals concerning the replacement of parts of the exterior of Bramante’s work at Santa Maria delle Grazie enraged Paravicini, who had earlier pointed to the importance of the terra cotta as a fragment of the historical development of techniques and materials in Lombard building - “important data in the history of a monument” (‘Appunti sul restauro dei monumenti’ Il Politecnico vol.29, 1880. p.578), and protested to the Collegio degli Ingegneri and the Reale Istituto Lombardo about the restorations (see: Arte e Storia Anno I n.8, 23 July 1882. p.60). On San Babila and San Calimero, see below. Paravicini’s efforts to campaign against the restorations of the Certosa are mentioned above (A.7.2.), and this was a cause in which he and others persisted over subsequent years (see: Arte e Storia Anno III n.38, 21 Sept. 1884. pp.297-8; Anno VI n.24, 20 Aug. 1887. p.176)
Dear Sir,

It is painful indeed that however much one preaches about respect for ancient monuments, however much one shows that old work cannot be re-made, and preaches that the ruin or demolition of a monument is less damaging to history than a fake; it is indeed painful, I repeat, that in Italy nothing less than the restoration, reconstruction and falsification of old work is being practised, with the result that all the monuments are being counterfeited.

A few months ago the restoration of the church of S. Calimero was completed. Everything was brutally modified, rebuilt and added on. The Commission for the Conservation of Monuments has approved the lot. The Superior Council of Fine Arts, headed by Comm. Fiorelli, has found it all highly praiseworthy.

The Church of S. Babila, still in the process of being restored, is one of the most ridiculous forgeries - the most ancient portions are being knocked down to be rebuilt in an even older form, and the Conservation Commission, and Superior Council of Arts, and the Academy, and the Press shower this extraordinary work with an abundance of praise.

Now it is S. Vincenzo in Prato, a ruined ancient basilica, possibly Milan’s oldest church, which is in the throes of restoration. One of its apses was knocked down some years ago. The other was destroyed two centuries since. Now only the central one remains - and it is therefore to have two new ones. The restorers have altered the old sacristy just a few days ago - it is to have a new one. And thus a new altar, some new columns, new sculpture - and everything will have to look old.

Nor does a better prospect await the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, where there was talk of removing even Bramante’s magnificent doorway because it is not in harmony with the façade, or of rebuilding the whole façade in the style of the doorway. In the meantime they are rebuilding in stone things that are terra cotta.

All these things are being done amid the praise, the encouragement, of the Commissions, the Council and the Press; and there are even senators who are putting the King in charge of these disgraceful violations and squeezing money out of him for the purpose.

That which is going on at Milan is common all over Italy, and proof of it is in the meeting the other day at Florence about the church of Santa Trinità, which Professor Castellazzi intends to restore and reduce to a unity of style, destroying portions of various periods so as to replace them with his antique inventions, against the better judgement of Professor Poggi who is confining himself to the wish that at least the artistic parts be respected, irrespective of the style or period to which they belong.

I am writing a very lengthy memorial on the subject to send to Rome, enclosing over three hundred detailed illustrations of the monuments of Lombardy - drawings from life, done before the said monuments are restored - but I am convinced that it will end up like another one I sent to the Minister two years ago - a flop. Still, one must fight and make propaganda.

With the utmost esteem and consideration
I am, honourable Sir, your devoted servant

Arch. Tito Vespasiano Paravicini
Milan 27 May 1885

P.S.  
I would like to know to whom I should apply in order to recommend two of Milan's most illustrious gentlemen, highly regarded in the conservation of ancient monuments, who would like to join the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. They are the noble brothers Dr Fausto and Dr Giuseppe Bagatti-Valsecchi, of Via Gesù, Milan.

Source: ASPAB Loggia del Bigallo

Comments

This is a translation of the only autograph letter in Paravicini's hand located in the Archive of the SPAB. Of the other restorations he mentions, San Babila and San Vincenzo in Prato were perhaps the most dramatic. Internal restorations at San Babila had been going on for some years, but the drastic works to the exterior, culminating in the substitution of a fake Romanesque façade for the seventeenth-century one, were begun in 1883 and completed by the early 1890s. San Vincenzo had been neglected since the 1820s but was seized upon in 1885 and restored to active use by 1891, at the expense of much original historic material. The Bagatti-Valsecchi brothers, distinguished architects, antiquaries and restorers whose most famous works were a pair of houses in Via Santo Spirito (now the Bagatti-Valsecchi Museum) did not join the Society.
FRANCESCO AZZURRI (1827-1901)

Roman architect. Having studied at the Academy of St Luke, he began to practice in the 1860s, designing a number of noteworthy buildings, among them Palazzo Pericoli, Palazzo Negroni (Caffarelli), and a number of lesser domestic buildings, all in Rome. In 1862 he built the hospital of Santa Maria della Pietà and in 1867 the hospital of Fate-bene-Fratelli, also in Rome. The hospitals of Siena and Alessandria are also by him. He was an accomplished restorer, having conducted works at the Oratory of the Confraternità del Gonfalone in 1861, the church of Santa Maria in Monticelli, and Palazzo della Cancelleria. Among his better-known late works are the Gateway and Park at Palazzo Barberini, in a baroque style and the imposing Palazzo della Repubblica at San Marino (1894), the latter in a neo-Medieval style.

He was elected President of the Academy of St Luke in 1880, and between 1880 and 1886 he built the Teatro Nazionale in Via IV Novembre (now demolished). In his capacity as President of the Academy he entered into correspondence with Count Zorzi to allow the Academy to become the central channel through which English protests at Italian restoration would be transmitted. In his reply of October 1880 to concerns expressed at the restorations to the west façade of St Mark’s (see Appendix A.1.3.) he attempted to placate English fears and reassure the SPAB that the Academy had the matter in hand. Responding in June 1881 to the allegations over the Bigallo restoration, he relayed important technical data on the proposals in order to soften English suspicions
and ensure that the protesters were kept accurately informed of the realities of the case (see Appendix A.3.5.). Azzurri was rewarded for his equanimity with a seat on the SPAB Committee, alongside Paravicini and Zorzi, early in 1881 - the first foreigners to be so honoured. Azzurri remained a Committee member until 1892, but did not, apparently, visit England.

Bibliography

There are few sources on Azzurri, and the majority of these consist of only a few lines:


Galassi, F. 'Commemorazione' Annali della Società degli Ingegneri ed Architetti Italiani, 1901. p.16


Illustrazione Italiana, 1894 ii. p.211.

Obituary

L'Architettura Pratica vol.6, 1901. p.22.
Fig. 22 Francesco Azzurri (from an engraving in *Illustrazione Italiana*).
ONORATO CARLANDI (1848-1913)

Roman painter, born in Piazza di Spagna, son of an aristocratic mother and an architect father. Carlandi studied in Rome at the Accademia di Belle Arti di San Luca where his tutors were Coghetti, Capalti and De Sanctis. In 1866 he enrolled with Garibaldi's volunteers and served with an alpine brigade in the Trentino. He returned south to Naples in 1869 to study under Domenico Morelli (1826-1901). His earliest exhibits were patriotic subjects, such as La Barca dei Fratelli Cairoli (1871, at the Esposizione Internazionale at the Casa del Pincio), and I Prigionieri di Mentana (1872). Carlandi then worked as a scene painter at the Politeama Trasteverino and the Teatro Argentina until, in 1875, he became one of ten founder members of the Società degli Acquarellisti, Rome's first water colour society, of which he became Secretary in 1881. Other founder members were the painters Joris, Franz, Cipriani, Maccari, Cabianca, Simoni, Simonetti, Biseo and Tusquets. In later years the Società, while never a powerful organisation, attracted numerous members from abroad, most notably the British born artists Henry Parsons Rivière and Rhoda Holmes. Carlandi was particularly close to Vincenzo Cabianca (1827-1902). According to Augustus Hare, Carlandi had a studio in Via dei Zucchelli in 1875, but sometime between 1875 and 1880 he moved to new premises at the stabile Dovizielli, at Via Margutta, 33, a large complex of artists' workshops at which Cabianca also was based.
Carlandi and Cabianca travelled to England together in 1880. This period was a fruitful one in that the two artists were introduced into London artistic circles, apparently by the composer Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916), who later became a naturalised English citizen. Between 1882 and 1886 Carlandi exhibited over twenty works: eleven times at the Royal Academy; seven at the New Water Colour Society, and at the Suffolk Street and New Galleries, and elsewhere. In Spring 1882 he took a house in West London, not far from Sir Frederic Leighton's studio, on a seven year tenancy. During the 1880s Giovanni Costa, who was a leading light among Roman artists, was himself frequently in London (he exhibited well over fifty works there, and was the best-known contemporary Italian painter of his time in London circles). Carlandi and Cabianca had known him since the 1860s and were his closest associates among the Italian community in London. Through Leighton (whom he had met in Rome in 1853), Costa was introduced to Walter Crane and George Richmond. Costa was a favourite of the collector and amateur artist George Howard, Earl of Carlisle, and of the clergyman and collector, the Rev. Stopford Brooke. Brooke had been a committee member of the SPAB since 1877 and was close to Morris, Burne-Jones and the Howards. Brooke's house at 1, Manchester Square was a meeting place for artists associated with the SPAB, and Costa is known to have visited the Howards at Naworth Castle, Cumbria. It was through connections such as these that Carlandi most probably came to be associated with the SPAB, which nominated him as

2 Costa has been described as a Pre-Raphaelite, in so far as a movement of comparable aims existed in Italy. Cf: Callari, Storia dell'Arte Contemporanea, cit. (below). Cf also: Rossetti Agresti, O. Giovanni Costa: his life, work, and times, London, Gay & Bird, 1907.
Florence correspondent in 1882. While in England Carlandi became particularly interested in the water colours of Peter de Wint, Turner and Constable. It appears that he made contact with Miss Tatlock, granddaughter of de Wint. He also met an Irish painter of aristocratic descent, Selina Haverty, who became his second wife. Carlandi established a successful summer school in Wales, but by 1886 he seems to have been back in Rome where he teamed up with Costa to form the In Arte Libertas group. He went on to be a leading member of the Venticinque della Campagna Romana artists’ fraternity. His later work reveals a growing interest in the ruins of ancient Rome (I Granai d’Ostia 1905, Avanzi del teatro d’Ostia 1906, Alba Nuova 1911), a cause for which, according to Lomonaco, he became a tireless campaigner.

The appointment of Carlandi as Florence correspondent seems a little odd in that Carlandi does not seem to have had strong associations with that city, though he is known to have worked there. Costa and Cabianca had much firmer links with Florence, having established a relationship with numerous members of the Macchiaioli school while painting there in the 1860s. Diego Angeli, in fact, described Cabianca as “Il Ministro plenipotentiario della ‘macchia’ a Roma” (the Minister Penitpotentiary of the ‘smudge’ in Rome) in the 1880s (cit. below p.135), and the Via Margutta complex was often visited by Macchiaioli artists the likes of Fattori, Signorini, Banti and Cecioni.

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4 I have found no information whatsoever on Haverty, who does not appear in any accounts of the history of Irish painting in the nineteenth century.
Like almost every other aspect of Carlandi's life, his Florence period is not well documented. In the absence of any consistent first-hand testimony, of which I have found no trace, any account of Carlandi's activities during the 1880s must be pieced together from a vast number of fragmentary references. One of the few English sources which gives us any indication of the man is Matilda Lucas' *Two Englishwomen in Rome 1871-1900*. Anne and Matilda Lucas began taking lessons in painting with Carlandi in January or February 1878. They were on very friendly terms with Carlandi, who frequently attended parties and receptions given by the Lucases and other members of the expatriate community. Their descriptions of him offer a rare testimony of his personality and lifestyle. On 18 June Matilda Lucas wrote:

"We said goodbye to Carlandi yesterday. His new studio is very nice (possibly a reference to his move to Via Margutta, 33), and we hope to work there next year. It is his great desire to go to England, but he cannot leave his mother and sisters. He wants to draw English trees; he says he has heard that they are unusually beautiful this year."

**Bibliography and References**


In addition to the above, interesting accounts of Carlandi and his participation in the artistic life of Rome may be found in:


Exhibitions
Fleres, U. [Review of In Arte Libertas show, via Nazionale] Archivio Storico dell’Arte vol. 3, 1890. pp.127-35. (Leighton, Murray, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Klinger,Lenbach, Ernesto Hebert, Gioli, Signorini, Sartorio, Coleman, Corelli, and Alfredo Ricci were among the exhibitors at this multi-national exhibition).
Fleres, U. ‘Esposizione di Belle Arti in Roma’ Archivio Storico dell’Arte vol.4, 1891. pp.142-4. (Major exhibition at the palace of Fine Arts, in Via Nazionale, promoted by Costa. Showed works by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Marie Stillman, Frederic Leighton, as well as Italians such as Carlo Coleman, Alessandro Morani, Carlandi and his Giulio Aristide Sartorio).
The Studio vol. 42, 1908. pp.306-7. (Refers to Carlandi’s painting, and his summer school in Wales).
Fig. 23. Onorato Carlandi, self portrait, oil on canvas (Uffizi Gallery, reproduced courtesy of the Kunsthistorisches Institut).
CHARLES FAIRFAX MURRAY (1849-1919)

English painter, connoisseur, art dealer and collector of rare books. Murray, who was of Irish extraction, first came into contact with the Pre-Raphaelite circle in 1866, when he was introduced to Burne-Jones, who took him on as an assistant. He worked with Burne-Jones on the St George and the Dragon series for the home of Myles Birket Foster, in 1867, and also as assistant to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Murray began to paint his own works in the style of Burne-Jones but demonstrated also a prodigious talent for copying, such as in the multiple editions of Chaucer and the Ruba’iyat of Omar Khayyam, illuminated by Murray for the Kelmscott Press. By 1869 Murray was already travelling in Italy, where he regularly teamed up with John Ruskin, whom he had met after the latter had been shown some of Murray’s drawings of the Camposanto at Pisa. He was Ruskin’s assistant in 1871-2 in Venice, became a permanent resident in Italy around 1872, and went to Siena to execute for Ruskin in 1873 a copy of Lorenzetti’s Allegory of Good Government. Edward Burne-Jones, then on his third visit to Italy, told Charles Eliot Norton of having visited him at Siena in 1873. In 1875 he married Angelica Collivicchi at Pisa. He continued to work for Ruskin as a copyist, notably in Rome in April - May 1874, where he produced copies of Botticelli’s Trials of Moses at the Sistine Chapel. His wife gave birth to two daughters, and in 1877-8 they were living at in Piazza S.

Petronilla, Siena. Correspondence from Ruskin to Murray in the Pierpont Morgan Library show that Murray began to carry out studies of Lippi’s *Coronation of the Virgin*, in the Uffizi, for Ruskin in June 1878. It was perhaps at this time that Murray and his family moved to a house at 108 Via de’ Serragli, Florence, just south of the Arno river. He received a further commission from Ruskin in October 1879 - for a copy of a painting entitled *University Education of a Florentine Youth*, the original of which was at San Domenico, near Fiesole, and in 1881 he also made studies from Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes at the Campo Santo, Pisa. They were probably the last works executed for Ruskin. Clegg and Tucker mention that relations with Ruskin deteriorated when the latter became irregular in his payments. Letters from Murray in the archive of the National Gallery, however, show that Murray had found Ruskin a difficult customer on earlier occasions.

Murray’s income was not derived solely from copying: during the period in which he resided in Italy he became an astute picture-hunter. In this he began as a buying agent for the National Gallery, under its Director (and fellow SPAB member) F.W. Burton. For the National Gallery he obtained Ghirlandaio’s *Procession to Calvary* (1883) and Matteo di Giovanni’s *Assumption* (1884) - at considerable cost and effort. When Lady Walburga Murray’s correspondence with Frederick Burton implies (in contradiction to Berresford’s information) that the first had died in infancy before the second was born in August 1878. ALS Murray to Burton, 13 Aug. 1877, National Gallery, Box A IV, 4, 2.


Paget, whom he knew, described him as “full of talent, but lazy and very poor”⁷ she cannot have been thinking of his work as a collector and picture-buyer. He helped Ruskin in his purchases, and assisted Burne-Jones and especially Rossetti in obtaining photographs and other material in connection with his work as a painter of historical scenes. Over a period of time, and with the support and encouragement of Ruskin, William Morris, Burton, Rossetti and others, he became a prominent connoisseur and collector in his own right. During the 1880s he seems to have made numerous trips to Christie’s in London for the purposes of buying works of art, such as in 1883 when he bought a large quantity of drawings by Rossetti at the auction which took place after the latter’s death. Murray became an adviser to the firm of Agnew, a prominent London art dealer, and by 1887 it appears that he had more or less re-established himself permanently in London, concentrating on this aspect of his work.

Details of Murray’s activities as a campaigner for the preservation of ancient buildings are much less certain. He became a member of the SPAB in 1878, and immediately took on the mantle of Italian correspondent. He was already a close friend of Burne-Jones and Morris, and corresponded regularly with both of them throughout the 1870s and 1880s. While on a visit to London in July - August 1879 he visited Philip Webb, and Murray later conducted Webb around Italy when the latter arrived in the country for a prolonged visit between November 1884 and April 1885.⁸ Webb stayed with Murray in Florence when he visited Philip Webb, and Murray later conducted Webb around Italy when the latter arrived in the country for a prolonged visit between November 1884 and April 1885.⁸ Webb stayed with Murray in Florence when he visited Philip Webb, and Murray later conducted Webb around Italy when the latter arrived in the country for a prolonged visit between November 1884 and April 1885.⁸ Webb stayed with Murray in Florence when he visited Philip Webb, and Murray later conducted Webb around Italy when the latter arrived in the country for a prolonged visit between November 1884 and April 1885.

and it was in the company of Murray that Webb made his only visit to Venice (where he met a young Italian architect who was to become an intimate lifelong friend, Giacomo Boni). Webb later became another of Murray’s customers, the former asking him in June 1885 to obtain photographs from the firm of Alinari of the Basilica of Sant’Antonio at Padua.⁹

Though only one letter from Murray survives in the Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, dated 3 May 1881, and addressed to Newman Marks on the subject of San Gimignano, it points to a profound involvement in the issue of Italian restoration. Murray was acutely aware of the difficulties which the Society faced in its efforts to broadcast its message of simple conservation to an Italian audience. Murray made it his business to convey, at every opportunity, to those Italians whom he felt would lend a sympathetic ear, the principles of the SPAB. Thus he made the acquaintance of Antonio Tolomei at Padua, probably in the summer or autumn of 1880; he was known to Paravicini in Milan by the early part of 1881; Cannicci, the painter from San Gimignano approached him in the spring of 1881 regarding the Palazzo Comunale at san Gimignano. In the absence of manuscript evidence from the period it is impossible to say whether these contacts were established through the SPAB in London or whether Murray acted with a free hand, as a semi-detached ‘roving’ ambassador for the anti-scrape movement. In any event, his endeavours were of crucial importance in disseminating SPAB principles in Italy.

⁹ ALS Webb to Murray, 30 June 1885, Fitwilliam Museum.
Bibliography and Note on Manuscript Sources

Secondary sources dealing with Murray are few, and all lacking in conclusive detail about his involvement in restoration. There are collections of manuscripts, but those that I have consulted add nothing to the sparse account I have given of his work as a SPAB activist. The best bibliographical source is Berresford (cit. below). I summarise here only the location of the more substantial collections of relevance to the period 1877-1883, the period in which Murray seems to have been most active as an anti-scrape campaigner: some of his letters from F.W.Burton are now at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas, while many of those from Murray to Burton are at the National Gallery in London and at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester; letters from Ruskin to Murray (1869-1883) are now held at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester and at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (the latter collection was used heavily by Clegg and Tucker in their reconstruction of Murray’s activities in Tuscany); twenty-nine letters from Lord Leighton to Murray (1879-1883), are also at the John Rylands Library. All this material, of interest chiefly in relation to Murray’s picture buying and copying activities, sheds little if any light on Murray’s interest in restoration; an extensive and especially interesting collection of 86 letters and postcards from Burne-Jones to Murray (1867-1898, but mostly of the 1860s and 1870s) is at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Philip Webb’s letters to Murray are also at the Fitzwilliam Museum. There are only a handful of autograph letters of this period addressed by Murray to his correspondents in England and America. Berresford mentions diaries of Murray’s for the years 1874 and 1878. I have been unable to consult these, but I have
made use of portions of all the other collections mentioned in my study of Murray’s life and work, as well as the following secondary sources:


Obituaries


The Times January 28 1919. p.11.
Fig. 24. Charles Fairfax Murray, self portrait, pencil, (Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge)
TITO VESPASIANO PARAVICINI (1830-1899)

A little known antiquary whose contribution to the restoration debate in Italy is beginning to be recognised, mainly thanks to the efforts of Professor Amedeo Bellini. Nothing is known of his life prior to 1862 when he became a student of architecture at the Milan Academy (Brera), at the age of thirty-two.

After his studies (which, however, he appears to have left uncompleted) he went on to found a periodical, the *Albo dell'Architetto*, published in Milan from 1874 to 1877, designed as a kind of illustrated architects' encyclopaedia of forms, styles and typologies of all periods. In 1871 Paravicini visited Egypt. He published several books, among them one on Egyptian art, *Sull'Arte degli Antichi Egizii* (Milan, Robecchi, 1875), another on the Renaissance in Lombardy, *Die Renaissance Architektur der Lombardei* (Dresden, n.d but 1877), and a monograph on the church of Santa Maria presso San Satiro, *La Chiesa di Santa Maria presso San Satiro e gli scrittori che la descrissero* (Milan, 1877). He edited an Italian edition of Breymann's *Trattato delle Costruzioni Civili* (Trans. by C. Valentini, 7 vols., Milan, 1883-7) and the third part of Pietro Selvatico's ambitious *Le Arti del Disegno in Italia* (2 vols., Milan, Vallardi, 1873-83). He became an honorary member of the Academy in 1876, and was elected *Accademico di Merito* at the Academy of Perugia and correspondent member of the Academy at Urbino around 1876.
Bellini has identified only a handful of original architectural works by Paravicini, all in the environs of Milan, and in diverse hybrid styles, and a few funerary monuments, including the Pelanda tomb at the Cimitero Monumentale di Milano.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the culture of his times was as a theorist of restoration, and he was the leading Italian interpreter of the philosophy of anti-scare. His contributions to the Politecnico on the Cathedral, Santa Maria delle Grazie, San Giovanni in Conca have been considered at length in an earlier chapter, but Paravicini’s output was not confined to these alone. He was a frequent contributor to the Florentine journal Arte e Storia from 1882 to 1888, for which he reported chiefly on the progress of restorations in Lombardy. He was also a tireless critic of the Commissioni Conservatrici and the bureaucracy of the State. He once complained to Carocci, Editor of Arte e Storia:

"while nowadays the conservation of monuments is being endlessly talked about, while the Government is creating Conservation Commissions in competition with the local authorities and the provincial councils, we still have to lament the loss of some interesting edifice here, irrational undertakings or senseless additions there. But sadly the fact is that the conservation commissions themselves, whether because of the way they are set up, or because their actions do not rest on solid foundations, co-ordinated in accordance with incontrovertible general principles, almost never yield any advantage, and sometimes even damage the monuments themselves, which are in their care."\(^1\)

\(^1\) "...mentre oggidì si parla senza posa della conservazione dei monumenti, che il Governo in concorrenza coi Comuni e coi Consigli Provinciali crea delle Commissioni Conservatrici dei Monumenti, si debba costantemente lamentare, ora la perdita di qualche interessante edificio, ora l’esecuzione affatto irrazionali o di aggiunte senza senso. - Ma purtroppo sta il fatto che le stesse commissioni conservatrici, sia pel modo con cui sono costituite o perché l’azione loro non è appoggiata a solide basi, coordinate a principj generali indiscutibili, non riescono quasi mai di giovamento e talvolta anche, riescono di danno ai monumenti stessi, sottoposti alla loro tutela" Arte e Storia, Anno I n.8, 23 July 1882, p.60

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Paravicini's condemnation of the restorations of Santa Maria presso San Satiro and Santa Maria delle Grazie, in the early part of 1881, where new granite blocks had been deployed in place of ancient brickwork, was not only published in the press, but took the form of letters addressed to learned societies. In the course of his campaign in 1883-4 against the re-paving of the floor of the Certosa (Charterhouse) at Pavia, he wrote to the Minister of Public Instruction in Rome as well as to journals.² This, indeed, became his preferred modus operandi, and it was obviously a strategy much influenced by the SPAB in London, with whom Paravicini was certainly in touch by the beginning of 1881, the year in which he became (with Zorzi and Azzurri) one of the Society's Committee members.

The fundamental tenets of his philosophy can be distilled into three precepts: firstly the idea that the monument was a composite specimen of historical testimony, and should be preserved in its variety and entirety and not according to subjective, selective criteria; secondly, that the monument should be subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny in order to grasp fully its origins, history, and its structural and decorative diversity, prior to any programme of repairs or alterations; and thirdly, the conviction that 'repair' rather than restoration should be adopted as a general principle, and that forgery could be avoided if a regime of 'daily care' (to use Morris' term) were instituted to prevent the building from reaching a critical condition in the first place. It is the last of these which most clearly shows the impact of SPAB ideas on Paravicini during the period 1881-84.

² Arte e Storia, Anno III n.38, 21 Sept. 1884, pp.297-8
Bibliography

For the most thorough bibliobiographical and critical studies of Paravicini to date, see the following:


Other biographical references:


Barring minor references (which do not add anything of import to the facts which are already known), and Paravicini's own publications and letters (the most interesting of which are probably those at the Archive of the SPAB and at the British Museum), these are the only sources of reference on Paravicini. The Fondo Paravicini, bequeathed to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in 1903 by the Paravicini family, was unavailable for consultation during the preparation of this study, but an account of its contents - comprising architectural sketchbooks, drawings, and projects rather than written manuscripts - has been published by Bellini:

WILLIAM SCOTT (1848-1914)

Scott began his training as an architect, was articled to a provincial architect, passed the voluntary architects’ exam in 1870, and became a Royal Academy Travelling Student. There is evidence that as early as 1873 Scott had begun to consider the problem of restoration. He wrote to Charles Eastlake, Secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, on 10 January 1873 to urge the RIBA Conservation Committee to use its influence to protect St John’s Hospital, Northampton.

Scott had a long association with the Architectural Association, where he was president of the colour class in 1875. He was awarded a RIBA silver medal in 1875. On 3 December 1877 he was admitted to the RIBA as an Associate, having been proposed by George Edmund Street, Charles Barry, and John Whichcord. He had begun exhibiting at the Royal Academy the previous summer, with designs for a London residence. Some time around 1877 he was awarded a Travelling Studentship at the Royal Academy, and became a Soane Medallist at the RIBA. With these funds he was able to travel to Europe, though there are no recorded details of these travels, other than a letter in the Archive of the RIBA in which he announces that he will shortly leave for a one-year sketching tour on the continent. In 1879 he exhibited designs for a Town Hall at the Academy, and his

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1 The letter is conserved in the Archive of the RIBA at the British Architectural Library, William Scott LC/11/1/7. The Committee Minutes of 1873 contain a reference to the appeal, from William Scott, “a student,” but there is no record of any action having been taken (Royal Institute of British Architects: Committee for the Conservation of Ancient Monuments and Remains, Minutes 1864-1886, p.35).

2 BAL William Scott LC/12/4/3, 8 Jan. 1875 and LC/12/4/18, 26 Jan. 1875.

3 BAL William Scott LC/17/2/10, 16 Dec. 1878.
permanent address was still Myddleton Square (in Finsbury), London. But in December 1880 he announced to the Secretary of the RIBA that he could not afford his subscriptions, and wished to stay on in Italy where he said he was much engrossed in the study of the application of colour to architecture. The following winter he cancelled his membership.4

His career may in fact have already taken a sharp turn in the direction of painting and, especially, etching. The precise date of his permanent transfer to Italy is not known, but he exhibited only Italian subjects at the Royal Academy in 1880, 1881, 1882, 1884, 1890, 1896 and 1897. In December 1880 he was at Via S. Basilio, Rome; in 1881 he was at Venice; in 1882 he was living again at Via S. Basilio, Rome, and in 1884 at Venice again, where he gave his address as the Caffè Florian, in St Mark’s Square.

Scott concentrated increasingly on painting and etching, and was elected a member of the Society of Painter-Etchers in May 1881.5 His condition of poverty, however, grew worse. Matilda Lucas met him in Rome around 1883:

"Our room is turned into a perfect shop, not, however, on our own account, but because we are anxious to help some of our artistic friends, who are very hard up, and we have their works on show. William Scott, the etcher, is literally starving. Madame Posi called on him yesterday and found him looking wretchedly ill, with only one stale roll for his dinner."6

5 On the Painter-Etchers, of which Alma-Tadema, Poynter and James Tissot were also members, cf: Newbolt, Sir F. A History of the Society of Painter Etchers, London, Print Collectors Club, 1931. Scott remained a member until 27 March 1896.
6 Lucas, Two Englishwomen in Rome, op.cit. p.198.
Scott was perhaps able to supplement his earnings through translation work - he was responsible for the translation of Boito’s monograph on St Mark’s, translated as *The Basilica of St. Mark in Venice illustrated from the point of view of art and history by Venetian writers under the direction of Prof. Camillo Boito* (2 vols., Venice, Ongania, 1888), and also the English edition of A. Pasini’s volume *Il Tesoro di S. Marco*, entitled *The Pala d’Oro of the Basilica of St. Mark, Venice*, (Venice, Ongania, 1887), but he disappeared into obscurity into the 1890s.

Scott’s approach to the problem of restoration was particularly advanced, and his letter to Henry Wallis on the SPAB’s involvement (see Appendix A.4.) in Italy shows a unique insight into the complexities of the issue. Scott seems to have been unusually attuned to the negative effects of centralised administration in Italy on the custodianship of the nation’s monuments. He considered the continental system less effective, not least because of an exaggerated reliance on government funding for restoration and conservation works, which facilitated the greed of the municipalities, all hungry for a share of the national treasury in order to boost local economies and confidence. Scott maintained an impartial view of the SPAB, and could be as critical as he was supportive - for instance in his response to the Bigallo campaign of March 1881. But he maintained always a conviction in the need for gradual acknowledgement of the “true principles on which the value of St. Mark’s and other like buildings depends,” to be encouraged at grass-roots level, among those
"accomplished and enthusiastic men, full, not only of love and admiration for the treasures of their fair native city, but with an intelligent appreciation of their worth."⁷

Any attempt to impose these principles from outside Scott knew would be a failure. Scott’s insight, experience and reason, made him a vital force in the anti-scrape crusade, and his contribution should be recognised.

Bibliography and References

There is virtually no material on Scott other than the few references mentioned above (including the important series of letters from him, and a very brief Biography File, at the British Architectural Library), and Scott’s own writings in The Architect. References may be found to him, sub voce, in such works as House, S. Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists 1800-1914, Woodbridge, Antique Collectors Club, 1978; and Wood, C. Dictionary of Victorian Painters (2nd ed.), Woodbridge, Antique Collectors Club, 1978.

The only collection of Scott material outside the British Architectural Library is that in the Witt Library at the Courtauld Institute. There are no letters, only drawings executed in the late 1890s, and formerly in the H.J.Cornish collection, donated to Hampstead Public Library in 1928. They comprise views of several Italian towns, including Bordighera and Apricale.


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Obituary

*The Builder* Vol. 114, 10 May 1918 p.290
JOHN RODDAM SPENCER STANHOPE (1829-1908)

Painter, second son of John Spencer Stanhope of Cannon Hall, Yorkshire. In 1850 he became a pupil to George Frederick Watts, then a fashionable young painter recently returned from a three-year sojourn in Italy. Stanhope joined Watts' studio at Little Holland House, the home of Thoby and Sara Prinsep. He therefore came into contact with many literary luminaries, including Tennyson, Carlyle, Thackeray, Browning, and Rossetti. Watts and Stanhope visited Padua together in 1853.

In 1857 he joined William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and Rossetti in their campaign to decorate the Union Debating Hall at Oxford with Arthurian scenes. In 1859 he accompanied Watts to Asia Minor, where Charles Newton was conducting excavations around the Mausoleum of Halicarnassos. Also in 1859 Stanhope exhibited for the first time at the Royal Academy.

His interest in Italian themes and techniques was pronounced - he was an enthusiast of the tempera technique of painting on panel, and it was this method that he employed in the Oxford Debating Hall.

Georgiana Burne-Jones says that Stanhope went to live at Campden Hill around 1860, wintering abroad to alleviate his asthma.¹ In 1860 Webb built for him a house at Cobham,

Surrey - ‘Sandroyd,’ subsequently known as Fairmile and today as Benfleet Hall - where he lived for a number of years.

In the early 1870s Stanhope and his wife transferred to Italy, partly for health reasons. They purchased a former Strozzi villa on the hills of Bellosguardo, Villa Nuti (now lo Strozzino). Stanhope was visited there by Morris and Burne-Jones in 1872, and by Webb in 1884. He certainly also knew Charles Fairfax Murray, who was the other principal figure of whom the SPAB sought advice and assistance during the early 1880s. There are, however, no surviving records of correspondence between the two men. Over the next thirty years the Stanhopes, in marked contrast to Murray and his life of penury, became pillars of a well-to-do Anglo-Florentine community which included the Lindsays (at Villa Palmieri), Sir John Strachey (uncle of the biographer Giles Lytton Strachey), Walter Savage Landor, Frederick Stibbert and Mr and Mrs Henry Ross (at Villa Poggio Gherardo) among its more illustrious members.

Stanhope continued to paint, exhibiting at the first Grosvenor Gallery show in 1877. He collaborated with George Frederick Bodley on a number of occasions, notably for the decoration of the eastern apse of Bodley and Garner’s Marlborough School Chapel, of 1883-6.

Stanhope’s later interests centred upon the Church of the Holy Trinity, built in Florence by and for the English community in 1894. Stanhope was vice-chairman of the building
committee, and his friend Bodley was the architect. Stanhope's painted reredos, comprising fourteen panels decorated with scenes from the life of Christ, now seems to be lost, though parts of it appeared on the market in Florence around 1970. The Stanhopes were generous benefactors of the church: they donated £100 to the fabric fund in 1891, and sold a Botticelli painting from their own collection in 1902 to raise funds for the completion of the tower.²

Bibliography & References


² cf: Florence Gazette Year 2 n.1, 31 Oct. 1891.
Fig. 25 John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (National Portrait Gallery)
WILLIAM JAMES STILLMAN (1828-1901)

Born at Schenectady, NY. As a young student at Union College, Schenectady, he had ambitions to be a painter, and entered into correspondence with John Ruskin, whom he met on his first visit to England in 1850. He was co-founder and editor of *The Crayon* (one of the first art journals in America) from January 1855 to June 1856, and it was through his efforts that the English Pre-Raphaelite artists were introduced to the American public. With Ruskin’s help he successfully procured the services of William Michael Rossetti, brother of the painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and himself a critic and art-journalist of growing reputation, as London correspondent of *The Crayon*. Stillman was instrumental in helping to set up the first American exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite painting, the American Exhibition of British Art, in autumn 1857. In summer 1858 Stillman led the first expedition of the Adirondack Club - the so-called ‘philosophers’ camp’ - a journey of intellectual discovery, and a test of physical prowess and comradeship in which Stillman and a group of literary friends, including James Russell Lowell and R.W. Emerson, went in search of Rousseauian paradise in the wilderness of the Adirondack forest.

He returned to Europe in 1859, hoping to join the revolt in Milan, but spent the winter instead in Paris, where he had studied for a time some years previously, and spent part of the summer of 1860 with Ruskin in Switzerland. Stillman’s relations with Ruskin, at first warm, became cooler with the passage of time. Ruskin found his blustering
self-confidence unsettling. He once described him to Charles Eliot Norton as “a very noble fellow - if only he could see a crow without wanting to shoot it to pieces.”

His good connections went some way to helping Stillman to secure his first diplomatic post, as American consul in Rome, where he remained 1861-1865. He was joined there by his American wife Laura Mack, and young son. While in Rome he continued to paint, and befriended members of the Roman expatriate artists community: William Wetmore Story (1819-1895); Randolph Rogers (1825-1892); John Gibson (1792-1866); Giovanni Costa; and George Frederick Watts. However, following his outspoken criticism of the American delegation in Rome he resigned his post, though he was soon offered a second, as American consul in Crete, where he was stationed at the time of the Insurrection of 1867-8. This was a tense episode, during which Stillman’s pro-Cretan stance alienated him from the Turkish authorities. His family was persecuted and Stillman was ultimately constrained to transfer his diplomatic office to yacht off the Cretan coast. Stillman later grew bitter at what he perceived as a betrayal by his fellow countrymen who, he considered, had effectively forced him into exile, to a remote outpost, without the means to support himself.

In September 1868 Stillman resigned. He spent several months in Athens, but Laura Mack died soon after leaving Crete, and in 1869 Stillman returned to England and

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rented a cottage for the spring in rural Sussex, rediscovering his love of the natural landscape and recovering from the trials of Crete. He was joined by Dante Gabriel Rossetti who, at first wary of his brother’s friend, grew to like Stillman and presented him with a gift of manuscripts of his Willowood Sonnets, published in Poems that same year. Stillman became acquainted with leading members of the London artistic circle, such as Swinburne, Madox Brown, and Burne-Jones. He also met members of the Greek community in London, which had associations with the Pre-Raphaelite world, and through these friendships he met his second wife, Marie Spartali. ³

It was from the 1870s onwards that Stillman came into his own as a journalist. He contributed over 30 articles and reviews to the Nation and Atlantic Monthly, the latter periodical edited by his friend and fellow Adirondack Club member James Russell Lowell. At first he wrote chiefly on contemporary artistic matters, but increasingly also on matters relating to archaeological excavation and antiquities.

Stillman also began sending reports to The Times, where he became known chiefly as an astute commentator on Balkan affairs. From November 1869 to October 1879 over twenty of his letters on Greece, Bosnia, Montenegro and Balkan affairs were published in the pages of The Times. Stillman himself went to Herzegovina as a volunteer correspondent at the time of the insurrections against the Turks, and drawing on the skills of survival learned in the Adirondacks, travelled extensively across the region during 1875-7, often under harsh and dangerous conditions. He was

³ She was daughter of the Greek consul in London, and a painter and Pre-Raphaelite model. She was especially close to Jane Morris, wife of William Morris. cf. Christian, J.G. 'Marie Spartali Pre-Raphaelite beauty' Antique Collector, March 1984. pp.42-7
appointed Special Correspondent in 1876, but at the end of the following year the war came to an end. A letter from J.C. MacDonald, Editor of The Times, of 18 October 1877, shows that Stillman, no doubt exhausted by the war, planned to “hibernate.” It was a notion in which MacDonald was happy to acquiesce, since he could no longer offer Stillman any regular income. Thus began a period of unrest for Stillman, and his erratic movements can be only roughly traced through examination of the sparse correspondence of the period in the archive of The Times newspaper. He went back to Italy, but almost immediately departed again for Corfu. In April he wrote anxiously to MacDonald suggesting that, following the death of Mr Ogle, the Athens correspondent, the Editor might consider Stillman for the vacancy. MacDonald was unable to offer him the post owing to other obligations. After Corfu he moved on to Florence in the spring of 1878. He remained there for five years, with Marie Stillman and his two surviving children by Laura Mack.

1870 was the year in which Stillman’s first book, The Acropolis of Athens illustrated picturesquely and architecturally in photography, was published, at William Morris’ suggestion, by Morris’ own publisher, F.S. Ellis of London. The book consisted of 25 photographic plates of views of the acropolis, taken using the wide-angle rectilinear lenses devised by J. H. Dallmeyer (1830-1873) in 1866. Stillman’s interest in photography was certainly present at the time of his appointment to Crete in 1866 and remained a lifelong passion.

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4 A copy is preserved in the Times archive, Letterbooks vol.19 n.268.
Since his arrival in Italy in 1878, Stillman had adopted the habit of dividing his working year in two. During the winter he would stay in Florence, and in the spring he would indulge in antiquarian pursuits. On the foundation of the Archaeological Institute of America, in May 1879, Stillman became an active correspondent (and member in 1882). He conducted his own amateur excavations at Monte Leone, near Grosseto, in spring 1880, and in early 1881 visited Cnossos and coeval sites in western Crete with a view to carrying out work there also, though he was forced to leave for Athens when the Turkish authorities, at first supportive, became suspicious of his previous relations with the irredentist factions. During these years he frequently returned to Greece where, in addition to sending dispatches to The Times in his role as de facto Athens correspondent, he closely followed the excavations which were then being carried out under the aegis of the Archaeological Society of Athens, often with photographic equipment in order to record newly excavated sites.

Stillman and the restoration of the Basilica of St Mark’s, in Venice

Through his interest in archaeology Stillman began to explore new territories of art criticism. His own account of how he became involved in the restoration controversy in Italy is typically self-assured:

“The campaign finished (in Crete), I returned to Florence, where, during the lull in Eastern matters, I found my only occupation in the contest with regard to the restoration of ancient buildings in Italy.

To those who can remember the aspect of the Ducal Palace and St Mark’s in those years, shored up to prevent large portions of them falling in crumbling ruin into the Piazza, and can see that now at least the general aspect of the perfect building is preserved, and in the case of
the Ducal Palace even the details of the most important decorative elements restored with a fidelity which defies examination, will hardly be inclined to resent the restorations which have abolished the hideous balks of timber and bulkheads of most of the southern and western façades. The south-west angle of the Palace was prevented only by massive shoring from falling bodily into the Piazzetta. The anti-restoration society in England had raised a great outcry over the works, which had, however, been going on without criticism during the Austrian occupation since 1840; and after a thorough examination of the state of the two precious buildings, and the plans and appliances for their restoration, I undertook the defence of the restorers, and the hot controversy in the Times and other journals on the subject resulted in the confirmation of the authorities in their resolution to continue the works which have left the Ducal Palace at least in a condition to be seen for a few hundred years to come, and relieved the church of the scaffolds and bulkheads which disfigured it up to 1890. The works in St Mark's re-established in more than its original solidity the south flank, which was in such a state of ruin that only the abundant shoring had prevented the facade from top to bottom from falling bodily into the Piazza.

On the other hand, I found in Florence that the authorities, in anticipation of the completion of the present splendid façade of the Duomo, had decided to refresh the entire surface of the flanks to put them in keeping with the new sculpture of the front, and had actually inaugurated the system removing with acids, followed by the chisel, all the toned surface of the sculptured parts so that the Duomo should, when the facade was revealed, present the aspect of a bride cake in the brilliant whiteness of its marble, but without a touch remaining of the workmanship of its original architects and sculptors. At this juncture the editor of the Cornhill Magazine asked me for an article on the restorations in Italy, and I profited by the invitation to write a scathing article on the cleaning up of the Duomo, which falling under the attention of the government at Rome, provoked a telegram ordering peremptorily the cessation of all restoration on the church. I received the thanks of the Italian ministry, and the formal request to inform it of any other similar operations which should fall under my attention, and when a few weeks later I saw the scaffold raised around the beautiful pulpit of Donatello at Prato, a note to the ministry had the effect of telegraphically stopping
operations. The indignation of the good people of Florence at the cessation of the house-

cleaning brought me a request from a high quarter to undertake the defence of the city

against the insolent Englishman of the Cornhill!6

In 1883 Stillman left Florence with regret, having been forced away by the unsanitary

conditions of the city's streets, which had begun to affect the health of he and his

family.7 In 1886, on the death of Shakespere Wood, *The Times'* correspondent in

Rome, Stillman was appointed to succeed him. He returned to political journalism,

was *Times* correspondent in Italy and Greece from 1886 to 1890, and then in Italy

alone until retirement in 1898. He became a friend and biographer of Francesco

Crispi, but continued to write on painting, archaeology and monuments in Italy and

the Mediterranean for *The Times*, the *Nation*, and *Century Magazine*.

Select Bibliography.

Stillman's output was immense, and the following bibliography focuses therefore only

on works of direct relevance to the present argument:

'St.Mark's Venice' [Letter to the Editor], *The Times*, 18 Nov. 1879. p.5.


'New Lamps for Old Ones' *Cornhill Magazine* n.41, Jan.-June 1880. pp.96-103.


7 He was later to play an important part, along with the novelist 'Ouida,' in the discussions which took

place in the English press concerning the health of Florence and the reconstruction of the city's historic

centre in the 1890s.


*The Old Rome and the New, and Other Studies*, London, Grant Richards, 1897.


**Works on Stillman’s life, correspondence, and activities.**

I list these in order of importance, rather than chronologically:


**Obituary**

Fig. 26 William James Stillman, 1857 (Courtesy Union College, Schenectady)
HENRY WALLIS (1830-1916)

As a painter in the 1850s Wallis had strong associations with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and in 1858 he was a member of the Hogarth Club. Wallis had spent a period in Paris studying under M.G.C. Gleyre (1808-1874), a distinguished painting tutor in whose atelier Gérome, Sisley, Monet and Renoir became students. He met Arthur Hughes (1832-1915) while a student at the Royal Academy ca. 1848. Hughes went on to participate in the legendary Oxford Union fresco project with Morris, Burne-Jones, Rossetti and a number of less famous artists. In 1854 Wallis began exhibiting. The painting which brought him to notoriety, and which was described by Ruskin as faultless and "wonderful," *The Death of Chatterton*, was shown at the Royal Academy in 1856 and at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. The following year he exhibited a second successful canvas, *The Stonebreaker*. In 1857 he embarked on a love affair with Mary Ellen Peacock, daughter of Thomas Love Peacock and wife of Wallis' friend, the unstable novelist George Meredith. They eloped together to Capri, and Mary Ellen bore a son, Harold, but the relationship ultimately did not last.

In 1861 Wallis inherited his father's considerable wealth, whereupon, released from the obligation to earn a living, he gave up his ambitions to be a painter. Though he continued to exhibit until 1877 at the Royal Academy, Suffolk Street Gallery, the Old Water Colour Society and elsewhere, he began to dedicate himself more and more to other pursuits.
Wallis became deeply interested in the preservation of works of art and antiquities. He was a faithful supporter of the SPAB for the first three years of its existence, and was instrumental in forming the Committee for the Preservation of St Mark’s, of which he was the Honorary Secretary. In addition to his letters to *The Times* in November 1879 on the subject of Meduna’s restorations to the mosaic pavement at the Basilica of St Mark’s, he protested about numerous other interventions in Venice, and became an active proponent of conservative measures. He appears to have visited Venice more than once between 1870 and 1886. In 1883 he denounced foreign collectors who, he claimed, had plundered the streets of Venice of some of their most characteristic inscriptions, reliefs and other sculptural fragments in their appetite for architectural curios.\(^1\)

In 1886, when a scheme to renovate the internal marble decoration at St Mark’s was averted, Wallis’ letters to *The Times* kept him in the forefront of the issue.\(^2\) Wallis’ importance in the history of English preservation is substantial, but he was a private man and left almost no records of his life, and the absence of documentary sources makes it difficult to assess his precise role and influence among anti-restoration circles.

In the late 1880s Wallis became involved, with E.J.Poynter, in founding the Society for the Preservation of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt. He wrote an article, ‘The Destruction of Egyptian Monuments’ in the *Nineteenth Century* in an attempt to lobby

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1 Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 3 August 1883. p.4.  
the British Government to become involved in improving the quality of inspection and security at sites in the Upper Nile Valley. Wallis was a member of the Burlington Fine Arts Club, and contributed to its 1895 exhibition catalogue *The Art of Ancient Egypt. Photographic Plates representing objects from the exhibition of the Art of Ancient Egypt* (London, Privately Printed).

But it was as a scholar and collector of ceramics that Wallis made his most significant impact on the *fin de siècle* art world. He wrote an important scholarly work on Byzantine pottery, *Byzantine Ceramic Art. Notes on examples of Byzantine pottery recently found at Constantinople* (London, Quaritch, 1907), and other volumes, all lavishly illustrated, on Egyptian, Persian and Italian majolica ware.

**Bibliography**


Houfe, S. *Dictionary of British Illustrators & Caricaturists 1800-1914*, cit., sub voce.


Obituary

ALVISE PIETRO ZORZI (1846-1922)

Scholar, antiquary and painter, descended from a patrician Venetian family, he met Ruskin in December 1877. Ruskin was something of a celebrity in Venice, having visited on numerous occasions. His contribution to Venetian studies had earned him an Honorary Membership of the Venice Academy, and he had made a number of friends there, particularly among the younger painters. Two of these, Alessandro d’Alessandri and Raffaele Carloforti had collaborated with Ruskin on a number of projects. It was Carloforti who introduced their fellow Academician Zorzi to Ruskin, though the young Venetian knew of the English critic and had even tried to enter into correspondence with him some years earlier in connection with a book Zorzi was planning on Venetian monuments.

At their first meeting Ruskin expressed considerable support for a treatise Zorzi had written in condemnation of the Venetian engineers and their restorations at St Mark’s. Giovanni Battista Meduna had recently concluded a phase of works to the southern elevation of the building. Carloforti and others had urged Zorzi to publish the tract, but Zorzi’s attack on Meduna and others was virulent, and the young antiquary was warned by some of Venice’s more senior cultural figures that he risked his career and reputation if he should proceed to make public his feelings on the restorations that had been carried out. Furthermore, he had not the funds for such a venture. Ruskin’s support galvanised him, and when Ruskin offered to contribute to the work a letter, addressed to Zorzi,
denouncing the restorers, Zorzi accepted gratefully. The two men worked together closely through the winter of 1876-7. The book, Osservazioni intorno ai restauri interni ed esterni della Basilica di S. Marco, was published on St Mark’s day (25 April) 1877. With Ruskin’s words appended, it constituted a formidable attack, and Italian and English newspapers reported the event.

Ruskin departed in May and Zorzi almost lost contact with him. Zorzi went on to campaign against the threatened demolition of S. Moisè, a seventeenth-century church near Piazza S. Marco (to Ruskin’s evident disapproval), and continued to cultivate support for his St Mark’s protest both at home and abroad. He was made an Honorary Member of the SPAB, though he never visited England. His campaign gathered support through the efforts of William Morris, Henry Wallis and George Edmund Street in England; Zorzi showed a masterly sense of strategy in manipulating English concerns over the building to the attainment of his desired objective. Zorzi was rewarded first with membership of the Roman Academy of St Luke in 1880, and later, in 1881, with Secretaryship of the Museo Correr. In 1886 he obtained a civil service posting to Cividale, in the Friuli Region, where he became Keeper of Antiquities at the Museo Archeologico.

There is no doubt that Zorzi’s work was a powerful influence on the likes of Giacomo Boni, who in 1877 was an assistant draughtsman with a firm of architects. It is likely also that Camillo Boito, a much better-known figure, drew on Zorzi’s text in elaborating his
own theories. Dalla Costa has shown that Zorzi was the first Italian to identify the problems of restoration as a consequence of the decline in craft skill and the increased mechanisation of the building industry, and thereby to act as a conduit for the transfer of Ruskinian values onto the Italian scene. Zorzi’s view of Venice as an "immenso museo all’aria aperta" is of great significance, and the various points discussed in Osservazioni, from the selection of materials for replacement and repair, to the quality of architectural colour, reveal him as one of the first modern theorists of conservation as we know it.

Bibliography


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1 Dalla Costa, op.cit. p.17
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a selected alphabetical list of the principal secondary sources consulted in the preparation of this thesis. It is by no means designed to serve as a complete bibliography of the subjects covered. Included are the principal texts cited in the preceding chapters, which may be considered of wider importance to the subject as a whole. Some additional relevant modern works, not cited in the text, are included, as are a handful of older essays and articles not referred to but of further interest.


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