Certainty in the Uncertainty of Venice: John Ruskin and the Daguerreotype Photographic Process

Crystal Leah Medler
University of Pennsylvania, medler@design.upenn.edu
Certainty in the Uncertainty of Venice: John Ruskin and the Daguerreotype Photographic Process

Abstract
John Ruskin was among the first to embrace photography as a tool for preservation of historic architecture. His use of the newly invented daguerreotype photographic process in Venice, beginning in 1845, altered the way he documented architecture and aided in his mission to spread awareness of what he believed to be destructive restoration that was conducted throughout Venice in the mid-nineteenth century. Ruskin used the daguerreotype photographic process to produce a record of architecture in Venice which was his implicit form of preservation – an alternative to the destructive restorations he encountered. Ruskin's interaction with the daguerreotype changed his way of thinking about architecture and the way in which he felt that it should be documented. His interaction with the daguerreotype is reflected in the transformation of his drawing and painting style which was previously focused on creating an aesthetically pleasing illustration – evolving to a more technically accurate measured drawing that aimed to be an exact reproduction of its subject. Ruskin's acceptance and use of photography set the tone for its use in the field of historic preservation where it could be used to preserve the memory and information of a building, and create awareness of the potential dangers of restoration of historic architecture.

Keywords
Historic Preservation; Photography; John Ruskin

Disciplines
Architecture | Historic Preservation and Conservation

Comments
Suggested Citation:
CERTAINTY IN THE UNCERTAINTY OF VENICE: 
JOHN RUSKIN AND THE DAGUERREOTYPE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS

Crystal Leah Medler

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2010

Advisor
John Dixon Hunt
Professor Emeritus

Program Chair
Randall F. Mason
Associate Professor
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor John Dixon Hunt for inspiring me to write this thesis. His seminar on Understanding Venice provoked my interest in John Ruskin's work in Venice, and enabled me to combine my background in fine art with historic preservation. I truly appreciate his ongoing support and encouragement throughout this process.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my family and friends, especially my mom, Deb, father, Mike, and sister, Melissa, who have encouraged and supported me throughout my life, and continued to support me from three thousand miles away during my time at Penn. They have inspired me to reach beyond limits to accomplish things I never imagined.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ii

List of Figures iii

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Ruskin & the Daguerreotype 3

Chapter 2: Invention of the Daguerreotype 11

Chapter 3: Analysis of Ruskin’s Art & Photography 18

Chapter 4: Ruskin’s Perception of Venice 29

Chapter 5: Ruskin’s Approach to Preservation in Venice 34

Chapter 6: History of Restoration in Venice 47

Chapter 7: Ruskin & Restoration 48

Chapter 8: Ruskin & Viollet-Le-Duc 51

Chapter 9: Implications of Photography on Historic Preservation 58

Endnotes 60

Bibliography 63

Index 66
LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 – Pencil and wash of column capital 36 of the Ducal Palace in Venice by Ruskin, 1848-52...........................................................................................................24
Fig. 2 – Daguerreotype of column capital 7 of the Ducal Palace in Venice.................24
Fig. 3 – Pencil and watercolor of the south side of St Mark’s from the loggia of the Ducal Palace in Venice by Ruskin, 1849.................................................................25
Fig. 4 – Daguerreotype of the south side of St Mark’s from the loggia of the Ducal Palace in Venice by John Hobbs, 1849-50..............................................................25
Fig. 5 – Pencil and wash of the Ducal Palace in Venice by Ruskin, 1845......................26
Fig. 6 – Daguerreotype of the Ducal Palace in Venice attributed to Ruskin, 1845......26
Fig. 7 – Ink drawing of bridges in Venice by Ruskin, 1845..........................................34
Fig. 8 – Daguerreotype of St Mark’s in Venice during Austrian occupation by John Hobbs, 1845...........................................................................................................34
Fig. 9 – Pencil drawing of Casa Contarini Fasan in Venice by Ruskin, 1841..............42
Fig. 10 – Pencil drawing of Casa Contarini Fasan in Venice by Samuel Prout, date unknown..............................................................................................................42
Fig. 11 – Watercolor of Casa d’Oro in Venice by Ruskin, 1845.......................................46
INTRODUCTION

The use of photography in the field of historic preservation became of primary importance in the career and thinking of John Ruskin who invoked this new invention in documenting and reflecting on the historical buildings of Venice. Ruskin’s discovery and use of the daguerreotype photographic process altered the way in which he perceived and documented Venice, prompting him to record the threatened architecture of the city and challenge what he believed to be destructive restoration methods that were used to repair historic buildings in Venice. His interactions with the daguerreotype coincide with a distinct shift in his artistic drawing style that reflects his objective to produce a technically accurate image of the historical architecture of Venice, which is precisely what the daguerreotype provided. When Ruskin encountered the restoration of many significant buildings in Venice in 1845, he recognized that the city was losing its ruinous quality, thus threatening his perception of what he felt was the authentic Venice. Ruskin’s memory and perception of Venice was founded on an adolescent, imaginative view of the city based on paintings and written works illustrating the picturesque ruin that Venice had become. This included the work of Byron, and painters such as J.M.W. Turner as well as Samuel Roger’s book, Italy, which not only introduced Ruskin to Turner’s paintings, but instilled an aesthetic value in the ruined Venice. Ruskin also interpreted Venice’s ruinous state and its political situation, at the time under Austrian occupation, as a warning for England because he recognized similarities between the two, “England too is a mercantile power, a free nation that has flourished for some eight hundred years, enriched by commerce, governed by
a secular monarch and Parliament.”

The changes Ruskin encountered in 1845 caused him to reconsider how Venetian buildings should be preserved, primarily through documentation using the daguerreotype. This thesis is intended to identify and examine the ways in which the invention and use of the daguerreotype challenged Ruskin’s perception of Venice and, in turn, the way he responded to the treatment of historic architecture. The following sections will address each important aspect of Ruskin’s use of and reactions to the daguerreotype: Ruskin & the Daguerreotype, Invention of the Daguerreotype, Analysis of Ruskin’s Art & Photography, Ruskin’s Perception of Venice, Ruskin’s Approach to Preservation in Venice, Brief History of Restoration in Venice, Ruskin & Restoration, Ruskin & Viollet-Le-Duc, and the Implications of Photography in Historic Preservation.

John Ruskin was born in London on February 8, 1819, the only child of John James Ruskin (1785-1864) and Margaret (Cock) Ruskin (1781-1871). During his early years, John Ruskin travelled with his parents widely throughout Western Europe where he was exposed to considerable works of art and architecture that he would later critique and write extensively about. In 1836 Ruskin enrolled first at King’s College, London, where he studied English Literature and then till October 1836, when he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he would receive a ‘Double Fourth’ (honorary) degree in 1842. At Christ Church, Oxford, Ruskin developed his artistic and academic interests and skills that would later dominate his work on art and architecture. Ruskin became a prominent English au-
Ruskin and critic of art and architecture in the nineteenth century who challenged the theory and practice of architectural restoration throughout Western Europe.

RUSKIN & THE DAGUERREOTYPE

On January 7th, 1839, the daguerreotype photographic process was formally introduced to the Académie des Sciences in France, and on July 30th, the same year, the French government purchased the rights to the process from Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Isidore Niépce. On August 14th, 1839, through a separate contract initiated by Daguerre and Niépce—executed by a patent agent they had hired, Miles Berry, the daguerreotype process was patented in England, Wales and the British Colonies. This new invention became popular among artists due to its ability to capture minute details in shadow and highlights, and for its ease of use and mobility. H. Gaucheraud, a journalist for the Gazette de France reported on the daguerreotype before the invention was announced to the public: “Let not the draftsman and the painter, however, despair — the results obtained by M. Daguerre are very different from their works, and in many cases cannot be a substitute for them. The effects of this new process have some resemblance to line engraving and mezzotint, but are much nearer the latter: as for truth, they surpass everything.” The daguerreotype seems to have captured Ruskin’s interest because he realized its potential; a photographic image could capture the architectural forms and features that he strove to illustrate in his drawings and watercolors with much more accuracy, producing an image that could potentially be used as a historical record. Ruskin used daguerreotype images as an alternative to the res-
toration methods he encountered in Venice. In this way, he was promoting what is essen-
tially preservation through documentation. He focused on preserving the memory of the
building, and drawing attention to the potential dangers of restoration of historic buildings.
Ruskin’s interactions with the daguerreotype process and his reactions will be analyzed
below, determining the impact it had on his documentation work in Venice.

Ruskin’s earliest recorded use of the daguerreotype process in Venice is referenced
in a letter to his father on September 17th, 1845, when he wrote of his studies of Ca’ Foscari
and how J.D. Harding – his drawing tutor – had told him to “frighten the Daguerreotype
into fits,” which can be interpreted as Harding implying that he should produce so many im-
ages of Ca’ Foscari that the daguerreotype become overworked, demonstrating that Ruskin
was producing his own daguerreotype images by the fall of 1845. Then on October 7th,
1845, Ruskin purchased some printed images of palaces from a French photographer in
Venice, which he described in a letter to his father, “I have been lucky enough to get from a
poor Frenchman here, said to be in distress, some most beautiful, though small, Dagu-
erreotypes of the palaces I have been trying to draw – and certainly Daguerreotypes taken by
this vivid sunlight are glorious things.” Although these seem to have been Ruskin’s first
interactions with the daguerreotype in Venice, he was aware of its existence at an earlier
date, which he described in his autobiography, Praeterita, published 1885-1889:

It must have been during my last days at Oxford that Mr. Liddell, the present Dean of
Christ Church, told me of the original experiments of Daguerre. My Parisian friends ob-
tained for me the best examples of his results, and the plates sent to me in Oxford were cer-
tainly the first examples of the sun’s drawing that were ever seen in Oxford, and, I believe,
the first sent to England. Wholly careless at that time of finished detail, I saw nothing in
the Daguerréotype to help, or alarm me; and inquired no more concerning it, until now at
Venice I found a French artist producing exquisitely bright small plates, (about four inches
square,) which contained, under a lens, the Grand Canal or St. Mark's Place as if a magi-
cian had reduced the reality to be carried away into an enchanted land. The little gems of
picture cost a napoleon each; but with two hundred francs I bought the Grand Canal from
the Salute to the Rialto; and packed it away in thoughtless triumph.5

It's curious that, even decades later, when Ruskin was reflecting on his first interac-
tions with the daguerreotype in his autobiography, he doesn't explain exactly why he didn't
find the daguerreotype useful until his 1845 trip to Venice; however, his reflection dem-
onstrates the fact that he associated the daguerreotype with reality, and more importantly,
with architecture in Venice—meaning that he recognized the way it could be used to create
an exact replication of its subject. It appears that he was also excited by holding these little
images in his hand, which must have provoked ideas of how he could use daguerreotype
images in his written works, and the possibility of reaching a larger audience since a da-
guerreotype could be reproduced quickly, and with consistency in appearance.

Ruskin’s interaction with the daguerreotype process in Venice began in two ways;
first by purchasing and commissioning daguerreotype images of Venetian architecture, as
well as by producing his own images, mainly taken by his servant, John (George) Hobbs,
which Ruskin later referenced in Proctorita, “George indefatigably carrying his little da-
guerreotype box up everywhere, and taking the first image of the Matterhorn, as also of the
aiguilles of Chamouni, ever drawn by the sun.” 6 Hobbs is cited in Ruskin's letters from
1845 as assisting him with his work in Venice; this consisted of photographing buildings
that Ruskin was studying, though there is no indication that Hobbs was formally trained as a photographer.\textsuperscript{10} However, anyone who aspired to learn the daguerreotype process would have found instructions easily accessible and fairly straightforward — printed in a booklet by Daguerre in 1839 — making it possible for someone with no formal training in photography, like Hobbs, to use the daguerreotype.\textsuperscript{11} At the time of its invention, scientist François Jean Dominique Arago claimed “The daguerreotype does not demand a single manipulation that is not perfectly easy to everyone. It requires no knowledge of drawing, and is not dependent upon any manual dexterity. By observing a few simple directions, anyone may succeed with the same certainty and perform as well as the author of the invention.”\textsuperscript{12} Some of the daguerreotypes taken in 1845 may have been taken by Ruskin himself, with the help of Hobbs, though it is not clear just how involved Ruskin was in the actual process. A daguerreotype image of the Doge’s Palace taken in 1845, recently exhibited at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, was attributed to John Ruskin with the assistance of John Hobbs,\textsuperscript{13} though it could have been taken by Hobbs under Ruskin’s instruction, which was often the case as Ruskin briefly noted in the preface to the first edition of \textit{The Seven Lamps of Architecture}, “the plates are valuable; being either copies of memoranda made upon the spot, or enlarged and adapted from Daguerreotypes, taken under my own superintendence.”\textsuperscript{14}

As Robert Hewison notes in both \textit{Ruskin and Venice}, and \textit{Ruskin’s Venice}, Ruskin’s collection of daguerreotype images that he had purchased — beginning with the images of Venice mentioned previously, grew to include more than two hundred images; ninety-five daguerreotypes of Venice alone.\textsuperscript{15} Hewison suggests that Ruskin “must have been one of
the first art historians to recognize the benefits of photography,” which is clearly reflected by the number of images he had collected, listed above.16 The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, by John Hannay, provides a detailed section on Ruskin’s involvement with the daguerreotype in which it lists “Over 200 daguerreotypes mainly of Alpine subjects and architectural details [that] are attributed, directly or indirectly, to Ruskin. 125 of these are extant and have been connected to Ruskin for some time. A further 121, possibly dating from Ruskin’s visits to Venice in the late 1840s up to 1852, together with 14 salt prints, which surfaced in 2006.”17 In a letter to his father in 1845 Ruskin noted that a daguerreotype image “is very nearly the same thing as carrying off the palace itself – every chip of stone and stain is there – and of course, there is no mistake about proportions.”18 Ruskin expressed his pleasure with the daguerreotype images that he had purchased in Venice. “I am very much delighted with these and am going to have some more made.”15

When Ruskin began to produce his own daguerreotype images two things happened; first, Ruskin directed Hobbs, or his commissioned daguerreotypist, to photograph the subject from the same angle and perspective that Ruskin was drawing or painting from suggesting that he had already intended to compare the two processes. This is important because it demonstrates that Ruskin was already aware that his documentation work could benefit from the use of this new invention. Second, Ruskin’s indirect involvement with photography – indirect because he was generally not the one producing the daguerreotypes since he was almost always drawing the same subject – shows that he was still primarily focused on his drawings, measurements, and notes.
Ruskin used daguerreotype images in several ways; he included them in his printed work to provide the reader with a detailed image of the subject that he was writing about, and in later years he would use daguerreotypes in lectures and exhibitions. Daguerreotype images were used to support his written works including: Stones of Venice, Lectures on Art, Fors Clavigera, Seven Lamps of Architecture, St Mark's Rest, and Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark's. In these publications, photographs provide excellent visual documentation of their subjects, and they enrich and provoke the text. In some cases, it would be difficult to imagine the subjects discussed in the text, therefore, the photographs are beneficial because they make it easier to grasp the complexity and detail of the subject, eliminating the need for the reader to conjure or imagine an image, or for Ruskin to spend more time than necessary making a drawing or painting of the subject.

Ruskin also used the daguerreotype specifically to create representations of important elements of buildings that were threatened by restoration such as the column capitals of the Ducal Palace and the façade of St Mark's. In 1879 he exhibited a series of ten photographs at the Society of Painters in Water Colours illustrating before and after images of St Mark’s during the restorations of 1845. Ruskin described this exhibition and use of daguerreotypes below:

By the kindness of the Society of Painters in Water Colours I am permitted this year, in view of the crisis of the fate of the façade of St Mark's, to place in the Exhibition Room of the Society ten photographs, illustrative of its past and present state. I have already made use of them, both in my lectures at Oxford and in the parts of Fors Clavigera intended for Art-teaching at my Sheffield Museum; and all but the eight are obtainable from my assistant, Mr. Ward, who is my general agent for photographs, either taken under my direc-

- 8 -
The images exhibited at the Society of Painters in Water Colours were intended to record what Ruskin considered significant examples of Venetian architecture and architectural elements that could be lost forever to decay or restoration. These daguerreotype images provided Ruskin with a visual tool to convey to his readers how the buildings were constructed, and to illustrate the details that made them significant to Venice, which include buildings with facades decorated with colored marbles brought to Venice by Venetian merchants, and Gothic formed windows and doors that "appear in the fabric of San Marco" as early as "the twelfth century." Furthermore, through his architectural studies, Ruskin helped to identify "a series of stages or 'orders' by which the Veneto-Byzantine arch evolved into the Gothic arch." Ruskin's appreciation and identification of these details motivated his architectural documentation work and his continual use of the daguerreotype.

For Ruskin, who valued the transmission of information through visual documentation, photography provided what he considered the only way to preserve the architectural history of Venice. He employed the daguerreotype as an implicit form of preservation by photographically documenting architecture that was threatened by decay or restoration. In this way, he was preserving a record of Venice's architectural heritage so that the information of how the building was constructed and how it appeared in his time could be saved and studied in the future. This was important to him because the way the building was constructed illustrated its history; the styles it was influenced by, and the methods of building that were used, which Ruskin felt was worth preserving.
Ruskin also used photography as a tool to illustrate the destructive nature of restoration and to create awareness of the threatened architecture in Venice. In 1879 he had a pamphlet printed, *Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark's, Venice, now in progress under Mr. Ruskin’s direction*, that illustrated the restorations which he was able to show in detail with the aid of daguerreotypes. It is unlikely that a drawing or painting would have had the same impact as a daguerreotype because people were aware of and believed the accuracy of photography, and would possibly have questioned the truth of an artist’s rendering of the same subject. Ruskin was clever to use photography in this way because the extreme detail and truth of the daguerreotype image conveyed the threatened condition of the buildings, including important buildings such as St Mark’s and the Ducal Palace, and the public was eager to see examples from this new invention. From the beginning, the public was made aware of the invention, and as John Hanning suggests in *The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Photography*, “the finely detailed surface of the daguerreotype and the publicly available details of its manufacture became more significant than its comparative limitations, leading to its wider adoption and dominance.”

When Ruskin began to use the daguerreotype in Venice in 1845, he started to compare the accuracy of the daguerreotype with his own drawings and watercolors which will be discussed in a following section on Ruskin’s art and photography. Ruskin wrote to his father from Venice in 1845 describing his satisfaction with the daguerreotype, “it is a noble invention...and any one who has worked and blundered and stammered as I have [drawing] for four days, and then sees the thing he has been trying to do so long in vain, done per-
fectly & faultlessly in half a minute won’t abuse it afterwards.”27 Regarding the accuracy of the daguerreotype, in a letter to his father postmarked Venice October 13th, 1845, Ruskin said, “I have been walking all over St Mark’s place today, and found a lot of things in the Daguerreotype that I never had noticed in the place itself.”28 Ruskin was excited at the possibilities of using the daguerreotype for his documentation work, and he was determined to use this new artistic innovation despite its cost and tedious process.

**Invention of the Daguerreotype**

The daguerreotype photographic process was developed by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851), Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765-1833), and later Niépce’s son, Isidore, of France. Though Joseph Nicéphore Niépce died in 1833, before the daguerreotype process was patented by Daguerre in France in 1839, Niépce did contribute key elements that were necessary for its invention, and he was credited for his input.29 The invention had an almost immediate impact on the art world, causing artists to reevaluate the art-making process, forcing them to either accept or dismiss this new artistic innovation. It also opened doors for people who would previously not have been considered artists, and would challenge the very definition of what was considered art. The history of photography goes back much further than what necessarily needs to be addressed for the purpose of this thesis, so the following section will focus primarily on the history of the invention of the daguerreotype process, and the process that it immediately replaced, followed by its impact on the process of architectural representation.
Prior to the daguerreotype process, artists used the camera obscura, which transferred an image through a lens onto an opposing surface in order to capture a temporary image that could then be traced to aid in the process of creating a final drawing or painting. "The ambition to fix the images of the camera obscura had occupied many artists and scientists ever since the publication in 1802 of Thomas Wedgwood's and (Sir) Humphrey Davy's experiments had demonstrated the possibility of doing so."³⁰ Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce shared this interest and ambition to invent a way to permanently fix an image in the camera obscura.⁴¹

Daguerre began experimenting with photography around 1824.³² Prior to his photographic experiments he was trained in architecture, which he abandoned in 1804.³³ He was also an accomplished artist, exhibiting work at the Salon beginning in 1814.³⁴ From 1816 – 1822 he designed sets for the Opéra and the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique in Paris. In 1822 Daguerre and Charles-Marie Bouton opened the Diorama in Paris where Daguerre used his artistic abilities to paint diorama pictures.³⁵ The Diorama consisted of an auditorium in which Bouton and Daguerre displayed their paintings, often 45 by 71 feet in size.³⁶ The Diorama was described as "a large-scale peep show in which a painting on a large translucent screen was seemingly animated by the skillful play of light on each side."³⁷ The paintings illustrated various historical events and well-known places in Europe. Daguerre held his position as co-proprietor of the Diorama from 1822 to 1839, when the Diorama was destroyed by fire.³⁸
Daguerre's early experiments with photography involved testing various methods of copper and silver-coated plates exposed to light in the camera obscura, then treated with different chemicals in an attempt to produce a permanent image.²⁹ Daguerre never directly spoke of his initial interest in photography; however, he considered his own artistic work perishable and was more than likely motivated to eliminate the tedious and time-consuming process of tracing in order to render an image projected by the camera obscura.⁴⁶ Like many other artists, Daguerre used the camera obscura to aid in the production of his designs for the Diorama, which undoubtedly provoked him to imagine the possibilities of creating a permanent image. Although it is unlikely that Daguerre recognized all of the additional benefits that the daguerreotype would offer until it was invented, including its transportability, ease of use, and the way it could be used to document architecture, as Ruskin would discover.

In 1826, a photographic process to create a permanent image from the camera obscura had already been developed by physicist, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. Niépce invented what was called heliography; a photographic process that used a glass or metal plate coated with bitumen, exposed to light in the camera obscura, and washed with lavender oil to create a permanent image.⁴¹ This process created the first photographic image; however, Niépce's "aspirations went beyond a visible image to a photoengraved plate from which he could pull prints."⁴² Niépce hoped to create a process that could accurately reproduce its subjects with increased clarity and permanence. He continued his experiments which eventually led him to apply bitumen to silver-coated copperplates. After removing the bi-
tumen once it had hardened, the product was a silver-silver iodide image. Unfortunately, Niépce’s experiments stopped there, for unknown reasons.44

Daguerre became aware of Niépce’s experiments with photography and his newly invented heliography technique, and in 1826 Daguerre began corresponding with Niépce in order to compare their findings in hopes of discovering the key to producing a permanent image. After corresponding for three years regarding their individual findings, Daguerre and Niépce formed a partnership and began conducting photographic experiments with the desire to invent a process that had the ability to produce a permanent image.34 In 1831, Daguerre made an important breakthrough that helped lead to the invention of the daguerreotype process. He discovered that silver iodide was sensitive to light.45 This discovery kept him motivated to continue his experiments, which he and Niépce did.

Joseph Nicéphore Niépce passed away in 1833, before he and Daguerre had succeeded in creating an improved photographic process.46 However, Niépce’s son, Isidore, succeeded him in partnership with Daguerre and the two continued to conduct experiments. In 1835, as many sources indicate, Daguerre accidently stumbled upon the final missing step in the process to create a permanent image when he left an undeveloped silver-iodide coated plate in a cupboard containing several chemicals. He later determined, through a simple process of deduction, that mercury vapor was the missing component that could be used to permanently fix a photographic image to a plate that had been exposed to light in the camera obscura.47
On January 7th, 1839, Daguerre presented the invention of the daguerreotype process to the Académie des Sciences in France.48 Daguerre stated that “the Daguerreotype is not merely an instrument which serves to draw Nature; on the contrary it is a chemical and physical process which gives her the power to reproduce herself.”49 The same year, Daguerre published his complete photographic process in a booklet of approximately 16 pages, fully illustrated with woodblock prints of diagrams and graphs demonstrating how the process worked.50 The booklet was intended to promote the use of the daguerreotype process, and allowed for anyone who was interested in using this new invention to learn the process without formal training. Daguerre’s final process consisted of a copper plate coated with silver iodide that was exposed to light in the camera; then fumed with mercury vapor and soaked in a bath of water and salt. The process yielded a permanent image in only twenty to thirty minutes.51

The invention of the daguerreotype process was influential in the fields of art and architecture in several ways. For the arts, it meant that a scientific, mechanical process was now capable of producing a true-to-life representation which was of course, accepted by some more so than others as truly fine art, a concept that is still challenged today with modern photography. Daguerre promoted the daguerreotype process as an “important discovery, capable of innumerable applications” and that it “will not only be of great interest to science, but it will also give a new impulse to the arts, and far from damaging those who practice them, it will prove a great boon to them.”52 Around the time of the daguerreotype’s debut, the Chambers Edinburgh Journal reported that, “the value of the Daguerreotype as
an aid to artists both in landscape and portraiture, is not yet fully appreciated,” demonstrating some initial reluctance to use the new invention. However, journalist H. Gaucheron, of the Gazette de France, praised the invention shortly before its public debut, stating that “this discovery seems like a prodigy. It confounds all the theories of science in light and optics, and, if borne out, promises to revolutionize the art of drawing.” Gaucheron continues his article and attempts to stir the art world with this bold statement, “They will see how far their pencils and brushes are from the truth of the Daguerreotype.”

For architecture, specifically architectural restoration and preservation, the daguerreotype had immense potential; it could document and record a structure in exact detail—able to render even the smallest cracks, chips, or holes in a building. It could also aid in the restoration or replication process by providing documentation of every feature that could later be consulted for accuracy. Gaucheron, reporting for the Gazette de France, stated that, “inanimate nature, and architecture, are the triumph of the apparatus,” which he was certainly correct in stating since the daguerreotype was best at capturing stationary objects. The daguerreotype had the ability to produce a highly detailed image that illustrated a wide range of shades, or tones, and great depth of field.

The daguerreotype’s potential use in the process of restoration and preservation was noted by both Ruskin and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc (1814-1879). Viollet-Le-Duc was conducting restorations throughout Europe during Ruskin’s time in Venice; however, both used the new invention in different ways. Ruskin often expressed positive
remarks on his initial encounters with the daguerreotype in letters to his father from Venice in 1845; one of the most notable was when Ruskin said that the daguerreotype is “a noble invention.” Viollet-Le-Duc stated that the daguerreotype “seems to have come along just in time to be of enormous help in the great work of restoration of our ancient edifices,” and that it is, in fact “possible to make too great a use of photography in restoration; very often one discovers on a photographic proof some feature that went unnoticed on the building itself.” Viollet-Le-Duc recognized the daguerreotype’s potential for aiding in the actual process of restoration, to be kept as a record that restorers could reference for accuracy; however, Ruskin realized its potential for preservation in a different way: in the form of visual documentation to record historic architecture in Venice. Ruskin noted that “among all the mechanical poison that this terrible 19th century has poured upon men, it has given us at any rate one antidote, the Daguerreotype.” This statement is surprising for Ruskin, since he was strongly opposed to many aspects of modernization in the 19th century including the restoration practices and changes he encountered in Venice; however, this statement shows his enthusiasm for the invention.

Of course there is always criticism with every new invention, and the daguerreotype certainly had its share. Accessibility was among the criticisms concerning the daguerreotype. The daguerreotype process was more expensive than drawing or painting, due to the price of the camera and all of the equipment and chemicals required for production, which limited the number of people that would initially be able to take advantage of the new invention. The process itself required the use of dangerous chemicals such as mercury,
and was somewhat time consuming, though it required less time than drawing or painting. Despite its criticisms, the daguerreotype process did receive much praise from Ruskin. Its positive aspects, such as the ability to capture an incredible amount of detail in a relatively short amount of time, were what appealed to its users, including Ruskin.

ANALYSIS OF RUSKIN’S ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

As Ruskin recognized, there were many ways in which photography was better suited for recording architecture in Venice than his previously preferred method of drawing and painting. For example, the daguerreotype produced a representation of its subject in a short amount of time, it was relatively easy to transport and use, and the operator did not have to be a talented artist or a master of perspective to produce an accurate representation. There is no question that Ruskin’s drawings and paintings of Venice failed to offer an invaluable record of the architecture that he valued in Venice; therefore, for the purposes of the preservation of the city’s architectural heritage, the daguerreotype images are far superior for four specific reasons that will be discussed in more detail below. First of all, the camera is relatively unbiased compared to an artist’s rendering, and capable of producing an accurate representation of its subject. The second reason concerns the issue of artistic license; the way in which an artist chooses to illustrate certain parts of their subject that may or may not be accurate. The third is Ruskin’s unbalanced attention to detail that often appears in his drawings and paintings of Venetian architecture; meaning the way he focused on rendering certain elements of his subject in great detail more so than other ele-
ments. Lastly, the daguerreotype’s physical attributes that contributed to its popularity and ease of use will be discussed below.

The most important reason that the daguerreotype proved to be a better tool for Ruskin’s architectural documentation in Venice is that the camera produces a relatively unbiased image compared to an artist’s rendering. An artist may choose – or subconsciously convey how they feel about their surroundings or subject, or provoke the viewer through their personal artistic style; however, the daguerreotype is a mechanical device that does not have the ability to interject personal feelings or styles, therefore it produces a more accurate image of its subject. This is not to say that the photographer doesn’t possess any artistic liberties; they do have influence over the final image because they ultimately determine the angle, distance, depth of field, and composition of the photograph, deciding what to convey to the viewer. Nonetheless, there is a reduced possibility for an artist to interject personal feelings in an image produced by the daguerreotype.

For Ruskin, the daguerreotype also offered a reduced risk of human error and oversight, which is precisely what he discovered when he compared his drawings of Venice to daguerreotype images of the same subject. On August 12th, 1845, Ruskin wrote a letter to W.H. Harrison expressing his realization of the daguerreotype’s accuracy: “My drawings are truth to the very letter – too literal, perhaps; so says my father, so says not the Daguerreotype, for it beats me grievously. I have allied myself with it; sith [sic] it may no better be, and have brought away some precious records from Florence.” The kind of
drawing Ruskin aspired to produce – one that was essentially an exact reproduction of its subject – requires a trained eye and much more attention to all of the tiny parts that make up the architecture as a whole, not just the outline or overall view of the subject. The daguerreotype’s advantages were also noted by painter Paul Delaroche who encountered the daguerreotype in 1838 and remarked that, “the painter will obtain by this process a quick method of making collections of studies which he could not otherwise procure without much time and labour.”61 Ruskin did indeed recognize the potential of this invention that captured details that he had missed altogether in his drawings. He continued to make comparisons of his drawings with daguerreotype images which he reported to his father in 1845, “I have been walking all over St Mark’s place today, and found a lot of things in the Daguerreotype that I never had noticed in the place itself. It is such a happy thing to be able to depend on everything – to be sure not only that the painter is perfectly honest, but that he can’t make a mistake.”62 This demonstrates Ruskin’s recognition that the daguerreotype could offer a reduced risk of human error in the process of documenting architecture. He credited the daguerreotype as “certainly the most marvelous invention of the century; given us, I think, just in time to save some evidence from the great public of wreckers.”63

Another way in which the daguerreotype proved to be a better tool for documenting architecture is regarding the issue of artistic license – meaning that an artist may choose to edit or add to their work as they please – inventing elements of the scene that did not exist in order to create a more pleasing image. The use of artistic license in this way creates a false representation of the subject or scene that is being represented which could potential-
ly confuse and mislead the viewer. Thus, in this aspect, this is where the camera is superior because it reduces the possibility of artistic license and ensures increased accuracy.

The daguerreotype was also better suited for Ruskin's documentation work because of its physical attributes. In the physical sense, Ruskin's drawings and paintings were far more likely to succumb to damage than a daguerreotype. The permanence of photography probably appealed to Ruskin. The silver plate negatives produced by the daguerreotype process, though not completely indestructible since they were breakable, were far less likely to succumb to serious damage than a drawing or painting which was usually done on paper, canvas, or linen. In addition, multiple prints could be made from a single daguerreotype plate, which could be used either on their own or reproduced and printed in publications such as Ruskin's *Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark's*. The daguerreotype process was also less time consuming than the time it took Ruskin to produce a drawing or painting, making it an invaluable tool for documenting the architecture of Venice.

The following section will present and discuss comparisons between daguerreotype images and Ruskin's drawings or paintings of the same subject to provide evidence that the daguerreotype was a distinctly different tool that was, in many ways, better suited for documenting architecture than drawing or painting. The comparisons include drawings, paintings, and daguerreotypes of the column capitals of the Ducale Palace, and the south side of St Mark's. The fact that Ruskin instructed Hobbs to photograph almost identical views indicates that he regarded both methods - drawing and daguerreotype - as use-
ful; and probably viewed them as separate in function; the daguerreotypes were taken for technical accuracy—producing more detailed studies, while his drawings were more aesthetically pleasing and artistic. The following comparisons between Ruskin's studies and daguerreotype images are intended to demonstrate the strength of the daguerreotype as a superior tool for documenting the architecture of Venice.

Ruskin made many studies of the Ducal Palace; a great number of these drawings or watercolors were specifically focused on the column capitals. Daguerreotype images of the column capitals of the Ducal Palace's lower arcade compared with Ruskin's drawings of the same subject reveal several striking differences that support the idea that the daguerreotype was a superior tool for recording architecture. (Figure 1-2) The first difference focuses on the subject of aesthetic value. Although Ruskin was clearly concerned with rendering every crack, chip and lacunae visible in the stone carving of the column capital in his drawing, the quality of his drawing was still much too concerned with aesthetics; for example, he was mainly concerned with the appearance of his work, not the technical accuracy of it, which would be a concern for him later. His careful quality of shading, the fluid movement of the lines, and the way he framed the capital to create an interesting composition indicate that creating an aesthetically pleasing drawing was still a priority. The line work is much too representational and loose—capturing general form, but not in great detail or accuracy. In addition, his application of wash to indicate mid-tones and shadows may look pleasing and create visual interest, but it detracts from any representational line work that could have captured the true form and shadow of the carving. This kind of
work cannot quite compete with the technical detail that the daguerreotype captured. The
daguerreotype image shows even the smallest cracks and chips in the stone capital, and
captures the rough texture of the stone while Ruskin’s drawing is rather flat and smooth in
areas where there should be texture and depth in the carving. As Ruskin discovered, the
daguerreotype captured details that even his trained eye could not see.

Another difference between the effectiveness of the daguerreotype versus Ruskin’s
drawings is the issue of Ruskin’s unbalanced attention to detail. A daguerreotype image of
the south side of St Mark’s from the loggia of the Ducal Palace compared to Ruskin’s draw-
ing of the same subject illustrates Ruskin’s tendency to focus heavily on certain ornamental
elements of architecture, where he captures a great amount of detail, but other areas receive
far less attention; whereas the daguerreotype image records the entire section equally and
unbiased. (Figure 3-4) Ruskin’s illustration of the South side of St Mark’s may appear to
be more detailed than the daguerreotype at first glance; however, upon closer examination
it becomes apparent that Ruskin has illustrated details in only select areas – not consistent
throughout the entire work. For example, the daguerreotype image illustrates valuable
information in the carving of the shaft of the column closest to the photographer, whereas
Ruskin’s drawing captures only the column capital in great detail and accuracy and does
not illustrate any carving on the shaft, where clearly there was carving. Ruskin probably
focused more on rendering these areas in greater detail because they are the elements of the
building that he appreciated most. For example, in The Stones of Venice, Volume I, Ruskin
said “The two virtues of architecture which we can justly weigh, are, we said, its strength
Figure 1. John Ruskin Capital 36 of the Ducal Palace, c.1848-52.

Figure 2. Capital 7 of the Ducal Palace, daguerreotype.
Figure 3. John Ruskin. South Side of St Mark's from the Loggia of the Ducal Palace, 1849.

Figure 4. John Hobbs. Daguerreotype of the South Side of St Mark's from the Loggia of the Ducal Palace, 1849-50.
Figure 5. John Ruskin Ducal Palace, 1845.

Figure 6. John Ruskin Ducal Palace, 1845.
or good construction, and its beauty or good decoration. His appreciation for architectural decoration is also apparent in his drawing of the Ducal Palace where he thoroughly illustrates the intricate pattern of the stone, and the detail of the arches of the upper arcade. (Figure 5) This drawing also illustrates Ruskin's tendency to render certain areas in detail, whereas others areas like the entire left side of the image - take on a more atmospheric style intended to hint at the general form of the building, but does not give a full, detailed reproduction of the entire building. A daguerreotype of the Ducal Palace, though taken from a different angle and view, demonstrates the range of detail, texture, and depth in the carving that it captured while thoroughly illustrating the entire building - not just small sections. (Figure 6)

Ruskin's developing interest in photography coincides with a distinct shift in his artistic style. At the time that he was making daguerreotype images of the architecture in Venice, his style changed from picturesque to more technical and calculated, reflecting his interactions with the daguerreotype. Rather than simply illustrating a general view of the building that was pleasing to look at, he began to produce measured drawings accompanied by notes on the construction and form of the architecture. This change is a direct result of the discovery that his previous work lacked the kind of detail that a daguerreotype image captured. While drawing in Venice in 1845 Ruskin remarked, "I am thoroughly thrown on my back with the Palazzo Foscari - don't know what the deuce to do with it. I have all its measurements and mouldings, and that is something, but I can't get on with the general view...to take the outline is what has been done a thousand times - the beauty of it is in
the cracks and the stains, and to draw these out is impossible and I am in despair." This statement demonstrates his growing concern for creating a technically accurate image. The aesthetic and stylistic change in Ruskin's work prompted him to recognize that the daguerreotype offered exactly what he was trying to achieve: a technically accurate image.

In addition to its reduced risk of human error and positive physical attributes, Ruskin may have also favored the daguerreotype because people were very curious and anxious to see its possibilities. The invention was highly publicized and received much praise upon its introduction. Scottish physicist, Sir John Robison remarked that in a daguerreotype image, "details are discovered which are not perceivable to the naked eye in the original objects; a crack in plaster, a withered leaf lying on a projecting cornice, or an accumulation of dust in a hollow moulding [sic] of a distant building, are faithfully copied in these wonderful pictures." This demonstrates the initial interest in the new invention that reached many different audiences and potential users. Louis Joseph Gay-Lussac, a French chemist, recognized the daguerreotype's potential influence in areas other than fine art, he suggested that, "Given to the public, the process will receive innumerable applications useful to mankind... As public property it will be developed and improved by general emulation." Later in his life Ruskin would return to drawing and painting as his main tool for documentation, and would criticize photography, though he still used it in his published work and lectures. He felt that "photography, and the cheap woodcutting of the day, have introduced a morbid and exaggerated love of effects of light [sic]; and as pleasing effects
of light, or appalling ones...can be easily imitated by any person who will pay a little attention to methods of execution.\textsuperscript{769} Ruskin believed that essentially any observant artist could produce an accurate representation comparable to that of a daguerreotype, although, Ruskin himself experienced the contradiction of this statement when he compared his drawings to daguerreotypes of the same subject in Venice in 1845. However, his displeasure with daguerreotypes must not have been whole hearted because he continued to use daguerreotypes to support his written work and lectures, demonstrating his continued satisfaction with its use as a visual aid. His use of the daguerreotype in Venice greatly impacted his architectural documentation work, challenging his artistic style, and altered the way he responded to the treatment of historic buildings, as well as provided him with a tool to convey his concern for the restoration of historic buildings in Venice.

**RUSKIN'S PERCEPTION OF VENICE**

In 1845 Ruskin took his first trip to the Continent without his parents at the age of twenty-six. Among other places on his itinerary, he intended to stay in Venice for two weeks in order to conduct research on the great Italian painters for his second volume of *Modern Painters*. On this trip Ruskin was struck by Venice's changing appearance which was, to him, a result of the restorations and modernizations that were being conducted throughout the city during the second Austrian occupation beginning in 1814 and lasting until 1848.\textsuperscript{76} He felt a sense of urgency in response to the restorations and decided to extend his stay for several more weeks to conduct extensive documentation, which he informed his father of
on October 11th, 1845, “I must stay a week more than I intended, to get a few of the more precious details before they are lost for ever.” The restorations Ruskin encountered were conducted by Austrian and Italian authorities and included, among others, the restoration of the facades of the Basilica of St Mark’s, the Ducal Palace, San Giovanni e Paolo, Madonna Dell’Orto, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, and the Foscari and Ca’ d’Oro Palaces. In addition to these restorations, in a letter to his father dated September 10th, 1845, Ruskin remarked that “two thirds of the palaces [are currently] under repair [sic],” which may have been an exaggeration when the actual accounts of restorations taking place in Venice at the time are considered. The Academy: A Monthly Record of Literature, Learning, Science, and Art, vol. II, published in 1871, and Thomas Okey’s Story of Venice, published in 1907, provide accounts of restorations being conducted in Venice in the mid-nineteenth century, including restorations of the Ducal Palace and St Mark’s, and do not indicate that two thirds of the private residences were under restoration as Ruskin had indicated in his letter, previously stated. Therefore, he may have been exaggerating – a symptom of his initial shock upon encountering the restorations in 1845 after several years of absence from the city.

Despite Ruskin’s strong disapproval of the restorations mentioned above, what’s important to note is that “Venice did not acquire a ‘Viennese’ style of architecture during the years of Austrian occupation. State patronage was mainly confined to the building of bridges and streets, and private building was characterized by a stylistic reticence and artistic uncertainty.” Therefore Ruskin’s opposition to the changes in Venice was rooted
deeper than his letters from the period would imply. His letters demonstrate his displeasure with the restorations and treatment of the historic architecture of Venice, but do not reveal any deeper issues that he was dealing with at the time. It appears that he was responding strongly to the changes in Venice because he had come to the unhappy realization that Venice was, in fact, a living city and not a ruin, which was how he had previously perceived it, thus he was unable or unwilling to accept any changes that might alter his perception of Venice. Prior to his extensive documentation campaign and shift of focus from art to architecture, Ruskin had already established his perception of what he believed was the authentic Venice. For Ruskin, this was a wonderful place that retained the same appearance that it had possessed for centuries, only it was slowly succumbing to the harshness of age and weather, leaving it in a wonderfully authentic – though ruined state of existence. For Ruskin, this preconception with Venice was based on several things. First, Ruskin’s visits to Venice – prior to 1845, when he admired the picturesque quality of the decaying architecture before extensive restorations were apparent to him upon his return to the city even though the restorations had begun much earlier in some cases and he had probably encountered them on his previous visits. Nonetheless, these changes were disturbing to Ruskin because he viewed the buildings of Venice as grand monuments and relics that represented the wealth, power, and success of Venice. However, when he witnessed insensitive restorations and the addition of new iron bridges, and gas lamps, he feared that Venice would no longer exist as a monument to the past. A letter to his father from September 14th, 1845, reveals his initial reactions to the introduction of the iron bridges: “Another loss that
I bitterly regret is of the old bridges. They have laid the gaspipes [sic] over them, and in so doing have performed the following transformation on them, the new one having, you see, patent iron railings.” (Figure 7) The addition of iron bridges and gas lamps was a crucial alteration to the appearance of Venice even though it did not directly alter the architecture of the city. For Ruskin, this addition altered his view of the city as a whole. It threatened his perception of Venice because he did not see the possibility of Venice ever being a living, modern city, but rather a museum dedicated to its history. Through his use of the daguerreotype he was able to produce a record architecture as it appeared to him, which was important because it preserved the memory and history of the building in that specific moment in time.

Ruskin’s perception of Venice as a ruin was also primarily based on his memory of the city as it was portrayed by artists including J.M.W. Turner, and the poet, Byron. Ruskin’s initial perception of Venice was founded on a very young-minded, imaginative view of the city based on paintings and written works that illustrated the picturesque ruin that Venice had become. The work of Byron and Turner, as well as Samuel Roger’s book, *Italy*, instilled an aesthetic value in Venice as a ruin. As Robert Hewison suggests in *Ruskin and Venice*,

Although in *The Stones of Venice* Ruskin criticized the sentimental, romantic (and unhistorical) view of the city promoted by Byron in *Childe Harold* and his play *The Two Foscari*, his own emotional response was shaped by Byron’s poetry. Byron, like Samuel Rogers, had helped to form his first childhood impressions of the city, a fact he acknowledges in his autobiography, where he consciously links Byron’s poetry with Turner’s painting: ‘My Venice, like Turner’s, had been chiefly created for us by Byron.’
Figure 7. John Ruskin *Illustration of Bridges in Venice*, 1845.

Figure 8. John Hoffs *Daguerrotype of St. Mark's during Austrian occupation*, 1850.
Ruskin’s perception of Venice was also due, in part, to his upbringing in England; as discussed in the first chapter of Jeanne Clegg’s book, *Ruskin and Venice*, the English admired and idealized Venice because “Venice had no equal in renown for stable government, efficient public administration, a balanced, sophisticated constitution and genius in international relations.” Furthermore, Clegg suggests that Ruskin recognized a correlation between Venice and England, and that the modernization of Venice was conflicting with his inherited vision of the city. John Julius Norwich suggests that “Ruskin, in short, sees Venice as a terrible warning — since England, he believes, has inherited something of Venice’s mantle. England too is a mercantile power, a free nation that has flourished for some eight hundred years, enriched by commerce, governed by a secular monarch and Parliament, and with a complicated system of political checks and balances designed to prevent autocratic rule.” Therefore Ruskin is concerned that England will succumb to the same threats that Venice did, but he also does not want to see Venice enter the modern world which is apparent in his opposition to modifications and restorations of buildings and insertion of modern elements.

**RUSKIN’S APPROACH TO PRESERVATION IN VENICE**

Whether he consciously recognized it or not, Ruskin’s preconceived perception of Venice helped him recognize his interest in architectural preservation. He was disturbed by the changes which he often expressed in letters to his father. In a letter from Venice dated September 11th, 1845, Ruskin expressed his sorrow for the restorations and neglect of the
city's architecture, "when we entered the Grand Canal, I was yet more struck, if possible, by the fearful dilapidation which it has suffered in these last five years...of all the fearful changes I ever saw wrought in a given time, that on Venice since I was last here beats."

In this letter, he is referring to all of the changes that had occurred, as a result of restoration, since his last visit in 1841. On September 20th, 1845 he described the restorations of the Ca d'Oro Palace in detail, "stonemasons everywhere, monuments torn down and pavements up, the cloisters everywhere turned into barracks and the carvings defaced or repainted."

In addition to the restoration of the Ca d'Oro Palace, Ruskin noticed the restoration of the exterior of St Mark's, which the Austrian troops had been conducting during their occupation since 1818, and the Ducal Palace (Figure 8), both of which Ruskin described in a letter to his father:

The interior court of the Doges palace... is being repaired, covered with scaffolding, & as a preparatory step they have already knocked off the heads of the statues. The area is already surrounded on one side barred by iron railings of this pattern, the heads being painted orange yellow, the rest black, Austrian colours you know - the front of St Mark's is being fitted with grand new windows, and the exterior arcade of the Doges palace has been brilliantly whitewashed inside, splashing the capitals all over, breaking most of them, and of course attracting the eye in a forcible manner to the black & yellow sentry boxes now in bright relief, which are agreeably contrasted with a mass of green & white built exactly before the palace in the water."

Danieli Hotel had also been afflicted by restoration which Ruskin observed in 1845: "All its rich red marble front is covered with a smooth, polished, bright white stucco, painted in stripes - so in imitation of marble, with the grand big blue sign in brilliant relief."
In addition to his concern for the architecture of Venice as a result of his reaction against restoration, Ruskin's appreciation for architecture could have also been due, in part, to his exposure to architecture at such an early age. This exposure was gained through education as well as a result of extensive travelling with his parents which set the tone for his admiration of architecture as a form of art. "Travel was a business necessity for John James Ruskin, but it was also — from an early date — seen as an important part of the education of his son [John Ruskin]." The family traveled throughout Europe where "John James took care to visit picturesque places and to take in cathedrals and castles," which was "all part of the stimulus and nurturing that he felt due to the genius of his growing son." What Ruskin saw on these trips ultimately instilled a value in picturesque places and historic architecture which is at odds with his documentation work in Venice in 1845, which strove to produce technical architectural drawings, and daguerreotypes, not aesthetically pleasing, picturesque views.

Visual documentation was important to Ruskin because he valued art as a transmission of information from the past that could inform and educate the future. The need to preserve this information through visual representation became the driving force for his documentation work, and use of the daguerreotype. As John Batchelor points out in John Ruskin "No Wealth But Life," Ruskin felt that,

The buildings that he loved [in Venice] had to be recorded because the violence of the late 1840s put the civilization that sustained them in doubt: "The aspect of the years that approach us is as solemn as it is full of mystery, and the weight of evil against which we have to contend, is increasing like the letting out of water. It is no time for the idleness
of metaphysics, or the entertaining of the arts. The blasphemies of the earth are sounding louder, and its miseries heaped heavier every day.\footnote{78}

The uncertainty of the architecture of Venice, whether threatened by decay or restoration – which was far worse for Ruskin, and that will be discussed in a following section on Ruskin and restoration – prompted him to protect this record of building by producing a visual document.

Ruskin’s initial documentation work began in the form of sketches and watercolors, striving to include as much detail as his skill and the medium would allow, and the daguerreotype which offered a much more accurate reproduction. Ruskin had been tutored in drawing and painting, and exposed to significant artists throughout his life that greatly inspired him in his artistic aspirations. He received drawing lessons from James Duffield Harding (1797-1863) and Copley Fielding (1787-1855), two respected and talented tutors.\footnote{88} In fact, Harding accompanied Ruskin throughout Italy in 1845, including the important period he spent in Venice when the majority of his architectural documentation took place.\footnote{89} Therefore, it comes as no surprise that drawing and painting came naturally to Ruskin as a tool that could be used for recording and documenting architecture.

Ruskin was very thorough in his documentation process and could be viewed as a compulsive categorizer; he strove to catalogue buildings by style to better map the growth and evolution of Venice and its architectural heritage; however, he found that this task was difficult due to the extensive restorations that most of the architecture of Venice had endured for centuries. Throughout the Renaissance in Italy it was not uncommon for monu-
ments to be torn down or altered to reflect the latest ideas and fashions in architecture, which Ruskin noted, adding that this removal of monuments was “in order to put up Greek porticoes or palaces in their stead,” implying that many historic buildings were simply torn down to accommodate new buildings, in the latest styles.¹⁰ Ruskin encountered this destructive tradition himself; he remarked that, “As far as my inquiries have extended, there is not a building in Venice, raised prior to the sixteenth century, which has not sustained essential change in one or more of it’s most important features.”¹⁰¹ If Ruskin was aware of this tradition, why was he so opposed to it occurring in Venice during his lifetime? Ruskin felt that “restoration, so called, is the worst manner of destruction.”¹⁰² He believed that the removal and replacement of architectural elements and integration of new elements – not original to the structure – gave the building a false identity. He felt that by capturing a visual rendering of the architecture – through drawing, painting, and photography, he could preserve the memory and information of the building. Documentation through drawing, painting, and later – photography, became his only tangible form of preservation.

His style, formerly atmospheric and picturesque, often capturing entire buildings or canal scenes, was nearly completely left behind for a more calculated, measured method and style that focused on small sections of buildings and details such as windows and column capitals, reflecting his interaction with the daguerreotype. His former style demonstrated his desire to cultivate an artistic technique and style similar to the artists that he admired most, which at the time included Samuel Prout and J.M.W. Turner. In Ruskin and Venice, Robert Hewison provides a comparison between Ruskin’s rendering of Casa
Contarini Fasan, done in 1841, with that of Prout’s, date unknown.\textsuperscript{52} (Figure 9-10) Hewison notes that Ruskin claimed Prout had borrowed Ruskin’s work of the Casa Contarini Fasan to make his work, though it is unknown which drawing was made first; nonetheless, the two works do exhibit striking similarities in viewpoint, perspective, and attention to detail.\textsuperscript{54} With the exception of the careful attention to detail in some areas, this work is exactly the kind of aesthetically pleasing view that lacks the consistent detail necessary for a complete record of its subject, which Ruskin left behind, for the most part, for small sections of architectural fragments carefully and precisely rendered. Much later in his autobiography, Praeterita, Ruskin reflected on his drawings prior to this shift in style; he confessed that he had not known how to draw architecture in the way that he would in 1845, he reflected on the drawings he had made from 1840-41, “they could not have been much better done. I knew absolutely nothing of architecture proper, had never drawn a section nor a leaf moulding; but liked it, as Turner did to the end of his days, anything that was graceful and rich, whether Gothic or Renaissance.”\textsuperscript{55}

Ruskin’s documentation of the architecture of Venice would become easier in some ways once he discovered the possibilities of using photography for producing a representation of the city’s architecture. After his discovery and use of photography he noticed that during the execution of his drawings he was missing important details in the architecture that was only apparent upon close examination; detail that photography was able to capture. He regretted not being able to see and document this detail for himself in his drawings and paintings. In a letter to his father dated October 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1845, Ruskin expressed his struggle
with documenting St Mark's: "I fail 3 times out of four, I suppose from trying to do too much, & yet it is just this too much that I want, for as to taking common loose sketches in a hackneyed place like Venice, it is utter folly." Ruskin held a very high standard for his illustrations and wanted to create an accurate representation of his subject so that people could see what the subject truly looked like, as opposed to an artist's rendering.

Today, Ruskin's drawings and paintings of Venice—though not technically accurate like his daguerreotype images, provide an extensive look at what he valued in architecture; the ornamental elements adorning the buildings of Venice; the details that he felt contributed to Venice's identity through its architectural heritage. Through what is essentially a catalogue of drawings and paintings, Ruskin identified the architecture that is characteristic of and significant to Venice. This includes palaces of the Venetian Gothic style—a style whose characteristics appear in the form of decorated facades adorned with colored marbles, and architectural elements such as ornamented paired Corinthian columns with fluted shafts, and tripartite pointed-arched, tracery windows. Ruskin's recognition of the significant architecture of Venice has helped secure its existence for the future by recognizing its importance to the history of Venice and raising awareness of its threatened condition. The same would come from Ruskin's use of the daguerreotype photographic process that he used to document the significant architecture of Venice in a more detailed and thorough way, marrying contemporary artistic innovation with his more traditional, artistic approach to looking at and documenting architecture.
Whatever the value of Ruskin’s drawings and paintings may be today, he was, at the time of their production, rarely satisfied with the outcome which led to his use of the daguerreotype. There were two main reasons for his dissatisfaction; the first, he felt that the pressures of time, due to the restorations taking place, were upon him, perhaps making his illustrations hasty in their execution and sacrificing detail to capture general form quickly before precious pieces of the building were lost forever. The second cause of his dissatisfaction was that he often doubted his own artistic skills and talent, which he frequently expressed in letters to his father. The third and final reason is that his drawings and paintings began to reflect his disapproval of the restorations that were being conducted on the buildings that he was attempting to document.

Ruskin certainly expressed his concern for the pressures of time that he felt in order to capture a good representation of architecture that he felt was threatened by restoration. Time was an advantage of the daguerreotype that Ruskin must have realized; his drawings took hours – if not days to complete, while the daguerreotype could produce an image in only 20-30 minutes. The numerous restorations that he encountered in 1845, such as the restoration of the Ca d’Oro palace, which will be discussed below, prompted him to use the daguerreotype because he needed a much faster way of working. In a letter written around the time of his arrival to Venice in 1845 Ruskin expressed the urgency of his documentation undertaking, informing his father that, “I must stay a week more than I intended, to get a few of the more precious details before they are lost forever,” implying that this was a matter of great importance to him and that if he didn’t record the architecture of the
city it would be completely destroyed by restorations. This urgency that Ruskin felt was certainly very real; in 1845 he wrote to his father of the restorations being done on the Casa d’Oro palace, “you cannot imagine what an unhappy day I spent yesterday before the Casa d’Oro, vainly attempting to draw it while the workmen were hammering it down before my face.” This sketch is – either intentionally or unintentionally unfinished – indicating how quickly he had to work to capture an image before that section of the building was restored. (Figure 11)

Ruskin’s dissatisfaction with his own drawings and paintings also reflects his disapproval of the restorations of the buildings he was documenting; as a result, the rushed quality that his drawings took on was due to the time constraints he encountered – not the quality of the work itself. When an artist is displeased with something they are illustrating, that feeling will undoubtedly be conveyed in their work whether they intend it to be or not. For example, the artist may be inclined to focus on rendering the sections that are pleasing to them – leaving out the sections they don’t like, as Ruskin has done with his drawing of the Casa d’Oro.

There is, of course, the possibility that Ruskin did not feel confident in his artistic abilities. Documenting the significant architecture of Venice certainly was an ambitious undertaking. The pressure of such an undertaking must have had an effect on him. On October 1st, 1845, he remarked, “St Mark’s too sets me aghast every time I go near it - since I have been studying architecture carefully, I see things about five times as beautiful as I
Figure 11. John Ruskin *Casa d’Oro*, 1845.
used to do, and as I can't draw much better, I am reduced to knocking my fists together and moaning. Ruskin did acknowledge the challenge and difficulty of documenting architecture and noted that "nothing is so rare in art, as far as my own experience goes, as a fair illustration of architecture; perfect illustration of it does not exist." Ruskin's idea of a perfect illustration of architecture was a rendering that captured every detail visible to the human eye, as well as his memory of the building. Ruskin strove to create architectural representations rather than artistic renderings of architecture. This shift signals the dramatic change in his artistic style and established his intent for these new works. It also allowed him to become susceptible to the beneficial use of photography, which, had he become an artist whose main concern was creating aesthetically pleasing images, he may have rejected photography altogether.

Ruskin's growing interest in architecture and concern for the restorations in Venice were due to his admiration of ornamentation and architectural details, as well as his appreciation for the signs of age, or the patina on a building, which contributed to his disapproval of restorations in Venice, thus leading him to discourage the removal of this patina. Ruskin commented on his appreciation for patina specifically in a letter to his father in 1845 while visiting Lucca, "hitherto, all architecture, except fairy-finished Milan, had depended with me for its delight on being partly in decay." Ruskin connected patina, and its associations with the past and memory of Venice, with authenticity; meaning time had left its mark on the fabric of the structure where it could be read and interpreted. For Venice, the evolution of its architectural style could be researched by looking at, and visually deconstructing
its architecture. Ruskin's reaction against restoration in Venice would appear in much of his written work including: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), and later, *St. Mark's Rest* (1884), as well as his visual documentation in the form of sketches, paintings, and daguerreotypes.

It is during his time spent reacting to the restorations in Venice in 1845 that Ruskin solidified his interest and concern for Venetian architecture through visual documentation in the form of drawings, paintings, daguerreotypes, and written work. This solidification of his interest and concern for Venetian architecture came out of genuine concern for the significant architecture that he felt was being boldly defaced by the restorations being conducted. Ruskin believed that "the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. It is in its age."¹⁴² The ability to see the age of a building, without obtrusive additions and replications, was quite possibly – though he often contradicted this – far more important to Ruskin than the actual survival of the structure itself, which was often, although not always, the cause for restoration. Ruskin often expressed his appreciation for historic architecture, therefore he would not have advocated letting it fall to complete ruin. In the course of his meticulous and thorough documentation process he critiqued the current restoration practices being undertaken, thus establishing his own definition of restoration that will be discussed in a following section on Ruskin and restoration; however, first a brief history of restoration in Venice will be discussed.
The history of restoration and altogether rebuilding in Venice is lengthy and complicated. Ruskin made note of this in *The Stones of Venice*, where he states that, "Most of the palaces in Venice have sustained interpolations hardly less numerous; and those of the Ducal Palace are so intricate, that a year's labor would probably be insufficient altogether to disentangle and define them." Ruskin became obsessed with the inability to define a building as belonging to one particular style by reading its chronology, due to the layers of additions and restorations that had taken place over time. He felt that restoration added to this confusion of chronology because the new materials that were added to the building in the restoration process were indistinguishable from the original materials of the building, since they were intended to blend in and not draw attention to the new sections.

Published in 1907, *The Story of Venice*, by Thomas Okey describes comparable – if not the very same restorations Ruskin became concerned with that were conducted on the basilica of St Mark’s, "in 1846 this same vaulting [the west dome] was again in urgent need of repairs and the Zuccati mosaics were largely destroyed in the subsequent restoration." Okey goes on to describe the full extent of restorations that St Mark’s endured, stressing that the restorations were indeed absolutely necessary, and in some cases imperative to secure the survival of the building. This poses an interesting question; if the restorations were indeed imperative for the survival of the structure, what was Ruskin reacting against specifically? There were many reasons for Ruskin’s reactions against restoration; for ex-
ample, Ruskin was concerned with maintaining the original materials and style-defining elements of each building, such as the Greek marble that was removed from St Mark’s and replaced with “inferior Carrara” marble during an early restoration. In addition to his disapproval of the removal of original materials of the building, he did not approve of the restoration of St Mark’s because he felt that the work was careless in execution and possessed no thought as to what should be maintained or preserved to maintain the original appearance of the structure. Incidentally, the restorers working on St Mark’s had actually considered applying a varnish and smoke treatment that would emulate the aged marbles, still intact, to make the newly added marbles less obtrusive. Would Ruskin have been more pleased with this treatment of replication instead of overall replacement? It’s difficult to say, however, it’s unlikely that he would have accepted the alternative treatment because this was the kind of insensitive, obtrusive restoration that concerned him the most, and would occupy much of his time during this period in Venice.

RUSKIN & RESTORATION

Even though Ruskin’s perception of Venice as a ruin did strongly influence his disapproval of the architectural restorations in Venice, he did express a valid concern that should be addressed. This concern was that some of the restorations being conducted in Venice during the 1840s were invasive and ultimately destructive rather than beneficial because they often used harsh chemicals for cleaning that damaged the surfaces of buildings. Careless workmanship was also a concern; in Pisa Ruskin remarked, “these conservators,
who let the workmen repairing the roof drop their buckets of plaster over whole figures [of the frescoes in the Campo Santo] at a time, destroying them for ever, will hinder me with my silky touch & fearful hand, from making [by tracing the frescoes] even so much effort at the preservation of... any one of them.”

In 1845, Ruskin wrote to his father stating “I can tell you the delight I have had, as well as the sorrow, in examining tonight the architecture of St Mark’s which is going to be destroyed. Every capital of its thousand columns is different, and their grace inimitable – these are in the renewed parts either scraped down or cleaned with an acid which has so destroyed the carving that it is not even legible – as I said before, I am just in time and no more.”

Ruskin considered the restorations destructive because, for him, the most important features of a building were its ornamentation and decorative details that defined the style and quality of the building. As suggested by Kristine Ottensen Garrigan in her book, *Ruskin on Architecture*, “for Ruskin, details are not merely the basis for the entire appreciation of the building, but they finally constitute the very definition of architecture, and its claim to be Fine Art.”

Ruskin felt that the architectural restorations were damaging and destroying these elements, which in many cases he was right. In Venice, September 14th, 1845, Ruskin wrote that “The old marbles;” on St Mark’s were “displaced and torn down – what is coming in their stead I know not.” This uncertainty would be remedied by his daguerreotype images which provided a solid document containing the memory of the building that he was recording.

Ruskin defined restoration as a destructive act that completely destroys the building – damaging or worse yet – stripping it of its characteristic elements and replacing them with
materials not original to the structure, resulting in a completely false identity, muddling its architectural evolution and history. Ruskin witnessed the destruction of many important buildings in Venice as a result of the misguided intentions of restoration; he said that “the principle of modern times...is to neglect buildings first, and restore them afterwards.”[11]

To end this vicious cycle, Ruskin recommended that the monuments be maintained in order to prevent the future need for restoration. In The Seven Lamps of Architecture he wrote:

> Watch an old building with an anxious care, guard it as best you may, and at any cost, from every influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would jewels of a crown; set watches about it as if at the gates of a besieged city; bind it together with iron where it loosens; stay it with timber where it declines; do not care about the unsightliness of the aid; better a crutch than a lost limb; and do this tenderly, and reverently, and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow.[12]

In his argument against restoration, Ruskin did not directly express a suitable alternative to restoration in order to protect and preserve historic buildings, however, he did seem to promote a preventative method that can be considered stabilization – keeping the building stable without restoring it with materials that were not original to the building. One can only assume that Ruskin would have advocated stabilization and preservation of the historic structure as opposed to restoration because of his appreciation of age and time worn buildings.

Ruskin’s opposition to the restorations in Venice was perhaps abetted by his improved drawing and painting skills which he would use to record the buildings in their current state of existence, with the signs of their age weather visible on the surface, though not as successfully as the daguerreotype. Ruskin expressed this admiration for patina and
his response to the removal of it in a letter to his father in 1845, reflecting on the restoration of St Mark’s, “off go all the glorious old weather stains, the rich hues of the marble which nature, mighty as she is, has taken ten centuries to bestow.”113 In another letter to his father, dated August 9th, 1848, Ruskin said “I seem born to conceive what I cannot execute, recommend what I cannot obtain, and mourn over what I cannot save.”114 He must have felt somewhat cheated, finally possessing the artistic skills he had lacked before, in addition to the assistance of the daguerreotype that he had begun to use. Nevertheless, during this period in Venice, in 1845, he developed his opinions of architectural restoration and his solution which was to document the architecture with the daguerreotype, before it was altered by restoration. He later formulated and expressed his opinions of restoration in a series of publications: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, published in 1849, *The Stones of Venice*, published 1851-1853, and later, *St. Mark’s Rest*, published in 1884. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, which was the most important that will be discussed in the following section.

**RUSKIN & VIOLETTE-LE-DUC**

When discussing Ruskin’s view on restoration, it is important to include a contrasting view; that of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, who was a contemporary of Ruskin. Viollet-Le-Duc practiced architectural restoration mainly throughout, though not limited to, France.115 In his work, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIIe siècle (Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century)*, published in 1854,
Viollet-Le-Duc defines the term restoration, "To restore an edifice means neither to maintain it, nor to repair it, nor to rebuild it; it means to reestablish it in a finished state, which may in fact never have actually existed at any given time."116 Ruskin viewed this type of restoration as lacking truth and authenticity; he believed that it created a fictive history of the building, resulting in a total fabrication. He expressed his feelings toward this type of restoration in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in the chapter on the "Lamp of Memory":

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer; a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed.117

In opposition to Ruskin's belief in authenticity in architecture, meaning architecture that bears the physical signs of time and age, maintaining its original fabric, Viollet-Le-Duc believed in, and practiced, what he termed restoration. Often viewed as heavy-handed, and sometimes destructive restoration, Viollet-Le-Duc's approach to the treatment of historic architecture was highly criticized since it often required original materials of the building to be removed and replaced with new materials, and cleaning methods were not sensitive to the building materials.118 Viollet-Le-Duc felt that "all buildings or parts of buildings constituting historical monuments [should] be restored in the style that belongs to them."119 He did acknowledge the fact that buildings were not constructed overnight and often took decades to be completed – acquiring different styles throughout time; therefore, he felt that it was "essential, before any repair work actually begins, to ascertain exactly the age and character of each part of the building."120
Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc agreed on very little concerning the restoration of architecture with the exception of two things; first, the beneficial use of photography in the restoration field, which Viollet-Le-Duc believed had "the advantage of making possible an exact and irrefutable presentation of a building in any given state," and furthermore, "it provides documentation that can continually be referred back to, even after the work of restoration has covered over some of the damage that came about as the building was falling into ruin."121 Viollet-Le-Duc felt that photography held restorers responsible for taking more care in their work because every little detail was documented and could be referred back to for accuracy. Ruskin, too, realized the importance of the new innovation that could be used to document architecture prior to restoration, though in a different way. Ruskin would have rather not subjected the buildings to restoration at all, unlike Viollet-Le-Duc, which is another topic that will be addressed.

The second concept that Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc agreed on was – as Nikolaus Pevsner suggests in Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc, "what Victorians called reality in architecture, [that] is insisted on by both Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc,"122 For Ruskin, truth – or reality in architecture, meant that the building retain, and clearly display its original function and appearance as it was originally intended by the architect and builder. The extent to which Ruskin agreed with Viollet-Le-Duc on this concept is unclear and not specifically addressed by Pevsner, however, Viollet-Le-Duc's work reflects, at the very least, an acknowledgement of the concept of preserving the original appearance in the way that he often attempted to recreate the original look of the building, although it was often a fictive

- 53 -
recreation. This is where Ruskin and Viollet-Le-Duc’s agreement ends; Ruskin would have done everything possible to retain the original fabric of the building — the materials that it was originally constructed with at the time it was built, whereas Viollet-Le-Duc would often bring in replacement materials that attempted to recreate the original appearance, but this created an inauthentic replication. To Ruskin, the act of restoring a building to a state in which it had never existed was far worse than letting it fall to ruin over time. Ruskin seems to have been hinting at finding a happy medium somewhere between Viollet-Le-Duc’s theory of restoration and his own thoughts on the treatment of historic buildings. Ruskin considered architecture “the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them contributes to his mental health, power and pleasure.” This statement demonstrates his acknowledgement of the importance of maintaining the original appearance of the building. Many interpret his strong opposition to restoration and his admiration for time-worn buildings as advocacy for letting nature, so to speak, take its course; however, he certainly would not have advocated complete loss over a more sensitive and thoughtful restoration. This can be determined by the countless hours he spent documenting the architecture of Venice and by reading his introduction to the 1880 republication of The Seven Lamps of Architecture, “I never intended to have republished this book, which has become the most useless I ever wrote; the buildings it describes with so much delight being now either knocked down, or scraped and patched up into smugness and smoothness more tragic than uttermost ruin.” Though it is brief, he expresses regret in these questionable restorations, and in some cases a complete loss
of the structure, and seems to recommend an alternative that has been widely practiced in preservation since Ruskin's time.

Ruskin advocated documentation as an alternative to restoration as well as a process that involves stabilizing the structure. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin suggests, in order to prevent from having to conduct restorations:

> Take proper care of your monuments, and you will not need to restore them. A few sheets of lead put in time upon the roof, a few dead leaves and sticks swept in time out of a water-course, will save both roof and walls from rain. Watch an old building with an anxious care, guard it as best you may, and at any cost, from every influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would jewels of a crown; set watches about it as if at the gates of a besieged city; bind it together with iron where it loosens; stay it with timber where it declines; do not care about the unsightliness of the aid; better a crutch than a lost limb; and do this tenderly, and reverently, and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow.14

The fact that he was thinking of alternatives to restoration, that would secure the existence of the building for the future, proves that he did not want to see buildings fall to complete ruin.

In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, under the Lamp of Memory, Ruskin elaborates on his thoughts and reactions to restoration. He states that, “it is impossible; as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture,” and equally as important, that “as for direct and simple copying, it is palpably impossible. What copying can there be of surfaces that have been worn half an inch down? The whole finish of the work was in the half inch that is gone; if you attempt to restore that finish, you do it conjecturally.”125 There can be no truth in conjectural restoration, and
Ruskin believed in truth in architecture, which meant maintaining as much of the original building materials as possible, which is ultimately why he disagreed with copying in the process of restoration. Ruskin asks the question, “how is the new [restored] work better than the old?” 126 In terms of restorations that were executed in order to secure the existence of the structure, these restorations were obviously very important, otherwise in many cases the entire structure would be completely lost; however, it is in the way in which the restorations were undertaken, with very little care or thought, as far as Ruskin was concerned, that bothered him the most.

Ruskin stressed the preservation of the original materials above all other treatment because he valued two physical qualities in architecture that he expressed in The Stones of Venice, “the two virtues of architecture which we can justly weigh, are...its strength or good construction, and its beauty or good decoration.” 127 Ruskin believed that authenticity and truth in architecture were obliterated by the process of restoration. The reason for this, as Kristine Ottensen Garrigan suggests in her book, Ruskin on Architecture, is that, “Ruskin’s final great architectural bequest is his insistence on preserving and revering the buildings of the past as an inspiration to the present. If the architecture of the present reflects a nation’s values, so also does a nation’s attitude toward its architectural heritage.” 128 As Viollet-Le-Duc suggested in The Foundations of Architecture Selections for the Dictionnaire Raisonné, “Our era, and our era alone, since the beginning of recorded history, has assumed toward the past a quite exceptional attitude as far as history is concerned. Our age has wished to analyze the past, classify it, compare it, and write its complete history,
following step-by-step the procession, the progress, and the various transformations of humanity," as Ruskin did in Venice through his architectural studies. Ruskin was concerned that Venice was not acting to preserve its architectural heritage; in fact, as far as he was concerned they were acting against the preservation of their own heritage by replacing it with all the modern fashions. Although in some cases the Venetians did not have a choice in the restorations and modernizations since most were conducted by Austrians during their occupation of Venice, "Little by little, the ancient configuration of the city was being transformed; streets were widened, bridges restored or rebuilt, and canals dredged," and "by 1843 gas street lighting was in operation," all undertaken during Austrian occupation.

Although Ruskin did not physically practice preservation, he did much to promote it through writing and keeping visual records in the form of drawings, watercolors, and daguerreotypes. It is at this point in Ruskin's life, when he was critiquing the restoration practices in Venice in the 1840's, that it becomes apparent he has established the importance of visual documentation as a significant factor in the preservation process — if not an act of preservation in itself. For Ruskin, producing a record and memory of a building was an implicit way of preserving that building. Ruskin's intention was clear; to provide visual documentation that could be used to remember, memorialize and transfer information about the architecture of Venice to the next generation, a tangible record of what came before. Ruskin strongly felt that Venice had not yet been visually represented as it should be; thoroughly and in great detail, despite the work of painters such as Carpaccio and Bell-
ini. In a letter to his father in 1845 he expressed this concern, "Venice has never yet been painted as she should, never, and to see the thing just in one's grasp, & snatched away... it is too bad, far too bad." Ruskin's passionate statement can be seen as an exaggeration when considering the great illustrations of Venice that had been produced before his time including the works of artists such as Bellini, Carpaccio, Tintoretto, and Turner. Though Ruskin may have been looking for a more technical architectural representation, which he regrets not being able to find when he was documenting the Ca' d'Oro Palace; "On the Ca'd'Oro, the noblest Palace of the Grand Canal, the stonemasons are hard at work, and of all its once noble cornice there remains one fragment only. Had that gone, as in a day or two more it will, all knowledge of the contour of this noble building would have been lost for ever, for I can find no architectural drawings of anything here."  

**Implications of Photography on Historic Preservation**

Ruskin was among the first people concerned with the protection and preservation of historic architecture to recognize the potential of photography as a form of preservation. Generally, photography would come to be used as a tool for recording historic architecture. In the field of historic preservation, photography has the potential to convey visual information that can be published or reproduced to reach a larger audience. It can also aid in the process of restoration, reconstruction, and conservation of historic buildings, as Viollet-Le-Duc had discovered in his own restoration work. Photography, along with infrared and x-
ray processes, are strong tools for creating awareness about threatened or damaged historic architecture. Visual documentation can be quite compelling and can speak to a very broad audience. It is quite possible that Ruskin’s approval and use of photography as a method of preservation prompted its popularity in the preservation field; he was, after all, consistently challenging the restoration and preservation practices and theories of the time.

Ruskin was a pioneer of photography and the treatment of historic architecture. He voiced his opposition of the destructive restorations during his time, and he immediately recognized and embraced the potential of photography as a tool to preserve a record and memory of architectural heritage that could be transferred through generations. 1845 was a pivotal year for Ruskin which included his discovery of the daguerreotype, his heightened awareness of the meaning of restoration, and his developing technical drawing style, a distinct shift from his earlier picturesque aesthetic. Ruskin’s daguerreotypes of Venice provide an unbiased record of the significant buildings that contribute to Venice’s architectural heritage. Through his uncharacteristic embrace of one of the nineteenth century’s great technological achievements, the daguerreotype, he was able to create awareness about preservation and give life to his opinions of the destructive restorations in Venice.
ENDNOTES

2 John Batchelor, *John Ruskin, No Wealth but Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), 48. As Batchelor explains Ruskin "would not normally have taken an honours degree because his illness had meant a year out from his studies. The 'Double Fourth' was honorary, a concession recognizing the intelligence of the candidate while at the same time maintaining the received distinction between the 'Honours' degree and the 'Pass' degree."
7 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
10 Batchelor, *John Ruskin, No Wealth but Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), 75. Bachelor notes that in 1848, "Ruskin devoted a tour to a study of the cathedrals of northern France, using detailed note-taking, sketching, measurements and daguerreotypes (the latter taken by George Hobbs)." Ruskin’s letters from 1845 indicate that Hobbs accompanied him to Venice and assisted him with his architectural studies, which included a series of daguerreotypes that have been attributed to Hobbs.
11 M. Daguerre, *A Full Description of the Daguerreotype Process, As Published by M. Daguerre* (New York: J.R. Chilten, 1840); Reprinted by J.R. Chilten in 1840 from Daguerre’s publication printed in 1839.
18 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
19 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
25 Ruskin, *Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark’s, Venice, now in progress under Mr Ruskin’s direction*, ed. III (London: no publisher, printed by Strangeways & Sons, 1879-80).
27 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
28 Shapiro, 1972, p. 225.
32 Gemseim, 1968, pp. 48-49.
33 Gemseim, 1968, pp. 4-5.
35 Gemseim, 1968, pp. 15, 49.
36 Gemseim, 1968, p. 15.
39 Hammer, 1940, pp. 4-5.
41 Daguerre, A Full Description of the Daguerreotype Process. As Published by M. Daguerre (New York: J.R. Chilton, 1840) Reprinted by J.R. Chilton in 1840 from Daguerre's publication printed in 1839.
43 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 53.
44 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 52.
45 Hammet, 1940, p. 5.
46 Hammet, 1940, p. 4.
48 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 82.
49 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 81.
50 Daguerre, 1840.
51 Daguerre, 1840.
52 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 81.
54 Gernsheim, 1968, p. 84.
57 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
59 Shapiro, 1972, p. 220.
62 Shapiro, 1972, p. 225.
64 Ruskin, Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark’s, Venice, now in progress under Mr Ruskin’s direction, ed. III (London: no publisher, printed by Strangways & Sons, 1879-80)
66 Shapiro, 1972, p. 218.
71 Shapiro, 1972, p. 200.
73 Shapiro, Ruskin 1972, p. 121.
74 Appleton, ed., 1871, p. 515.
81 Shapiro, 1972, p. 159.
82 Shapiro, 1972, p. 207.
83 Shapiro, 1972, pp. 196-200.
84 Shapiro, 1972, p. 198.
85 Batcheler, 2000, p. 23.
86 Batcheler, 2000, p. 67.
87 Batcheler, 2000, p. 78.
89 Batchelor, 2000, p. 67.
93 Hewison, Ruskin's Venice, 2000, pp. 42-43.
94 Hewison, Ruskin's Venice, 2000, pp. 42-43.
95 Ruskin Praeterita, vol.2, ch.6, par.115 (works, 35).
96 Shapiro, 1972, p. 219.
98 Shapiro, 1972, p. 200.
99 Shapiro, 1972, p. 209.
100 Shapiro, 1972, p. 218.
102 Ruskin, Praeterita, vol.2, ch.6, par.115 (works, 35).
105 Okey, 1907, p. 311.
106 Okey, 1907, p. 282.
107 Batchelor, 2000, p. 65.
108 Shapiro, 1972, p. 203.
113 Shapiro, 1972, p. 201.
117 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 1889.
118 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 1889, p. 194.
123 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 1889, preface to 1880 edition.
124 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, Lib. Ed. (London: George Allen. 1904), Vol.8, 244.
125 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 1889, p.195.
126 Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 1889, pp. 194-195.
132 Shapiro, 1972, p. 209.
133 Shapiro, 1972, p. 208.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


INDEX

A
Académie des Sciences 3, 15
Arago, François Jean Dominique 6

B
Batchelor, John 36, 60
Bellini 57, 58
Berry, Miles 3
Bouton, Charles-Marie 12
Byron 1, 32

C
Ca’ d’Oro Palace 58
Ca’ Foscari 4
Camera obscura 12, 13, 14
Caravaggio 57, 58
Casa Contarini Fasan 4, 38, 39, 40
Chambers Edinburgh Journal 15, 61, 63
Christ Church, Oxford 2
Circular respecting Memorial Studies of St Mark’s 8, 10, 21, 60, 61
Clegg, Jeanne 34, 61

D
Daguerre, Louis Jacques Mandé 3, 11, 12, 60, 61
Daguerreotype 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 49, 50, 51, 59, 63
Danielli Hotel 35
Davy, Humphrey 12
Delacroix, Paul 20
Dierama 12, 13
Doge’s Palace 6, 60
Ducal Palace 4, 8, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 35, 47

E
England 1, 3, 5, 34

F
Fielding, Copley 37
Florence 19
Fore Clavigera 8

G
Garrigan, Uttensen 49, 56, 62
Gaucheron H. 3, 16
Gay-Lussac, Louis Joseph 28
Grand Canal 5, 35, 58
H
Hannay, John 7, 10, 60, 63
Harding, James Duffield 37
Harrison, W.H. 19, 61
Heligrapy 13, 14
Hewison, Robert 6, 32, 38, 60
Hubbs, John (George) 5

K
King’s College 2

L
Lectures on Art 8, 61

M
Madonna Dell’Orto 30
Modern Painters 29, 61
Musée d’Orsay 6

N
Niépce, Isidore 3
Niépce, Joseph Nicéphore 11, 12, 13, 14
Norwich, John Julius 34, 60

O
Okey, Thomas 30, 47, 61

P
Palazzo Foscarì 27
Pevsner, Nikolaus 53, 62
Præterita 4, 5, 39, 60, 62, 64
Precht, Samuel 4, 38, 40

R
Restoration 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59
Robison, Sir John 28
Roger, Samuel 1, 32

S
San Giovanni e Paolo 30
Santa Maria dei Miracoli 30
Seven Lamps of Architecture 6, 8, 46, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 60, 62, 64
Society of Painters in Water Colours 8, 9
St Mark’s Rest 8, 64
Stones of Venice 8, 23, 32, 46, 47, 51, 56, 61, 62

- 67 -
I

Théâtre de l’Ambigu-Comique  12
The Seven Lamps of Architecture  6, 46, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 60, 62, 64
Tintoretto  58
Turner, J.M.W.  1, 32, 38, 39, 58

V

Venice  2, 3, 4, 12, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65
Viollet-Le-Duc, Eugène Emmanuel  16, 51

W

Wedgwood, Thomas  12