

**Souvenirs of Venice: Reproduced views, tourism, and city spaces**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is the first study of the three-hundred year history of souvenir images of Venice produced by local Venetians for tourists from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century. The project traces both the changes and the elements of continuity in the Venetian spaces depicted and in the visual conventions used. The Introduction explains why Venice is a particularly significant subject for a study of souvenir imagery and outlines the theoretical ideas related to travel and souvenirs that inform the work that follows. Chapter One focuses on the view paintings of Venice by Giovanni Canaletto and Francesco Guardi, as well as Antonio Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings, within the context of both the Grand Tour and Venice's dwindling power leading up to the fall of the Republic in 1797. Chapter Two explores nineteenth-century photographs of Venice made by local photographers Carlo Ponti, Carlo Naya, and Tomaso Filippi, with the photographs organized into central and peripheral spaces in the city, and with attention devoted to archival material in the little-known Archivio Filippi. Chapter Three considers the photographs in their serial form, as images included in commercial souvenir albums. Chapter Four analyzes twentieth-century postcards of Venice, which used the nineteenth-century photographs for their images. The Conclusion includes a study of a company in Venice that is continuing the tradition of producing postcard views of the city for visitors. The chapters also call attention to how the figures of locals and foreigners are presented in the images; to the tourist circuits through Venice implied in collections of images bound together, which are read here as visual guidebooks; and to spaces that brought tourists together to engage with the city's souvenir images, specifically Joseph Smith's viewing gallery on the Grand Canal in the eighteenth century, photographers' shops in San Marco in the nineteenth century, and the post office at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in the early twentieth century.



This thesis shows how Venetian souvenir images participated in reinforcing and shaping the spaces of tourism in the city, as in, for example, the emergence of the Bridge of Sighs as a significant tourist site. Furthermore, these reproduced views, which circulated widely, influenced not only which sites tourists visited and how they enacted their roles as tourists but also how they anticipated and remembered their travels. However, tourists were not passive recipients. Arguing for a dynamic relationship between the producers and consumers of the tourist imagery, this thesis incorporates travel writing, guidebooks, and literature of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries to highlight that tourists were often aware that their perceptions of the city were shaped by the representations they had seen. Moreover, tourists had a hand in shaping the souvenir views presented to them. In the eighteenth century, Canaletto and Guardi's patrons suggested subject matter, size, and viewpoints for the view paintings. In the nineteenth century, photographers took into account the Gothic and Romantic sensibilities of visitors when photographing Venice, and tourists were able to choose the specific images included in the commercial souvenir albums they purchased. This collaboration of sorts between producer and consumer is seen most tangibly in postcards, in which the tourist's own words accompany the commercial image. This project is at the intersection of art historical work on material culture, in which a close reading of visual conventions is at the fore, and sociological work on tourism, which explores the rituals associated with travel. Engaging with the city one visits through texts and images has often been disparaged as diminishing travel. In contrast, this project suggests that such an experience is an integral aspect of travelling, especially in Venice, a city that has for centuries had a place in the minds of visitors through its representations in literature and art.

## Résumé

Cette dissertation constitue la première étude portant sur une page de l'histoire de Venise s'échelonnant sur trois cents ans, soit du dix-huitième siècle au vingt-et-unième siècle, ayant été captée en images-souvenirs par des Vénitiens à l'intention des touristes. Ce projet met en lumière à la fois les changements et les éléments de continuité relatifs aux lieux de Venise ainsi qu'aux conventions appliquées aux représentations visuelles. L'introduction explique les raisons pour lesquelles Venise représente un sujet particulièrement significatif pour une étude portant sur l'imagerie-souvenir, et trace les grandes lignes des théories liées au voyage et aux souvenirs qui façonnent le travail qui suit. Le premier chapitre focalise sur les vues de Venise réalisées par les peintres Giovanni Canaletto et Francesco Guardi ainsi que sur les gravures d'Antonio Visentini réalisées à partir des tableaux de Giovanni Canaletto, et ce, dans le contexte du Grand Tour et du déclin du pouvoir de la république de Venise qui mena ultimement à la chute de celle-ci en 1797. Le deuxième chapitre explore les photographies de Venise réalisées au dix-neuvième siècle par des photographes locaux comme Carlo Ponti, Carlo Naya et Tomaso Filippi, qui ont été répertoriées selon l'emplacement central ou périphérique des quartiers de la ville, avec une attention particulière apportée au matériel d'archives du peu connu fonds Tomaso Filippi « Archivio Filippi ». Le troisième chapitre considère les photographies de série publiées dans les albums-souvenirs commerciaux. Le quatrième chapitre analyse les cartes postales de Venise réalisées au vingtième siècle à l'aide de photographies datant du dix-neuvième siècle. La conclusion comporte une étude portant sur une entreprise de Venise qui poursuit la tradition de production de cartes postales représentant des vues de la ville à l'intention des visiteurs. Les chapitres attirent l'attention sur la manière dont les figures des Vénitiens et des étrangers sont présentées dans les images, ainsi que sur les circuits touristiques implicites que créent les

collections d'images de Venise une fois reliées entre elles, et qui sont interprétées ici comme des guides touristiques. Les chapitres s'intéressent également aux établissements qui attirent les touristes et imprègnent leur esprit des images-souvenirs de la ville, et tout particulièrement la galerie d'exposition de Joseph Smith sur le Grand Canal, au dix-huitième siècle, les boutiques de photographie de San Marco, au dix-neuvième siècle, et le bureau de poste à la Fondaco dei Tedeschi, au début du vingtième siècle.

Cette thèse démontre de quelle manière les images-souvenirs de Venise ont contribué à renforcer et à façonner les lieux touristiques dans la ville, comme, par exemple, l'émergence du Pont des Soupirs comme important site touristique. De plus, en raison de leur grande circulation, ces reproductions des vues de Venise ont non seulement influencé les visiteurs quant au choix des sites qu'ils ont fréquentés et au rôle qu'ils ont joué en tant que touristes, mais également sur leur manière d'anticiper leurs voyages et sur les souvenirs qu'ils en ont gardés. Toutefois, les touristes n'étaient pas des figurants passifs. Défendant l'existence d'une relation dynamique entre les producteurs et les consommateurs d'imagerie touristique, la présente thèse incorpore des récits de voyage, des guides touristiques et de la littérature des dix-huitième, dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles afin de mettre en relief que les touristes étaient souvent conscients du fait que leurs perceptions de la ville avaient été façonnées par les représentations qu'ils avaient vues. En outre, les touristes ont contribué à la conception des vues souvenirs qui leur étaient présentées. Ainsi, au dix-huitième siècle, les clients de Canaletto et de Guardi apportaient des suggestions relativement aux sujets traités, aux dimensions et aux points de vue à illustrer dans les scènes de leurs tableaux. Au dix-neuvième siècle, les photographes de Venise tenaient compte de la sensibilité des visiteurs quant au caractère romantique et gothique des scènes qu'ils photographiaient, et les touristes pouvaient, quant à eux, choisir les images particulières qu'ils

désiraient inclure dans les albums-souvenirs qu'ils achetaient. Ce type de collaboration entre producteur et consommateur se constate de façon plus tangible dans le cas de la carte postale sur laquelle le message personnel du touriste accompagne l'image commerciale. Ce projet se situe à mi-chemin entre une étude d'histoire de l'art sur la culture matérielle, comportant un examen attentif des conventions visuelles au premier plan, et une étude sociologique du tourisme, explorant les rituels associés au voyage. Le fait de s'imprégner de l'esprit d'une ville que l'on visite au moyen de textes et d'images a souvent été décrié comme une pratique défavorable au voyage. Par opposition, ce projet suggère qu'une telle expérience constitue une partie intégrante du voyage, et ce, particulièrement à Venise, une ville qui à la faveur de ses représentations dans l'art et la littérature a tenu une place particulière dans l'esprit des visiteurs pendant des siècles.

### Acknowledgements

If, as Tennyson writes, “I am a part of all that I have met,”<sup>1</sup> the ideas developed here are influenced by all the teachers I have been fortunate to know in my life, from my parents, who instilled in me a love of literature, art, and travel, to my professors at Dawson College and in the Departments of English and Art History at McGill University. Given the fact that I began my formal schooling at Souvenir Elementary School, it seems rather appropriate that I am bookending it with a project on souvenirs. Professor Vanhaelen and Professor Wilson, co-supervisors of this dissertation, provided judicious comments on each draft of these chapters. I greatly appreciate their willingness to take on a topic that spanned three centuries and the time they devoted to reading and thinking about my work. My thanks as well to Professor Hunter, with whom I took an independent study course related to my interest in souvenir imagery, and to Professor Henry who, as second reader of the dissertation, offered pertinent suggestions. Colleagues at Dawson College also provided thoughtful feedback, as did family and friends whose interest in the topic spurred me on and who read the manuscript as it travelled over the years to reach this point. I am also very appreciative of the engaging questions and interest of the defense committee: my thanks to Professor Sloan, Professor Gibian, Professor Hilsdale, Professor Henry, and Professor Vanhaelen for such a memorable day. This dissertation is dedicated to my family for more than words can say and with infinite thanks for taking care of all that needed to be done so I could have the luxury of time to finish this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Tennyson, “Ulysses” (1842), in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 2 (New York: Norton, 1993), 1067-1069.

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- C.9b *Ponte dei sospiri*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-133.

## Introduction

I am in the curious position, for a foreigner visiting the Venetian lagoon, of having seen Venice before having seen images of Venice. My interest in the way local Venetians have represented their city in souvenir images has developed over the years during trips to visit family in the Veneto. Venice was reproduced for tourists arguably more than any other city of art and culture in Europe. In the second half of the eighteenth century, during the peak of what was known as the Grand Tour, most British and North American tourists arriving in Venice had already seen the city in *vedute*, or view paintings, painted in Venice and displayed in galleries in England, or in books that reproduced the engravings based on those *vedute*.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century, Venice became a centre of commercial souvenir photography at the same time as travel to the Continent was becoming more accessible to the middle classes.<sup>3</sup> Souvenir photographs, albums featuring key sites, and, later, postcards, were purchased in great numbers by tourists visiting the city and displayed in parlours back home, thus creating a pre-memory in those who had yet to visit. As the American novelist Henry James wrote in *Italian Hours* (1907), his collection of travel writing, “Venice has been painted and described many thousands of times, and of all the cities of the world is the easiest to visit without going there.”<sup>4</sup> This dissertation is the first to study three hundred years of Venetians producing souvenir images of their city for tourists.

I begin with a study of the view paintings and engravings of Venice produced in the eighteenth century, and then turn to nineteenth-century commercial photographs of the city and twentieth-century

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice* (London: Royal Collections, 2005), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Paolo Costantini, “Carlo Naya,” in *Venezia nella fotografia dell'Ottocento*, ed. Italo Zannier (Venezia: Böhm/Arsenale, 1986), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Henry James, *Italian Hours* (London: Penguin, 1907), 7. James’ piece on Venice was first published in *Century Magazine* (November 1882, 2-23).

postcards, concluding the project with a consideration of a company in present-day Venice that is continuing the tradition of producing commercial souvenir images for visitors. In the 1720s, Giovanni Canal, known as Canaletto, began painting Venice for well-heeled visitors, as did Francesco Guardi in the latter half of the century.<sup>5</sup> Canaletto's paintings, especially, were so popular that his patron, Joseph Smith, the British Consul to Venice, published a book of printed images of them.<sup>6</sup> These were reproductions of the engravings Antonio Visentini had made of Canaletto's *vedute*. Smith's palace on the Grand Canal featured a gallery displaying Canaletto's paintings and was open to well-connected visitors by invitation.<sup>7</sup> In the nineteenth century, Carlo Ponti, Carlo Naya, and Tomaso Filippi photographed the city for tourists, selling the souvenir images in their shops as single photographs and in albums.<sup>8</sup> Many of these photographs were then used in colour and black-and-white postcards in the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

The way these souvenir images of the city were presented both in Venice and in the tourist's social circles back home created the conditions for tourists to become, increasingly, tourists of images and not only tourists of the actual city. Significantly, travel writing on Venice is a trove of rich evidence on how tourists conceived of themselves and the souvenir images produced for them. Visitors wrote about their experience of seeing the city after having seen reproductions of the city, and it is their voices that are given prominence in this study. For example, the British writer, historian, and art patron Hester Piozzi, a prolific chronicler of Grand Tourist life, writes in her 1789 memoir of first entering the Piazza San Marco, whose "appearance [...] revived all the ideas inspired by Canaletti, those especially which one sees at the Queen of England's house."<sup>10</sup> Foreigners began looking at

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<sup>5</sup> Christopher Baker, *Canaletto* (London: Phaidon, 1994), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Frances Vivian, *Il console Smith: mercante e collezionista* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1971), 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Bomberg, *Canaletto's Etchings: Revised and Enlarged Edition of the Catalogue Raisonné* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy, 1992), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Italo Zannier, *Venezia nella fotografia dell'Ottocento* (Venezia: Böhm/Arsenale, 1986), 17.

<sup>9</sup> In order to determine this, I have compared postcards in antiquarian shops in Venice with the photographs in the Archivio Filippi.

<sup>10</sup> Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany*, vol. 1 (London: Strahan, 1789), 77. In 1762, King George III purchased a large part of Smith's collection of

paintings, prints, and photographs of Venice, and at Venice as framed through these images. These views were especially prized because the city's own residents were producing them, lending the representation greater authority as an image that captured the city.<sup>11</sup>

Viewers toured the images as armchair tourists, as well as during and after their travels, and the places and perspectives depicted in those images also toured or travelled, so to speak, over the centuries from one medium to another. The space of the Piazza San Marco, for example, moved from a painting, to a photograph, to a postcard. Three examples of the Piazza illustrate well the long history of the views I am investigating. In 1730, Canaletto paints the Piazza San Marco looking out towards the Basilica di San Marco, peopling the square with groups of local residents in conversation and depicting market stalls in front of the basilica (fig. 1.1). The same view of the square becomes a popular souvenir photograph in the following century (fig. 2.1), as do images of the square featuring tourists, as in Filippi's 1895 photograph of the façade of the basilica with a view of the clock tower (fig. 2.26). The emphasis on providing tourists with souvenirs of both the city and of their own tourist activities continues in early twentieth-century postcards of the Piazza, as in a postcard of a view of the Palazzo Ducale seen from the Piazzetta, the female figure's white dress and red umbrella identifying her as the central figure strolling through and observing the architecture (fig. 4.3).

My goal in embarking on this project was to consider ways in which these visual representations of the city, intended for foreign visitors and which, at various times, included depictions of Venetians and tourists, changed over time and may have participated in shaping the spaces of tourism, tourists' conceptions of themselves as tourists, and notions of the city's residents.

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Canaletto paintings, and as Clayton writes, "many of Smith's paintings were used to furnish the newly purchased Buckingham House (later Palace)" (16).

<sup>11</sup> Nineteenth-century guidebooks to the city, such as *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Murray, 1873), highlight that the local photographers, whose shops were in and around the Piazza San Marco, sold the best photographs (376).

What I discovered during my research was that there are both moments of shift and elements of continuity in the way Venice is presented. Pictorial representations of Venice, acting as lodestones, draw tourists to particular spots, and some of these locations remain consistent over the centuries, such as the Piazza San Marco, Grand Canal, and Rialto Bridge, while others, such as the Bridge of Sighs and the city's peripheral spaces, as in bridges and canals that are not part of the standard tourist routes through the city, emerge as noteworthy at particular times because of historically-specific shifts in aesthetics and notions of tourism, among other factors. What also became evident during my research was that visitors had a hand in shaping the souvenir views aimed at them, and corresponding ideas about tourist and local identities, in both subtle and quite tangible ways.

In recent scholarship, souvenir images are acknowledged as powerfully shaping viewers' perceptions. For example, Jonathan Long observes that "the postcard establishes a hierarchy of space by excluding from representation those places that are not worthy of being seen and decreeing in advance how those spaces that are represented are to be both seen and remembered."<sup>12</sup> This understanding of the work that souvenir images do can certainly apply to all the representations of Venice studied here, and I follow this approach in considering effects of souvenir images on the viewer. Yet, as I also argue, the particular aesthetic and literary interests of the dominant tourist groups also affect how the spaces represented are seen and remembered, as does the fact that visitors were, at times, actively engaged in the production of the souvenir, as in the case of the personalized commercial souvenir albums available in Venetian photographers' shops in the nineteenth century. The tourist is not always a passive viewing subject but rather, to varying degrees depending on the moment and medium, also engaged in the complex process of constructing the "hierarchy of spaces," to borrow Long's phrasing, that the souvenir images determine.

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<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Long, "W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist" in *The Undiscover'd Country: W.G. Sebald and the Poetics of Travel*, ed. Markus Zisselsberger (Rochester: Camden, 2010), 79.

One longstanding convention in travel writing on Venice is to assert that words are an inadequate tool to capture the city. Charles Dickens, for example, writes of Venice in 1844 “that the reality itself [is] beyond all pen or pencil,” adding that “I never saw the thing before that I should be afraid to describe. But, to tell what Venice is, I feel to be an impossibility.”<sup>13</sup> The trope that Venice is impossible to record in words may be the reason the city has been reproduced so extensively in images. While foreigners have written on Venice, locals have depicted the city for foreigners, and this is a subject that has not yet been broached in art historical work on Venice or in sociological studies of travel. My work can be positioned at the intersection of an art historical attention to material culture, with its corresponding analysis of the visual conventions in the popular images, and the interest prevalent in leisure studies on considering ways in which tourists engage in what can be considered the rituals associated with travel.<sup>14</sup>

My methodological approach in each chapter also focuses on working with primary texts as much as possible, specifically memoirs written by Venetians and visitors, travel writing, guidebooks, and literature set in or inspired by Venice. In addition, I also had the great pleasure to discover that the photographer Filippi’s youngest daughter kept all her father’s photographs and documents. This trove of over 7,000 negatives, 20,000 photographs, 3,000 postcards, and numerous boxes of documents and journals is now housed in the last place she lived in Venice, the Casa di Riposo dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo, one of the city’s residences for the elderly, and is preserved by the Ufficio Conservatori delle Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione di Venezia (IRE), the organization’s archival office.<sup>15</sup> Along with these primary documents, I also returned often to particular theoretical ideas associated with

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed Jenny Hartley (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 149.

<sup>14</sup> For examples of the approach taken in leisure studies work on tourism, see John Urry and Jonas Larsen’s *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011), 116, as well as Dean MacCannell’s *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976), and, specifically on Venice, Garry Marvin and Robert C. Davis’ *Venice, The Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World’s Most Visited City* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> My thanks to Dr. Paola Margarito, of the Marciana Library, and Dr. Agata Brusegan, of the IRE Archive, for their assistance and for the information provided during my visits.

tourism, such as Judith Adler's understanding of travel as a "performed art,"<sup>16</sup> Susan Sontag on the camera's ability to make "everyone a tourist in someone else's reality and eventually in one's own,"<sup>17</sup> as well as John Urry's concept of the tourist gaze.<sup>18</sup> Long's emphasis on postcards forming social networks also influenced my thinking,<sup>19</sup> as did conceptions of space and place, especially the notion of an imaginative geography in Derek Gregory's work on travel writing.<sup>20</sup> Before all this, though, reading Susan Stewart's *On Longing* (1992) reinforced my interest in the ways in which the mass-produced souvenir is rendered personal once it is purchased. As Stewart argues, a souvenir requires the participation of the purchaser and, once purchased and taken home or mailed away, keeps its "material relation" to its original location.<sup>21</sup> Keeping these ideas in mind, I began to consider more closely how tourists interacted with the souvenirs they purchased.

Eighteenth-century view paintings have been studied for their formal qualities<sup>22</sup> and nineteenth-century photographs as documents of the city's past,<sup>23</sup> but neither has been approached primarily as the souvenirs that they certainly were produced to be.<sup>24</sup> Postcards of Venice have received minimal scholarly attention until this project<sup>25</sup>, although postcards of other cities have

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<sup>16</sup> Judith Adler, "Travel as Performed Art," *The American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1989): 1368.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Anchor: New York, 1990), 57.

<sup>18</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Long, "W.B. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist," 79.

<sup>20</sup> Derek Gregory, "Scripting Egypt," in *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 1999), 147, and Gregory in "Social Theory and Human Geography," in *Human Geography: Society, Space, and Social Science* (1994).

<sup>21</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke UP, 1992), 138 and 135.

<sup>22</sup> For a formalist analysis of eighteenth-century view paintings, see, among others, Michael Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1980) and Diane De Grazia and Eric Garberson's catalogue of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Italian painting in the National Gallery in Washington (New York: Oxford, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Italo Zannier, *Venezia: Archivio Naya* (Venezia: Böhm, 1981).

<sup>24</sup> Scholarship on the Grand Tour, such as Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini's *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tate, 1996), does present the view paintings as souvenirs but without a close reading of how the formal conventions in the images shaped tourist perceptions.

<sup>25</sup> In *Venice, The Tourist Maze*, Davis and Marvin discuss postcards in their chapter on souvenirs in which they write "one would never want to underestimate" the "bad taste" (277) of tourists. As noted above, their project takes a sociological approach to tourism in Venice. They do analyze some of the visual conventions in the postcards, but what they determine about the postcards, specifically that these ushered in images of tourists feeding pigeons and moonlit scenes (271-273), in fact begins with the souvenir photographs on which the postcards were based.



recently been studied.<sup>26</sup> In light of the long history of souvenir views undertaken here, I offer a detailed survey of both the history of and scholarship on view paintings, commercial souvenir photographs, and postcards in the introductory section of each corresponding chapter. But, it is important to highlight, by way of introduction, that in both travel writing and scholarly work, images sold as souvenirs were, for a long portion of their history, seen as less than art. James, in *Italian Hours*, writes critically about all that is sold in the Piazza San Marco, such as “bead bracelets and ‘panoramas,’” asserting that these souvenirs turn the elegant Piazza into a commercial “treadmill.”<sup>27</sup> Michael Levey, in his seminal work on eighteenth-century Venetian paintings, sees *vedute* as decorative filler. Levey argues that Venice’s political and social decline created “a fundamental need [...] for pictures removed from reality” and asserts that Canaletto and Guardi “represented, they did not need to comment.”<sup>28</sup> However, Canaletto’s paintings, while evoking a serene cityscape, are very much engaged in the details of daily life, as I will show. Moreover, often an artwork’s apparent uselessness is its own politically useful tool, allowing it to subtly criticize the status quo, which is the role that Guardi’s paintings, albeit perhaps unintentionally, can be understood to be taking on.

Echoing James and Levey’s stance on souvenir images, James Buzard, in his study of the visual culture associated with nineteenth-century tourism in Europe, suggests that the collecting of souvenir images diminished the experience of visiting a foreign city by prompting the tourist to see the actual site as “a painted surface.”<sup>29</sup> In his work on the various motifs, both literary and visual, associated with Venice, Tony Tanner also sees pictures as “empty,” arguing that both Romantic poems and souvenir images “dematerialize” and “dehistoricize and un-people it [so that] ‘Venice’ has been purveyed by thousands of empty texts and pictures from the end of the eighteenth century to the

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<sup>26</sup> See Nancy Steiber, “Postcards and the Invention of Old Amsterdam Around 1900” in *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*, eds. David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 12 and 96.

<sup>29</sup> James Buzard, “A Continent of Pictures: Reflections on the ‘Europe’ of Nineteenth-Century Tourists,” *PMLA* 108 (1993): 34.

present day.”<sup>30</sup> In contrast, John Eglin, in his work on the myths associated with Venice in British tourist culture of the eighteenth century, has noted that while it is “reasonable to see the *vedute* primarily as tour souvenirs” since they were in the service of promoting nostalgia, “they still have ideological significance.”<sup>31</sup> Eglin’s view is rarer, and thus images of Venice have not been analyzed for what insights they can bring to our existing knowledge of interactions between locals and tourists, of commercial decisions to serve particular interests, and of shifts in perceptions of Venice, changes in modes of looking, and shifts in popular tourist spaces, to mention only a few possibilities explored in depth in this project.

Depictions of Venice’s Piazza, bridges, and canals predate eighteenth-century tourism.<sup>32</sup> Five of the celebrated paintings on the stories of the True Cross by Gentile Bellini, Lazzaro Bastiani, Vittore Carpaccio, and Giovanni Mansueti are set in Venice itself, providing us with details about Renaissance Venice.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, even though we are attune to the fact that paintings, photographs, and postcards are not documents, art does often operate as information.<sup>34</sup> Bellini’s *Procession in Piazza San Marco* (1496), commissioned for the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista and, since the early nineteenth century, on display at the Accademia museum, provides tourists with the chance to, in the words of the *Eyewitness Travel Guide to Venice*, “compare the square with how it looks today.”<sup>35</sup>

Because of changing markets and forms of patronage, as well as increased tourism on the part of Northern Europeans, among other factors, artists began creating paintings in which views of Venice

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<sup>30</sup> Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992), 20.

<sup>31</sup> John Eglin, *Venice Transfigured: The Myth of Venice in British Culture, 1660-1797* (London: Palgrave, 2001), 124.

<sup>32</sup> For more on printed imagery of Venice produced before the eighteenth century, see Bronwen Wilson’s *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> The five paintings are Bastiani’s *The Relic of the Holy Cross is Offered to the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista* (1494), Mansueti’s *Miracle of the Cross at San Lio* (1494), Bellini’s *Procession in Piazza San Marco* (1496), Carpaccio’s *Miracle of the Cross at Rialto* (1496), which provides a view of the wooden Rialto Bridge before its collapse in 1524, and Bellini’s *Miracle of the Cross at San Lorenzo* (1500).

<sup>34</sup> In “Art as Information,” Anna Ursyn points out that the eighteenth-century view paintings of Warsaw, Poland painted by Canaletto’s nephew, Bernardo Bellotto, “due to his accuracy and careful attention to relevant details [...] furnished visual evidence” that helped architects restore the city after World War II (*Leonardo*, vol. 35, no. 4 (August 2002): 446).

<sup>35</sup> Brenda Birmingham, *Eyewitness Travel Guide to Venice and the Veneto* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2010), 133

were the subject and not the backdrop. The genre of the *vedute* began in Venice in the early 1700s with Luca Carlevaris, who, inspired by Dutch landscape painters, created large-scale ceremonial views of Venice, and reached its peak most famously with Canaletto, whose view paintings were the first to be created specifically for tourists.<sup>36</sup> Canaletto painted his views of Venice, in which the city is presented as a luminous stage set, for wealthy expatriates and visitors, which explains why Venetian museums have so few of his works. Canaletto's Venice can be seen more when travelling elsewhere than when in Venice. Nineteenth-century photographs of Venice were similarly created for tourists. Anticipating postcards, they acted as inexpensive, portable souvenirs. The theme of timelessness is one that certain types of nineteenth-century photographs deliberately evoke, along with other visual tropes related to the continued popularity of Gothic and Romantic literature among late nineteenth-century travellers.

Spanning many centuries, this thesis, with its chronological structure, provides the opportunity to study the possible reasons for shifts in how the city has presented itself over time. The art historian Mark Miller Graham has asserted that “synchronic units can provide more meaningfully articulated histories than can our fixation on linear sequence [which nevertheless] remains the crucial construct that makes the teleological narratives of style seem ‘natural.’”<sup>37</sup> However, we can engage in a diachronic study without pretending such a study is natural: both synchronic and diachronic approaches create their own narratives about art and historical moments.

Eighteenth-century Venetians themselves had something to say about how we perceive history. The architectural theorist Carlo Lodoli believed that history is not linear but rather develops without continuity and through a series of *caesuras* and breaks.<sup>38</sup> Lodoli's ideas, as recorded by his

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<sup>36</sup> William Barcham, “Townscapes and Landscapes” in *The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1994), 93.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Miller Graham, “The Future of Art History and the Undoing of the Survey,” *Art Journal*, vol. 54, no.3 (Fall 1995): 33.

<sup>38</sup> Alina Payne, “Architectural Criticism, Science, and Visual Eloquence: Teofilo Gallaccini in Seventeenth-Century Siena,” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 58, no.2 (June 1999): 150.

contemporary Francesco Algarotti, intrigued Smith and other members of his social circle.

Architectural historian Alina Payne asks, in her analysis of Lodoli's contributions to architectural theory, if Lodoli's and the later modernist view of history as a series of disconnected ruptures is correct or if there are links between these ruptures. She suggests that the scholarly tendency to focus on one historical moment has "led us to neglect the interstices, the very sites where transition and transformation in [a] discourse took place."<sup>39</sup>

In the history of souvenir views of Venice created by locals for tourists, this discourse must take into account two shifts in the way in which Venice was represented, specifically the move from painted views to photographed views and then the proliferation of postcard views. These changes, along with a host of other historically-specific factors, brought about transitions in both modes of looking at and moving through a tourist space, as well as in the tourists' level of engagement in the production of these souvenirs. Only a diachronic study can support the analysis of two major changes in the history of souvenir views of Venice. These will be studied not as the natural development of what came before but as moments of transition in pictorial representations of the city's spaces. At the same time, artists and photographers did not alter greatly how central spaces in the city were framed or the points of view used, and thus the shifts also contribute to a history of souvenir images of Venice in which there is a significant degree of continuity.

Although this dissertation is organized chronologically, the chapters are also organized with attention to particular elements that recur in the images and the ways in which tourists engaged with these views of the city. Specifically, the chapters focus on the following: the spaces featured in the images, such as the Piazza San Marco, the Grand Canal, and others that emerge as significant at particular moments; the figures in the images, often those of locals and tourists; the circuits through

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the city evoked in collections of images bound together; and tourist spaces, which is to say spaces which brought together foreign visitors.

These tourist spaces were Smith's palace in the eighteenth century, nineteenth-century shops devoted to selling photographs of Venice, such as Filippi's in the Piazza San Marco, and, in the twentieth century, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, Venice's post office, in which tourists dipped their nibs in the provided ink and wrote postcards home. The souvenir views prompt particular spaces in the city to be considered especially noteworthy by tourists; they participate in structuring the tourist's movements in the city and their understanding of the rituals associated with being a tourist in Venice; and they also foster social spaces of interaction among tourists and local residents, and, in the case of postcards, networks of senders and recipients.

In Chapter One, I argue that eighteenth-century view paintings, by virtue of their repetition, solidified the most salient points of interest for foreigners, created tourist desire for an idealized Venice, and, through their use of perspective, also instructed tourists on how to look at Venice. The *vedute* tended to endorse central spaces over peripheral ones and thus had some degree of control over what tourists focused on, how they moved from one site to another, and what and how they remembered. I also contextualize the view paintings by considering them alongside handwritten texts displayed in the Piazza San Marco that engaged with the social and political realities in the decades before the fall of the Venetian Republic. In a comparative analysis of Canaletto and Guardi's paintings of the Piazza San Marco, I argue that while they are often considered to be simply beautiful depictions of a serene city, the *vedute* are, in ways specific to the style of each painter, a comment on the political instability of *la Serenissima*, as the Venetian Republic was called. These paintings of the square, like the writings that circulated in it, emphasize the ability of a social space, such as Venice's singular Piazza, to become a multi-valent symbolic space through representation. I also devote

attention to the book *Le prospettive di Venezia* (1735), which features reproductions of Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings, and which I read as a visual guidebook.

In Chapter Two, I explore photographs of Venice produced by local photographers and, by extension, the fervour amongst tourists for what were perceived as realistic and authoritative souvenirs. After considering ways in which photographers established continuity with the view paintings of the previous century, I devote attention to Venice's status as a center of commercial souvenir photography. I then organize my analysis of the photographs that form the Archivio Filippi into a study of photographs of central spaces, followed by a special focus on the Bridge of Sighs and its presence in Romantic poetry, and then a consideration of the new tourist space of minor bridges and canals, which I refer to as peripheral spaces. I consider the particular representational strategies used in producing these different sets of images. As well, I devote attention to the figures in the photographs. Tourists were often depicted in these souvenir photographs. Local photographers not only catered to the desire of foreigners to see their likeness in souvenirs, but they also engaged in ethnographic projects, albeit in reverse. While foreigners surveyed locals in their travels and travel writing, the Venetian photographers trained their eye on foreigners and presented tourists, and their rituals, as a recurring type in the souvenir images.

In Chapter Three, I study a representative commercial souvenir album in order to consider, as in the Visentini engravings of the previous century, how souvenir images work differently when presented in serial form. I compare the album to the book Smith published of Visentini's engravings, both of which encourage the viewer to have an embodied relationship to the images, and I call attention to how the nineteenth-century album also functions as a visual guidebook, in this case with the figures of tourists further framing viewers' conceptions of themselves. Such albums are useful in that they, like guidebooks, help us suggest how tourists navigated the city or, in other words, how the experience of the city was organized, in miniature, for them. Tourists then used this predetermined

division of space when exploring the actual city; thus, photography, along with guidebooks and literature, scripted their experience, as did painted views a century before. However, the tourist also participated in the creation of these souvenir views. In the case of single photographs, tourists' sensibilities, as formed by Gothic and Romantic literature, prompted the particular aesthetics photographers cultivated in their images. In the case of the commercial albums, the tourist participation in the creation of the souvenir is more tangible since tourists were invited to choose photographs for their albums from a selection in the photographers' shops.

Chapter Four engages in an analysis of postcards of Venice. Many of these postcards, printed by the Scrocchi company based in Milan, used the photographs of the city taken by Naya and Filippi as source material. I consider various stylistic elements, such as the use of deliberately non-realistic colour in many of the postcards, and the recurring figure of the tourist. I also devote attention to the early anxieties associated with such an open form of communication, as well as to how the medium altered the tourist's interactions in the city. As the new century began, tourists who would once spend a week in Venice, borrowing books, conversing with photographers, waiting for albums to be bound, were now skimming Venice in three days or less with their ubiquitous Kodak cameras in hand.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, the culture of purchasing souvenirs changed from relatively prolonged interactions with photographers to a brief exchange at these same shops or with a street vendor in which a few coins were given in exchange for a collection of postcards. Distanced from the production of the souvenir, tourists may have echoed the sentiments of Walter Crane, the British illustrator, designer, and proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement, who, in his *Ideals of Art* (1905), lamented the fact that in industrialized cities "the shops are not workshops. The goods appear in the window as if by magic.

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<sup>40</sup> Barbara Levine and Kirsten Jensen, *Around the World: The Grand Tour in Photo Albums* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 25.

Their producers are hidden away in distant factories.”<sup>41</sup> In order to make a profit and compete with other souvenir shops, those owned by photographers developed the film taken by tourists with their portable Brownie cameras. The stores were also stocked with lace, glass, figurines, maps, and books, which, often, were sold at a higher price than the shops’ initial *raison d’être*, the photographs that, in many cases, were the souvenirs made by the photographers themselves.<sup>42</sup> As postcards grew in popularity, tourists continued to engage in a personal interaction as a result of the objects they purchased as souvenirs, but now the engagement was not a face-to-face one with the producer of the souvenir image but a remote one with the sender’s network of recipients. Nevertheless, more than with any of the previous souvenirs, the postcard as a souvenir object attests to the collaboration between the producer and consumer of the souvenir in light of the sender’s handwritten message on the postcard’s verso.

This dissertation on Venetian souvenir images is a contribution to the study of tourism and its material culture and the first account of Venice’s long history of representing itself in images intended for visitors, with a focus on the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. View paintings, photographs, and postcards of the city created a visual narrative for the tourist on how to experience Venice as a collection of views. These reproduced views had some degree of control over what tourists focused on, how they moved from one site to another, and how they anticipated and remembered their travels so that the images became spaces of tourism themselves that semaphored, or visually signalled, Venice. These same views were also influenced by the aesthetic sensibilities and interests of the tourists, as each chapter will argue. The behaviours and expectations promoted in and by souvenir imagery form part of what can be termed tourist culture, and culture, as this project emphasizes, is

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<sup>41</sup> Walter Crane, *Ideals in Art: Papers Theoretical, Practical, Critical* (London: George Bell, 1905). This is also cited in Gary Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in London* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 16.

<sup>42</sup> The items sold in Filippi’s shop and the services offered, such as film development, are listed in a folder marked ‘Corrispondenze Clienti 1896-1899’ in his personal and commercial archive of letters, notebooks, and photographs housed in Venice at the *Ufficio Conservatori delle Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione di Venezia* (IRE).



constantly in the process of being shaped, largely non-deliberately, by various agents.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, my work here also contributes to a reconsideration of the way tourist rituals are perceived. Scholarship on tourism, as noted above, often derides the tourist tendency to engage more with images and texts than with the city itself. Instead of criticizing this tendency, the following chapters, with each new form of souvenir imagery being studied, show that the mediated experience, in which images are often used as a way to enter into a relationship with the space being visited, *is* the authentic travel experience.

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<sup>43</sup> This idea about how culture is formed is also developed in Karin Becker, "Picturing Our Past: An Archive Constructs a National Culture," *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol.105 (Winter 1992): 16-17.

## Chapter One

### Eighteenth-Century Souvenirs: Paintings of the City

#### 1.1 Introduction

In 1730, Canaletto painted one of his many *vedute* of the Piazza San Marco as a clear, sunny square suggestive of order, balance, and harmony (fig. 1.1). The view is framed so that the arcaded facades of the Procuratie Vecchie and Nuove offer a pleasing symmetrical border for the basilica and its bell tower seen from the vantage point of a beholder looking out from a second floor window across the square from the basilica. The small figures gathered in groups conversing in the square function as spatial markers to highlight the grandeur of the architecture that surrounds them. These figures of local Venetians are presented as serene citizens enjoying their city's quintessential public space, the space most associated with civic pride and the Venetian Republic's long history. During the course of his career as a painter of souvenir views for foreigners from the 1720s to his death in 1768 at the age of 71, Canaletto depicted the Piazza from the exact same angle six other times, and from myriad other angles over forty times.<sup>44</sup> With only a few exceptions, the scene is always bright, and the figures are clearly delineated. Fifty years later, in 1780, Francesco Guardi depicted the square from the same angle, looking out towards the basilica (fig. 1.2). The view is framed in the same way, the beholder is also positioned looking out from a window across the square, and the figures are both spatial markers and depicted in conversation. Here, though, the space is encroached by shadows, with more than half the Venetians painted in semi-darkness. The figures, too, have their capes, like the

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<sup>44</sup> Information on Canaletto's age at his death is taken from Baker, *Canaletto*, 23. The information on the number of times Canaletto painted the perspective of the Piazza San Marco described above and the Piazza itself is gleaned from my study of the various catalogues of Canaletto's existing paintings.

canopied stalls near the basilica, caught up in an implied wind, in contrast to the still capes and canopies in Canaletto's painting. In Guardi's painting, order, balance, and harmony are replaced by an unstable atmosphere that subsumes the blurred figures. Guardi also depicted the Piazza San Marco from various angles about forty times in his career, from the 1760s until his death in 1793 at the age of 80, with each canvas presenting a more shadowy version of the square as the century, and the Republic, moved closer to its end.<sup>45</sup>

One could argue that Canaletto and Guardi simply painted in two different styles, and that nothing more should be made of the difference. But, importantly, some of Canaletto's earlier paintings, influenced by Luca Carlevaris' cityscapes of Venice, incorporated more "menacing skies," as one art historian has described them.<sup>46</sup> Canaletto's shift to the pleasing blue skies and sunlit views for which he is known were more in keeping, it seems, with the neoclassical tastes of his largely British art patrons and dealers. Guardi appealed to a different set of collectors, notably other Italians, such as the cardinal Giacomo Della Lena and the priest Giovanni Vianelli.<sup>47</sup> Both these intellectuals reacted against neoclassicism and thus were drawn to Guardi's style. John Strange, a British resident of Venice in the 1770s, also patronized Guardi, in contrast to most of Strange's compatriots who preferred Canaletto's style. In a catalogue prepared for the sale of his paintings in 1789, Strange writes of Guardi's "particular manner, which is spirited and quite his own."<sup>48</sup> As the art historian Francis Haskell has described it, these collectors moved "on the fringes of scholarship."<sup>49</sup> By the mid eighteenth century, Venice experienced a social and economic shift from being the dominant source of goods for the Venetian Republic's international markets to becoming a city that produced luxury items aimed primarily at a local market of wealthy British and American ex-patriates living in

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<sup>45</sup> Antonio Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa* (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 1975).

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Baker, *Canaletto* (London: Phaidon, 1994), 8.

<sup>47</sup> As well, some of his late works, depicting the smaller islands that surround Venice, may have been painted for local Venetians rather than for tourists. For more on this, see Haskell, "Francesco Guardi as *Vedutista*," 274, cited below).

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Roderick Conway Morris, "Venice through an Eccentric's Eyes," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Francis Haskell, "Francesco Guardi as *Vedutista* and Some of his Patrons," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 (July-Dec. 1960): 263.

Venice.<sup>50</sup> In patronizing Guardi, art collectors, consciously or not, promoted *vedute* that were, stylistically, in contrast to the tendency to cater to the dominant aesthetic interests of British tourists visiting Venice.

Indeed, in a nineteenth-century review of Venetian view paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy, an anonymous London art critic writing in *The Athenaeum* asserts that “in the last century [...] no Englishman of wealth considered his Venetian tour complete until he had secured a Canaletto [...], but nobody in this country heard of Guardi.”<sup>51</sup> In his study of the 200 surviving Guardi paintings, Haskell argues that “a patron who proposed to buy a work by Guardi had to turn against the fashion.”<sup>52</sup> The Italian collector Della Lena, for example, favoured art that was ambiguous, “*indiretto e indeterminato*” as he phrased it.<sup>53</sup> Canaletto, who trained as a painter of theatre scenery, was known for ‘exact’ views, which nevertheless toyed with perspective so as to include as many distinctive elements of the Venetian topography as possible, as well as *capricci*, fantastical views of Venice that conflated two parts of the city together or views set in an imagined landscape with fanciful architecture. While Canaletto’s paintings were valued by eighteenth-century patrons who sought an ostensibly objective document of their travels, Guardi’s paintings appealed to patrons who wanted an impression of a scene. In this chapter, I focus not only on how the paintings function but also on what their distinctive styles might suggest because it was their stylistic difference that was often cited in eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century texts on Venetian art and by Grand Tourists when they included references to the paintings in their travel chronicles.

The difference between Canaletto’s clear, linear style and Guardi’s frenetic, painterly brushwork has not been analyzed with an eye to the political and social context of the period. I argue

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<sup>50</sup> Paolo Polledri, “Urbanism and Economics: Industrial Activities in Eighteenth-Century Venice,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 41, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 15.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous, “Review of the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition,” *The Athenaeum* (February 2, 1884): 156.

<sup>52</sup> Haskell, “Francesco Guardi as *Vedutista*,” 257. Two hundred paintings by Guardi have survived of his output of more than a thousand.

<sup>53</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 262. For more on John Strange’s patronage of Guardi see Francis Haskell’s *Patrons and Painters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). In “Guardi and the English Tourist” (*Burlington Magazine*, vol. 138, Jan. 1996), Francis Russell considers Brook Bridges’ and Lord Brudenell’s influence on Guardi’s success.

in this chapter that Guardi's view paintings were in part a response to anxieties developing in the middle of the eighteenth century as a result of changes in Venice's economic fortunes and a growing sense that the Republic could no longer retain its autonomy. While Canaletto's *vedute* celebrate and attempt to preserve the glory of the Venetian Republic, Guardi's works can be seen as a critique of attempts to gloss over the Republic's decline and as a patriotic gesture asserting Venice's local identity in contrast to the aesthetic preferences of foreign patrons and tourists. By subtly engaging with the political, the paintings call attention to the fact that souvenir images created by locals for tourists are not trifles: they are in dialogue with the tastes of tourists and patrons as well as with the social and political climate in which they were produced.

In order to contextualize the view paintings, this chapter begins with a survey of the economic changes and political tensions in eighteenth-century Venice, followed by an overview of the history of the genre of view painting in Venice and a survey of the scholarship on the *vedutisti*. The brushwork, perspectives, depiction of figures, and other details in the Venetian *vedute* have rarely been studied for how local concerns might reverberate in them or as elements that make claims about Venice for foreign visitors. In the history of scholarship on the view paintings, there exists a long tradition, still very much in place, that stylistic details are observed, not analyzed.

Following these introductory points, I focus on how patrons and tourists engaged with the view paintings both before and during their stay in Venice. The city was an important stop on the Grand Tour.<sup>54</sup> The tour, as Eglin has noted, was a "process of elite socialization" since it "secured [the traveller's] status not only at home but as a member of an international and cosmopolitan elite."<sup>55</sup> One

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<sup>54</sup> The term "Grand Tour" was coined by Richard Lassels in *The Voyage of Italy* (1670). The tour was intended as an edifying visit to the continent for well-heeled North American and British travellers, lasting many months or a few weeks, typically with stops to see key sights of artistic and architectural interest in France, Germany, Italy, and Greece, with some travellers continuing as far as Egypt and the Holy Land. The tour, often chaperoned by a tutor, was considered the cap to a young man's university studies and a finishing touch on the moulding of a cultivated woman before marriage. For more on the history of the Grand Tour, see Chloe Chard's *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and Jeremy Black's *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>55</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 73.

of the characteristic aspects of the tour was what Christopher Baker has described as “refined souvenir hunting.”<sup>56</sup> A through line in this dissertation is that consumers of souvenir views are not passive recipients but rather engaged, actively or through the influence of the particular tastes of their social group, in the production of the souvenir imagery aimed at them. This dynamic begins with the numerous souvenir views available for purchase in the eighteenth century, view paintings that patrons and agents often had a hand in shaping. In Venice, these paintings were produced as engravings for a larger tourist population or often copied by other artists and sold in picture shops.<sup>57</sup> Canaletto’s patron and agent Joseph Smith influenced the size of Canaletto’s paintings as well as his style.<sup>58</sup> The paintings became smaller, more portable for tourists packing for the return home, and Canaletto moved away from his early agitated brushwork towards the smooth lines, clear details, and bright light favoured by British and American clients steeped in neoclassicism.

Smith, as British Consul to Venice, lived in the Palazzo Balbi on the Grand Canal and invited visitors to see Canaletto’s paintings in the palace’s viewing gallery.<sup>59</sup> Thus, Smith’s gallery became a key tourist space in Venice, a space for tourists to convene and associate in addition to the tourist sites and souvenir picture shops of the city. In 1762, King George III purchased Smith’s collection of view paintings for the royal library.<sup>60</sup> Until his death in Venice in 1770, Smith continued to collect *vedute*, making them accessible to his compatriots who were visiting Venice.<sup>61</sup>

Visitors preparing for their Grand Tour in the eighteenth century were not seeing Venetian view paintings for the first time when in Venice. Instead, because the serial images lent themselves so well to the medium of engraving, “a connoisseur of even the most modest means,” as Martin Clayton

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<sup>56</sup> Baker, *Canaletto*, 11. The paintings are now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

<sup>57</sup> Filippo Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice: Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Susan Scott (London: Tauris Parke, 2002), 26.

<sup>58</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 118.

<sup>59</sup> The fact that British travellers visited Smith in Venice and viewed his private gallery is included in Baker, *Canaletto*, 14, as well as in Ruth Bromberg, *Canaletto’s Etchings: Revised and Enlarged Edition of the Catalogue Raisonné* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsky, 1993), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 15.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

writes, “could afford to assemble a sizeable collection of prints, housed in portfolios, on the pages of albums, or bound together in slim volumes.”<sup>62</sup> These prints, as well as the view paintings they saw in the homes of fellow Grand Tourists and the Smith trove once it was displayed in the galleries at Buckingham Palace<sup>63</sup>, shaped British tourists’ perception of Venice. For example, the English musicologist Charles Burney, in his 1771 account of his travels in *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, acknowledges that the *vedutisti* made art appear more real than life. He writes that tourists “develop such a romantic idea of Venice that the actual Venice does not respond to our expectations, especially after having examined the view paintings of Canaletto.”<sup>64</sup> Grand Tourists, being diligent chroniclers, have left a wealth of impressions of their travels. It is these discourses on travel that serve as evidence of the effect of the view paintings. The painted views became the lens through which the actual Venice was seen and remembered and, in turn, the published travel narratives of Grand Tourists prompted armchair tourists, as they prepared or imagined their travels, to engage in the same way with the reproduced views. The actual city was compared to the reproduced view, with the souvenir images becoming the original and the city the copy that must measure up.

Following an analysis of how patrons and tourists engaged with the souvenir views, I turn more closely to the work of Canaletto and Guardi for a number of reasons. They were the most prolific of the view painters, with many hundreds of paintings each; they were local Venetians representing their city for tourists; and they were the most referenced in the travel writing and chronicles of tourists. As well, their use of space in the view paintings is distinct from the organization of space in earlier view paintings and, perhaps because of this, they were the most imitated by other painters. Canaletto’s paintings were engraved and sold as prints and thus accessible to a wide tourist population. Most importantly, their views of Venice repeat the same perspectives and

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<sup>62</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 16.

<sup>63</sup> For more on the royal purchase of Smith’s collection, see the exhibition catalogue *A King’s Purchase: King George III and the Collection of Consul Smith* (London: Queen’s Gallery, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London: Becket, 1773), 146.

city spaces and thus construct a set of established and expected souvenir views available for tourists and resident foreigners.<sup>65</sup> As noted in a 1757 survey commissioned by the Venetian Republic on the various arts sold in the city's shops, picture shop owners often bought view paintings from "poor starving painters at a dastardly price then to sell them at a great markup."<sup>66</sup> Many of these view painters, catering to public demand, made painted copies of varying quality from the prints of Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings.<sup>67</sup> Canaletto and Guardi's perspectives dominated the market: their paintings were the most numerous, the most copied and popular, and thus the most viewed, factors that are essential when making claims about how Grand Tourists and patrons may have interpreted their very different styles.

View paintings of Venice, with few exceptions, focus on the city's central spaces: the Grand Canal, the Rialto Bridge, the Riva degli Schiavoni, and, most often, the Piazza San Marco.<sup>68</sup> It is the Piazza San Marco, the only square in Venice to be given the name Piazza, which is my focus, as introduced by the two paintings with which I began. I first establish that the Piazza San Marco was a physical and metaphorical lodestone in the political discourse published in the city during the period leading up to and after the fall of the Venetian Republic. The square was the key space in Venice associated with the political. Contrasting viewpoints were printed and posted on broadsheets in the

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<sup>65</sup> Other well-known Venetian *vedutisti* were not producing souvenir views *per se* or were not as prolific. Luca Carlevaris' celebrated 1701 book of engravings of Venice was certainly the inspiration for the collection of engravings made by Visentini of Canaletto's paintings in the 1730s, but Carlevaris' paintings were created as monumental commemorative souvenirs for ambassadors visiting Venice and thus fall outside the scope of this project. Bernardo Bellotto, Canaletto's nephew and assistant, moved to Poland to work as a view painter, and Michele Marieschi, also a contemporary, died young. A number of anonymous view painters also worked in Venice, such as the painter known as the Langmatt Master, as noted in a recently discovered 1757 report commissioned by the Venetian Republic on the subject.

<sup>66</sup> This citation, from the 1757 survey on the various arts sold in Venetian shops, is included in Pedrocco's *Visions of Venice*, 26. The original source is an article by Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, available at the Museo Correr in Venice: "I 'botteggeri da quadri' e i 'poveri pittori famelici': Il mercato dei quadri a Venezia nel settecento" in *Tra committenza e collezionismo: Studi sul mercato dell'arte nell'Italia settentrionale durante l'età moderna* (Vicenza: Terra Ferma, 2003), 143-166.

<sup>67</sup> Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 147.

<sup>68</sup> Notable exceptions include Canaletto's *The Stonemason's Yard* (1728), at the National Gallery in London, which depicts the Campo San Vidal in the San Marco *sestiere*, a square that is removed from the city's central tourist spaces, and Guardi's *Gondolas on the Lagoon* (1765), depicting a solitary gondolier surrounded by water with the Venetian shoreline in the distance, at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan. The Guardi, though, was cut from a larger of Guardi's canvases by the artist and art dealer Giuseppe Bertini (Morris, "Venice through an Eccentric's Eyes," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2012).



square, pamphleteers worked the arcaded walkway, and the space was also the setting of choice for allegorical political tracts.<sup>69</sup>

Figures of locals are plentiful in the view paintings. Devoting attention to the inclusion of these figures, I consider how the view paintings created a class-based narrative about public space. The poor are engaged in work and the upper classes in conversation. Unlike later souvenirs, namely photographs and postcards of the city, the view paintings tend not to include figures of tourists. Those purchasing the paintings or engravings were not seeing their own likeness but were rather observing the particularities of local life.

The final section of this chapter is devoted to a close analysis of the views Visentini engraved from Canaletto's paintings for *Le prospettive di Venezia*, a bound collection of printed views funded by Smith and published by the Pasquali publishing house in Venice with a first edition in 1735 and a longer second edition in 1742.<sup>70</sup> In addition to the way in which the book of engravings structured experiences with the city, I consider how the shift in medium, from painting to engraving, alters the context for the scene being depicted.

Since the view paintings were the product of local Venetians, these *vedute* were often politically engaged. In the late eighteenth century, political tracts allegorized aspects of the Piazza San Marco to celebrate or to lament the Republic's defeat and Napoleon's rule in Venice. For much of the century, view paintings and engravings were also creating a discourse about the city at a time when its future as an independent city-state was uncertain. In addition to this political element, souvenir view paintings of Venice solidified the most salient secular points of interest for foreigners and participated

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<sup>69</sup> As Catherine M. Sama emphasizes in her study of eighteenth-century Venice, the city "was the principal center of journalistic activity in all of Italy and ranked among the most important publishing centers in Europe" ("On Canvas and on the Page: Women Shaping Culture in Eighteenth-Century Venice" in *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, eds. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyn Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama (Redwood: Stanford University Press, 2009), 133). Casanova, too, makes this point succinctly when writing of his imprisonment in Venice. Allowed to request books, he provided the guards with a detailed list since "what books are not translated in Venice!" (*History of My Life*, vol. 4, trans. William Trask (New York: Harcourt, 1970), 230).

<sup>70</sup> When published, the collection of engravings was given the Latin title *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum*. I will discuss the history of publication in the final section of this chapter.

in creating tourist desire for an idealized Venice. Through their organization of space, depiction of central spaces over peripheral ones, and presentation of local life, the paintings instructed tourists on how to move through, look at, and conceive of Venice. Simultaneously, the foreigners themselves, such as Smith and his gallery of Venetian view paintings or Grand Tourists writing about the paintings in published accounts of their travels, contributed to the way the *vedutisti* depicted their city and to the way future tourists experienced both the city and its souvenir imagery.

### *1.1.1 Economic changes and political tensions in eighteenth-century Venice, and their relation to tourism*

The economic changes and political realities in eighteenth-century Venice that either affected tourism or were themselves somewhat affected by tourism are important to underscore. During the era of the Grand Tour, Venice was shifting from being a European and international economic power to a local producer of goods, with an economy that gradually became based on producing souvenir items for its cosmopolitan visitors. Venice attracted a great number of British tourists because of the English tradition of seeing parallels between England and Venice, specifically in light of Venice's independent status, its elected Council of Ten, and its resistance to the papacy.<sup>71</sup> By the mid eighteenth century, Venetian luxury goods such as mirrors, masks, painted views, and lace, which had been mainstays of artisanal production for centuries, were now being produced mainly for tourists. In the 1730s, Venice was still associated with its seventeenth-century role as a centre of large-scale industry, but by the middle of the century the penchant for luxury items resulted in a decrease in the production of wool, silk, and other traditional items.<sup>72</sup> As Paolo Polledri has shown through a study of

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<sup>71</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 3.

<sup>72</sup> For the decrease in wool production, see Polledri, cited below, and for the decrease in Venice's silk industry, see Marcello Della Valentina's "The Silk Industry in Venice: Guilds and Labour Relations in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in *At the Centre of the Old World*, ed. Paola Lanaro. (Toronto: Victoria UP, 2006).

tax records and guild rolls, Venice “was in the process of readapting from the role of a European economic power to that of a local centre.”<sup>73</sup> As a result of Venice’s strict control of various workshops, the city’s guilds lost lucrative contracts to their competitors on the *terra ferma*.<sup>74</sup> When the traditional workshops closed, moved to the mainland, or were replaced by a tourist-oriented shop, “the pattern of pedestrian traffic changed,” as Polledri states, “altering the functional aspect of an area.”<sup>75</sup> In the 1789 edition of her *Observations and Reflections*, Piozzi notes that “it was very petulantly and very spitefully said by Voltaire that Italy was no more than *la boutique*.”<sup>76</sup> Indeed, by using statistics compiled by Polledri that compare guild workers in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, one notices that the number of paper makers, crafts workers, leather workers, and, most significantly, service workers all rose dramatically as tourism increased.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the popularity of the Grand Tour throughout the century, a series of European conflicts resulted in a marked decrease in tourism at certain points. Once stability was restored, tourism increased, as did a more critical take on the Grand Tour, at least in England. Venice was not involved in the War of Austrian Succession between the Habsburgs and France during the 1740s. The city instead enjoyed a relatively peaceful and stable period, but travel to the city was nevertheless seen as dangerous. The number of tourists during the 1740s decreased enough to prompt Canaletto to leave Venice for London in order to paint his clients’ native topography.<sup>78</sup> Tourists returned to the city directly after the conflict, but despite the war’s end in 1748, Giacomo Casanova, writing his *History of My Life* in the 1790s, recalls the tension felt in Italy until the 1756 alliance between France and

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<sup>73</sup> Paolo Polledri, “Urbanism and Economics: Industrial Activities in Eighteenth-Century Venice,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 41, no. 3 (Spring 1988):15.

<sup>74</sup> A decrease in wool production also occurred in the 1600s, post-plague, as Brian Pullan has shown in “Wage Earners and the Venetian Economy, 1550-1630” in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Brian Pullan (London: Methuen, 1968), 146-174. Pullan notes that the guild’s rigid quality controls in Venice as well as the cheaper labour available in rural areas prompted the wool industry to shift its centre of production to the mainland. However, as Polledri emphasizes, the most dramatic decline in the wool industry occurred in the 1760s.

<sup>75</sup> Polledri, “Urbanism and Economics,” 19.

<sup>76</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 124. Piozzi’s line is also cited in Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Harper, 2001), 197.

<sup>77</sup> The statistics Polledri cites are for 1642 and for 1760. Polledri, “Urbanism and Economics,” 15.

<sup>78</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 15.

Austria. He writes that upon hearing of the treaty “the part of Europe which had the most reason to rejoice at it was Italy because she was suddenly delivered from the fear of becoming the unhappy theatre of war whenever the least difference should arise between the two courts.”<sup>79</sup> The rejoicing was short-lived since 1756 marked the beginning of the Seven Years War, which was a continuation of the previous political tension.<sup>80</sup> Venice remained on the sidelines, a sign of its decreased power on the political stage.<sup>81</sup> After the Seven Years War, which ended with England’s victory over France in 1763, the number of visitors to Venice increased.<sup>82</sup>

However, in England, the value of the Grand Tour came into question soon after the war. Linda Colley has argued that England’s “colossal new dimensions”<sup>83</sup> prompted a sense of insecurity about the most effective way to manage the empire, and Bruce Redford has suggested that perceived problems with the Grand Tour were highlighted as a result of this period of anxiety. A Socratic dialogue on “The Uses of Foreign Travel Considered as Part of an English Gentleman’s Education,” written by the British bishop Richard Hurd, begins by stating all the benefits of the Grand Tour, namely that it polishes the mind, offers “knowledge of the world,” develops the traveller into a connoisseur, and teaches the liberal arts *in situ*.<sup>84</sup> However, one of the text’s speakers then argues that “the tour of Europe is a paltry thing: a tame, uniform, unvaried prospect” that makes men ill-prepared to lead.<sup>85</sup> Despite criticism in England of the decadence and vice engendered by the famous tour of Europe, Grand Tourists, both men and, increasingly, women, continued to visit Venice in large

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<sup>79</sup> Casanova, *History of My Life*, 141.

<sup>80</sup> For more on the Seven Years War, see Daniel A. Baugh’s *The Global Seven Years War* (Toronto: Longman, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Sama notes in “On Canvas and on the Page” that Venice “experienced a period of peace during the eighteenth century [...]. As a result, there was little social unrest and living conditions in Venice compared favourably with [those in] the rest of Europe” (133).

<sup>82</sup> Francis Russell, “Guardi and the English Tourist,” *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 138, no. 1114 (January 1996): 10.

<sup>83</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 101.

<sup>84</sup> Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 41.

<sup>85</sup> Cited in Redford, “Venice and the Grand Tour,” 42.

numbers in the latter half of the century. The numerous picture shops that mushroomed in the city are evidence that prints and paintings were the most sought-after souvenirs.<sup>86</sup>

During the last decades of the eighteenth century, Venice experienced a period of political and social turmoil. The cities of Trieste and Fiume had developed ports that rivalled Venice's. As well, Lombardy, which was under Austrian rule, and Mantua were closing in on Venetian territory, causing the trade route along the Po River to become unstable.<sup>87</sup> William Wordsworth, in his early nineteenth-century poem "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic," eulogizes Venice by recalling the city's earlier power as "the safeguard of the West" and "the eldest child of liberty," and then turns to the city in the eighteenth century, when Venice saw "her glories fade" and "strength decay," before ending with the now well-known lines that "men are we, and must grieve when even the shade/ Of that which once was great has pass'd away."<sup>88</sup> Tourists in Venice also recorded their observations and experiences at the city's casino and at carnival festivities in language that suggests the Council of Ten cultivated distractions from what was an impending shift in its political fortunes. For example, during her visit in 1789, Piozzi describes the festive atmosphere and notes that "suspicion [is] concealed under the mask of gaiety."<sup>89</sup> Clearly, the Republic's declining economic, military, and political power in contrast to the *terra ferma*'s growing economic power, as well as the threat to Venice of France and Austria's political and military might, did not go unnoticed by foreigners in their reflections on Venice.

As a reaction against Venice's reputation as decadent and corrupt, the Council of Ten limited the independence of its citizens. Books by the Venetian poet Lorenzo da Ponte and the French philosophers Rousseau and Voltaire were burned. Political dissenters were hanged from the columns

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<sup>86</sup> Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy, 1700-1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London: Methuen, 1979), 37.

<sup>88</sup> William Wordsworth, "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic" in *William Wordsworth: The Major Works* (London: Oxford, 2000), 268.

<sup>89</sup> Piozzi, "Observations and Reflections," 162-163.

in the Piazzetta with signs around their necks that read ‘For treason.’<sup>90</sup> In response to Casanova’s claim that “nowhere are we more free than in Venice,” Voltaire is said to have quipped, “Yes, if you are a mute.”<sup>91</sup> Voltaire here participates in what is known as the anti-myth of Venice. He counters the myth that Venice was an island of freedom and liberty.<sup>92</sup>

An independent republic for over a thousand years, Venice conceded defeat without a battle to the Napoleonic army in the summer of 1797. With the signing of the Treaty of Campo Formio in October 1797 after Napoleon’s victory against the Austrians, the Italian campaign between Austria and France ended, and Napoleon gave Venice to Austria after he secured control of the Austrian lands in Italy and the Netherlands.<sup>93</sup> The disintegration of the Venetian Republic captured the public imagination of Europe, as Wordsworth’s poem suggests. For the first time in its history, Venice was invaded, the city lost its status as an independent city-state, and Venetians lived through a decade during which physical and symbolic spaces in their city, most notably the Piazza San Marco, were altered because of political factors.

The political writings penned by local Venetians and published during the summer of 1797 call attention to the fact that the Piazza San Marco was the space in the city most associated with the political. Specifically, in the minds of many Venetians the square was metonymic for the Republic itself and thus served as the site of acts of protest and dissent against political change. In his memoirs, published in London in 1798, the Venetian Francesco Calbo Crotta chronicles the political atmosphere leading up to the summer of 1797.<sup>94</sup> Sympathetic towards Louis XVI, Calbo Crotta describes the

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<sup>90</sup> Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 10-12.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>92</sup> For bibliography on the myth and anti-myth, see Peter Burke, “Myths of Venice” in *The Cultural Identities of European Cities*, eds. Katia Pizzi and Godela Weiss-Sussex (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), esp. 78.

<sup>93</sup> James H.S. McGregor, *Venice from the Ground Up* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 304-309. After declaring himself emperor of France and King of Italy in 1804, Napoleon cancelled the treaty with Austria, and French troops entered Venice once again in 1806.

<sup>94</sup> Francesco Calbo Crotta, “*Memoria che può servire alla storia politica degli ultimi otto anni della Repubblica di Venezia*,” (London: Rivington, 1798), 380-381. Using the epistolary form as a framing device, the piece, written as a letter to a friend, was published in England since, unlike most histories published under the newly established French control in Venice, it attacked France.

Venetian crowd's reaction to a French general's speech in the Piazza San Marco that celebrated the Venetians' newfound liberty: the crowd resisted by refusing to repeat the cry of liberty, and only when the general tried "Viva San Marco," the well-known Venetian slogan honouring Venice's patron saint, did the crowd repeat joyfully, ripping copies of *Il libero veneto* (*The Free Venetian*), a pamphlet distributed by the French authorities.<sup>95</sup>

Another distinctive voice that emerges in the printed discourse is an anonymous response to the Venetian nobleman Nicolò Morosini who had written a pro-French piece in Italian. The rebuttal, in Venetian dialect, purports to be the writing of a gondolier, a *barcariol*, and includes phrases such as "*za che ti spiegghi sta parola, che mi no capiva*" ("you'll need to explain that word to me since I don't understand it").<sup>96</sup> The text, despite these claims of ignorance, was clearly written by another patrician who objected to Nicolò's new loyalties. The piece is noteworthy for its colourful use of Venetian dialect, its critique of the notion that Venetians were being liberated, and its vivisection of the Venetian upper classes, presenting them as thieves who stole Venice by aligning themselves with the French. The writer declares "we are free now, just as we have always been" even though the poor "don't have your palaces, gardens, carriages, and horses in the countryside" and asserts that although he might die before he sees the gondoliers make something of themselves he will nevertheless tell his son "*ti xe libero*," that he is more free than the wealthy patricians who are tied to those in power.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Calbo Crotta also writes that "without a leader to direct them in their noble quest to save their Venice," the crowd attacked the printer Fogliarini who had published the French pamphlet. The mob stormed the printing shops, ransacking the workshop of the printer Sardi, who had engraved the pro-French *Albero della liberta*, a print of the Tree of Liberty, and even the shops of "the honest Savioli" and other printers were vandalized as the mob stormed the streets.<sup>95</sup> Calbo Crotta criticizes French revolutionaries and writes of the "*morta della mia patria*," the death of his homeland, since France refused to form an alliance with Venice, who would have been a powerful friend (Calbo Crotta, *Memoria*, 7). In the original Italian, he writes of "*li francesi [...] continuando nel loro piano di non curanza verso li piu delicate riguardi di una Potenza Amica*." All translations into English in this dissertation are mine unless noted otherwise.

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous, "*Scritti sortiti nella Rivoluzione di Venezia*." Della Stampa del Cittadino Francesco Andreola. Libreria Marciana. C183c96.40.

<sup>97</sup> The original, in Venetian dialect, reads as follows: "*semo liberi, come che semo stai tanti secoli*." Even before the French liberation, they were "*liberi, e no i gaveva el palazzo, el zardin, la carozza, i cavai in compagna*." The writer goes on to recall his father recounting tales of Venice, his father who without eyeglasses, "*senza occhiai*," saw more and understood "*come che andava la polenta*," how the cornmeal cooks, that is to say how life works. He ends with "*ho fenio*," which translates as "I've said my part" (Anonymous, "*Scritti*," C183c96.40).

This text was displayed in and around the Piazza San Marco, and it was popular enough to be soon after included in a collection that gathered together various writings from this period.<sup>98</sup>

These writings had as their counterpoint competing pro-French accounts of the Council of Ten's draconian ways, published by, among others, the Venetian Francesco Bellon, referred to as Citizen, or '*Cittadino*,' Bellon, given his support of the French Revolution.<sup>99</sup> These texts give voice to the thoughts of Venetians who saw that a political shift was a possible alleviation of their poverty but who nevertheless took issue with the notion that they were not freethinkers while under Venetian rule. Clearly, the political atmosphere in Venice at the end of the century was one of anxiety, division, and uncertainty as various voices vied for the political sympathies of the populace.

During the spring and summer of 1797, more level-headed locals than the mob Calbo Crotta describes seem to have collected the many published arguments celebrating French rule as well as the counter-arguments, often in Venetian dialect, into a bound history of the public discourse on Venice's defining current event. The books' owners added their own handwritten thoughts and transcribed copies of other texts between the published sheets.<sup>100</sup> The anthologies are evidence of the fact that the Venetians who compiled them were interested in the political discourse but not particularly tied to one side or the other. Instead of taking an entirely pro-Venetian or pro-French and Austrian stance, the compilations and often the texts themselves include both, which speaks to a sense of uncertainty as well as a willingness to consider the validity of contrasting opinions. For example, in a two-volume

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<sup>98</sup> The compilation is entitled *Raccolta di tutte le carte pubbliche stampate ed esposte ne' luoghi piu frequentati della citta di Venezia*, which translates as "A Compilation of all the published texts displayed in the most frequented areas of the city of Venice." Libreria Marciana. C183c98.

<sup>99</sup> These pieces are also included in the compilation *Scritti sortiti nella Rivoluzione di Venezia*, cited above.

<sup>100</sup> The archives of Venice's Marciana library preserve these homemade anthologies, many of which are carefully dated although not signed. One such compilation provides the publisher's name, Dalle Stampe del Cittadino Francesco Andreola, and the date, May 24, 1797, two weeks after Napoleonic troops entered the city. The speed with which publishers such as Andreola prepared these volumes suggests that there was a great demand for a portable record of the public opinions and propaganda issued during the tumultuous summer of 1797. The volumes also include handwritten Table of Contents, suggesting an impulse to order the political narrative, and handwritten additions to the printed discourse, transcribing what may have been popular publically-disseminated tracts that were not included in the bound edition. Political tracts were displayed in public areas in Venice, allowing those interested to copy them in their own hand into their printed collections of the public discourse. See *Raccolta di tutte le carte pubbliche stampate*, Stampa Francesco Andreola, 24 maggio 1797. Libreria Marciana. C183c 98, 476.



anthology entitled “*Raccolta*,” the first text in the compilation is both pro-French and sympathetic to the Lion of St. Mark, the symbol of the Venetian Republic. The text includes the Italian version of the French revolutionary slogan but also comforts Venetians by celebrating the best aspects of Venice’s “ancient democracy.”<sup>101</sup> In the second volume of the same anthology, a piece written by the count Bujovich ambiguously favours a change to Venice’s political system and also expresses a sense of melancholy at the fall of the Republic.

The anthologies are a record of public debates about matters of widespread concern: they provided a framework for reacting to and understanding Venice’s current events. Even if a publisher bound the popular tracts together, the creation of an anthology with additional handwritten transcriptions of popular texts was a personal project, one that attempted to take the varied output of a propaganda war that was displayed as broadsheets and scattered about the cafés of the city and create an orderly discourse allowing for rebuttals and counter-rebuttals.<sup>102</sup> The printed collections and their handwritten annotations stand as a rejection of absolutes in a time of change. The owners of the books organized competing voices, a gesture which speaks to an impulse to impose order on both the public discourse and, by extension, the actual political and social shifts experienced at the time.

### 1.1.2 History and development of view painting in Venice

The desire to organize chaotic and competing aspects of the city into a comprehensive whole in the political anthologies compiled by local Venetians at the end of the eighteenth century is also

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<sup>101</sup> Anonymous, *Raccolta di tutte le carte pubbliche stampate*, 476.

<sup>102</sup> These compilations also attest to the city’s status as a centre for printing and publishing. The local Venetians who annotated their copies of the collected printed tracts were, perhaps peripherally, part of the city’s tradition of editing and compiling. As Mario Infelise argues, “there existed no other city in the Italian peninsula where it was possible to earn a living from intellectual work, [...] editing books, [...] compiling newspapers” (“*Gazzette e lettori nella Repubblica Veneta dopo l’ottantanove*” in *L’eredità dell’Ottantanove in Italia*, ed. Renzo Zorzi (Florence: Oleschki, 1992), 310. On the city’s eighteenth-century print culture, the Swiss writer Philippe Monnier, in 1902, romanticizes the scene, writing that “in Venice books were sold by weight, like walnuts and apples. Venice was a city [...] where sonnets flutter about in the wind, where rolls of manuscripts appear from coattails, where men of letters abound” (*Venice in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chatto, 1902), 74).

evident in the view paintings produced by the *vedutisti* throughout the century. In the cityscapes painted by Canaletto and Guardi, various social groups, moments, details of everyday life, and even perspectives are brought together.<sup>103</sup> Canaletto and Guardi in Venice, and Canaletto's contemporary Giovanni Panini who painted the sites of Rome, were crafting images that developed out of an earlier tradition of landscape painting in Rome and of Dutch cityscape painting. Seventeenth-century artists working in Rome, especially Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin, and Claude Lorraine, influenced the work of later view painters by presenting ideal, utopic landscapes. Landscape painting, though, was regarded more highly than view painting since it was seen as an interpretation of a scene and thus requiring more skill than view paintings, which were considered to be simply accurate renderings of topography.<sup>104</sup> Venetian view paintings also have as their ancestors the painted cityscapes produced in the Netherlands, such as the work of Jan van der Heyden and Gaspar van Wittel, which incorporated meticulous details and architectural reflections in canal waters.<sup>105</sup>

Luca Carlevaris, born in the northern Italian city of Udine and Venice's first local view painter, was influenced by the work of the Dutch cityscape painters. He began painting monumental views of Venice in 1700, depicting the festivities organized to honour visiting French and British ambassadors and the Danish king.<sup>106</sup> In Carlevaris' *Regatta on the Grand Canal in Honour of Frederick IV of Denmark* (1709), the perspective is that of a viewer at eye level to the pageantry, a perspective Carlevaris used often and one that allows viewers to feel immersed in the event being chronicled, in contrast to Van Wittel's tendency to paint cityscapes from a raised, bird's eye

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<sup>103</sup> Michele Marieschi also painted views of Venice from 1735 until a year before his death at the age of 33 in 1743. Like Canaletto, he had painted theatre scenery before turning to view paintings. They both applied perspective and composition techniques that formed part of their early training in the theatre. Marieschi, especially, composed his paintings so that the scene seems to play out on stage with the architectural details appearing as painted stage wings. Marieschi did not paint figures in his view paintings: while figures are present, these were added in the final stage of the painting's completion by other artists before the canvas was presented to potential buyers (Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 150).

<sup>104</sup> Baker, *Canaletto*, 8.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. For more on Van Wittel, see Emanuela Tarizzo, *Gaspar Van Wittel: Views of Italy* (Rome: Gangemi, 2013).

<sup>106</sup> Barcham, "Townscapes and Landscapes," 93.

perspective.<sup>107</sup> Canaletto at times based his view paintings on Carlevaris' sketches and thus Canaletto's use of perspective is at times similar,<sup>108</sup> although Canaletto often depicts a view from a raised perspective, as in the example that opens this chapter. Carlevaris' technique of using dabs of paint to depict figures, known in Italian as *macchiette*, is also taken up by both Canaletto and Guardi, as is Carlevaris' attention to the sartorial details of the figures he depicts.<sup>109</sup> Canaletto and Guardi, though, both value empty spaces that allow the eye to rest while Carlevaris fills the canvas with figures and movement. This is largely because of the different moments depicted: with some exceptions, Canaletto and Guardi are often presenting Venice on any given day while Carlevaris is depicting government rituals to commemorate foreign dignitaries, spectacles which attracted crowds. The Republic's power, though, was already ebbing in the first decade of the eighteenth century and thus Carlevaris' paintings of civic rituals were contributing to what William Barcham, in his work on Venetian views, has described as the Republic's desire "to convince itself, and to assure others, that it retained its former prestige."<sup>110</sup> Canaletto's paintings continue this same project.

By the latter half of the century, art treatises and travel memoirs of Venice inevitably compared Guardi's paintings to those of Canaletto. Writing in 1796, Luigi Lanzi, in his *History of Painting in Italy*, asserts that Guardi is admired largely for his use of colour while Canaletto remains the master at composition, light, and detail.<sup>111</sup> The French chronicler and collector Pierre-Jean Mariette, writing in the 1770s, noted that Canaletto was known for the finesse of this brushwork.<sup>112</sup> In keeping with the prevailing view that Canaletto was indeed the superior painter, some of Guardi's

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Pedrocco, *Views of Venice*, 53.

<sup>109</sup> Barcham, "Townscapes and Landscapes," 96.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>111</sup> Luigi Lanzi, *Storia pittorica dell'Italia*, vol. 3 (Florence: Molini, 1845), 240. Lanzi writes of Guardi's paintings that "*le sue vedute di Venezia hanno desta ammirazione in Italia e oltramonti; ma presso coloro soltanto che si sono appagati di quell brio, di quell gusto, di quel bel effetto che cerco sempre: perciocche nel esattezza delle proporzioni e nella ragion dell'arte non puo stare a fronte del maestro.*" An English translation omits the reference to colour and instead has Lanzi writing that Guardi is admired "by such persons alone who are satisfied with the spirit, the taste, and the fine effect which he invariably studied" (*The History of Painting in Italy*, trans. Thomas Roscoe (London: Simpkin, 1828), 388.

<sup>112</sup> Giuseppe Berto, *L'opera completa del Canaletto*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1968), 9.

patrons asked him to paint scenes and figures more distinctly, more in keeping with Canaletto's style. One such patron was Pietro Edwards, in charge of inspecting public paintings in Venice. He states in a letter to the sculptor Antonio Canova that, because of decreased funds, Guardi would make his paints stretch by diluting the colour by adding oil, which would, in turn, create blurred contours and outlines. Edwards maintains that "those who purchase his paintings must resign themselves to lose them shortly; I would not be surprised if they last less than ten years."<sup>113</sup> Guardi's paintings were also thought to be more ephemeral than most because he often painted his cityscapes on canvases that had already been used.<sup>114</sup> Perhaps it was precisely the painting's potential transience that spoke to Guardi's patrons in contrast to Canaletto's permanently clear skies and solid architectural symmetry. Indeed, Canaletto's luminous paintings, more than Guardi's shadowy ones, participated in what some have observed as eighteenth-century Venice's collective avoidance of melancholy. Philippe Monnier, writing in 1902 on eighteenth-century Venetian literature, seems to be referencing Canaletto's paintings when he writes that "it would seem that in those days it was always fine, [...] the sky was cloudless, and there were no shadows."<sup>115</sup> The Venetian patrician and architectural theorist Andrea Memmo celebrated the bright neoclassicism of Canaletto's view paintings.<sup>116</sup> In contrast to this aesthetic, Guardi describes his own style as "*tocco forte*," a thick and often rough application of paint.<sup>117</sup> On the back of one of his drawings, Guardi writes that he seeks out interested buyers who appreciate brushwork that is deliberately rough rather than fine.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Pietro Edwards' letter, dated June 23, 1804, is cited in Luigina Rossi Bortolatto, *L'opera completa di Francesco Guardi* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1974), 7. ("*Chi acquista dei suoi quadri deve rassegnarsi a perderli in poco tempo; ed io non mi farei mallevadore della loro durata per altri dieci anni.*")

<sup>114</sup> Haskell, "Francesco Guardi as *Vedutista*," 257.

<sup>115</sup> Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 28-29. Monnier's statement on Venetian literature of the eighteenth-century is written in the context of analyzing Gaspare Gozzi's comic stories and Carlo Goldoni's plays.

<sup>116</sup> Memmo's penchant for neoclassical architecture, an aesthetic that was popular in Venice as well as in France and England, is expressed in his *Elementi dell'architettura Lodoliana* (Rome: Pagliarini, 1786).

<sup>117</sup> Cited in Rodolfo Pallucchini, *I disegni del Guardi al Museo Correr di Venezia* (Venezia: Correr, 1943), 26.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. Pallucchini cites Guardi's statement in Italian: Guardi painted canvases that consisted "*più di tocco forte, che finite. Le desiderà abbondanti di figurine piene di tocco.*"

Canaletto's brushwork, though, was the preferred style, and with Smith as his patron and agent, Canaletto gained an extensive British clientele. His nephew Bellotto often signed his own paintings as "Bernardo Bellotto, known as Canaletto," thus creating confusion among both collectors and early art historians.<sup>119</sup> As Bozena Kolwaczyk underscores in her work on Bellotto's early period, in both his and Canaletto's paintings "a grid is marked out with a ruler, arches are drawn with a compass, and lines of perspective and proportion are indicated by incisions in the ground."<sup>120</sup> To evoke three dimensionality when depicting sculptural elements, both applied "various overlapping layers of thick paint [...], from the darkest to the lightest, [...] topped with touches of white and yellow" and the light reflected in windows "is marked with touches of blue-grey."<sup>121</sup> While in London in 1749, Canaletto invited "any gentleman that will be pleased to come to his house to see a picture done by him, being a view of St. James Park."<sup>122</sup> Canaletto's invitation was prompted by his awareness that buyers were unsure if he was indeed the famous painter of views since Bellotto was at the time styling himself, on canvas and in name, as Canaletto, which attests to Canaletto's fame as the period's most sought-after view painter.<sup>123</sup>

Canaletto and Guardi were both accepted only late in their careers into the Venetian Academy of Fine Arts, which was established in the 1750s. Canaletto was accepted in 1765 at the age of 68 and Guardi in 1784 at the age of 72.<sup>124</sup> While fetching high prices for his *vedute*, Canaletto was for years deemed to be in the business of producing ornaments akin to the lacework and glasswork sold to

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<sup>119</sup> Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 118. Lanzi, the eighteenth-century art historian, acknowledges that Canaletto's "nephew and pupil, Bernardo Bellotto, approached so nearly his style, that it is with difficulty their respective pieces are distinguished" (Lanzi, *The History of Painting in Italy*, 387).

<sup>120</sup> Bozena Anna Kowalczyk, "Bernardo Bellotto and the Formation of an Original Style" in *Bernardo Bellotto and the Capitals of Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 118.

<sup>123</sup> Canaletto's *vedute* were so popular that they created business for *copistes* in London. Hilda F. Finberg, in "Joseph Baudin, Imitator of Canaletto" (*Burlington Magazine*, 1932), writes of discovering a June 1740 article in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in which a tourist celebrates the talent of a Mr. Joseph Baudin, writing that his Venetian views bear "an exact Likeness to the Originals" and have "so good effect that I almost imagined myself to be once more taking a Turn about Venice which I left but three months ago" (204).

<sup>124</sup> The information on Canaletto is taken from Baker, *Canaletto*, 26. The information on Guardi is taken from Robert Barry Simon, *Important Old Master Paintings* (New York: Piero Corsini Gallery, 1988), 113.

tourists.<sup>125</sup> Because his paintings were souvenirs for visitors, they were seen by the academy as commercial products rather than high art. With an eye to what the academy would value, Canaletto, once admitted to its ranks, chose as his reception painting not one of his well-known views of Venice but a *capriccio*, a fantasy of colonnades in a palace courtyard that displayed his virtuosic skill at using perspective.<sup>126</sup>

Canaletto and Guardi's late acceptance into the Venetian art establishment may also have been because of their purported use of the camera obscura to create their view paintings. The pinhole camera would have allowed the view painters to trace the outlines of architecture when making their preparatory sketches. Although the device was first used by artists as an aid in solving problems of perspective, viewing the world in miniature through the camera obscura became commonplace. By the middle of the century such boxes were depicted in Gaetano Zompini's *Le arte che vanno per via nella città di Venezia* (*The Arts that Travel the Streets of Venice*), published in 1753. The caption below the illustration in the Zompini book emphasizes the popular demand for this visual entertainment: "in this box, I show the world anew/with inner distances and perspectives."<sup>127</sup> The artist and writer Antonio Maria Zanetti, in his *Della pittura veneziana*, first published in 1771, was the first to assert that Canaletto used the *camera ottica*, as the pinhole camera is often known in Italian, to create his impressively exact views.<sup>128</sup> Lanzi, in 1796, repeated the claim in his survey of Italian art, and it quickly became accepted.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> For more on the Venetian Academy's consideration of Canaletto's oeuvre, see Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 95.

<sup>126</sup> Baker, *Canaletto*, 23.

<sup>127</sup> This illustration from Zompini's *Le arte che vanno per via* (1753) is included in Terisio Pignatti, *Gli incanti di Venezia* (Venezia: Aldo Martello, 1974), 69.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Smith, "Canaletto and the camera obscura" in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century, IV* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 232.

<sup>129</sup> Twentieth-century scholarship has questioned whether the view painters did use the camera obscura to achieve perfect perspective. Smith, cited above, states that "in many of the sketches claimed as products of the camera obscura the distances are either so short that a wide-angle lens would have been necessary, or so long and diverse that a camera would have needed [...] lenses of different powers to produce the images to the varied scale of these drawings."

Even before art historical scholarship addressed the issue, Grand Tourists were aware of the difference between the images offered by the mirrored walls of the camera obscura and the skill and artistry involved in the final view painting they were enjoying. Piozzi, in her travel memoir, emphasizes the difference between “a camera obscura in a London parlour” and “a view of Venice by the clear pencil of Canaletti.”<sup>130</sup> Whether or not the view painters made frequent use of the device, what the camera obscura places emphasis on is what can be seen, not what is felt or believed. The images produced with its help were often considered as ocular proof and as magical, despite the fact that it was a mechanical intervention that allowed the scene to appear in miniature for the viewer. In a city so aesthetically pleasing that countless tourists were writing that they could not believe their eyes, the view paintings, with the possible aid of the mechanical, assured them that they could indeed.<sup>131</sup>

In the mid nineteenth century, the apparent mechanical style of the view painters came under the wrath of Victorian England’s foremost arbiter on art, John Ruskin, thus spawning a marked decrease in the appreciation of the *vedutisti* among British tourists. In *Modern Painters*, first published in 1843, Ruskin famously declared that “Canaletto professes nothing but coloured daguerreotypism” and “possesses no virtue except that of dexterous imitation of commonplace light and shade.”<sup>132</sup> With the advent of photography, the tradition of the *vedute* was seen as redundant by the most established guidebooks. View painters were often omitted from surveys of Venetian art included in popular Baedeker and Murray guidebooks to the city. Copyists, though, are mentioned: the 1873 edition of Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* includes an asterisk next to the name of a Mr. Nerly, “a Prussian, whose views of Venice are in great request” and who “resides at the

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<sup>130</sup> Cited in Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 120.

<sup>131</sup> Perhaps as a reaction against assumptions that the use of the camera obscura made his work less than art, Canaletto, after completing one of his meticulous sketches of the Piazza San Marco, proudly and endearingly writes “*Anni 68, 1766, senza occhiali*,” which translates as ‘68 years old, without spectacles’ (cited in Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 119).

<sup>132</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Volume One: Of General Principles, and of Truth* (Sunnyside: George Allen, 1888), 110. In his vivisection, Ruskin also writes that Canaletto’s “miserable, virtueless, heartless mechanism, accepted as the mechanism of such various glory, is, both in its existence and acceptance, among the most striking signs of the lost sensation and deadened intellect of the nation at that time. [...] The mannerism of Canaletto is the most degraded that I know [...] for there is no texture of stone nor character of age in Canaletto’s touch.”

Palazzo Pisani, at San Stefano.” However, the guidebook quickly notes, in italics, that “the best *views of Venice* are *photographs*.”<sup>133</sup> By as early as the 1850s, visitors to Venice were confusing a Canaletto painting with a Guardi.<sup>134</sup> While photography usurped the view paintings and Guardi’s and Canaletto’s paintings were seen as interchangeable in the mid nineteenth century, by the end of the century reviews of exhibitions often did celebrate the paintings, specifically Guardi’s work, which was considered more impressionistic and thus more in vogue than Canaletto’s neoclassicism. For example, an 1884 review in *The Athenaeum* of the winter exhibition at London’s Royal Academy praised “a group of fine and luminous Guardis [...] far superior to the finest Canaletto.”<sup>135</sup>

In the early twentieth century, the view painters continued to be considered as less noteworthy than the artists who preceded them. In Baedeker’s 1903 edition of *Northern Italy*, the *vedutisti* are mentioned but in a rather critical piece written by the art historian and professor Anton Springer. Springer, parroting Ruskin, writes that Venetian artists “in the eighteenth century [...] excel in effects of colour, and by devoting attention to the province of genre and landscape painting they may boast of having extended the sphere of their native art. At the same time, they cannot conceal the fact that they have lost all faith in the ancient ideals, that they are incapable of new and earnest tasks.”<sup>136</sup> Clearly, it was the view paintings’ association with the mechanical, both with the camera obscura of their own time and their intimation of the photograph to come, that prompted those determining tourist tastes to claim the *vedute* were less than art.

Visitors who styled themselves as being above the typical tastes of nineteenth-century tourists imply in their travel writing that the view scenes have, because of repetition, become trifles. For example, James, in a passage that will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter, writes that Venice “of all the cities of the world is the easiest to visit without going there. [...] Step into the first

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<sup>133</sup> John Murray, *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Murray, 1873), 376. The copy used for my research was owned by Peter Redpath and is preserved at McGill University’s Rare Books Collection.

<sup>134</sup> Haskell, “Francesco Guardi,” 266.

<sup>135</sup> Anonymous review of the winter exhibition at the Royal Academy, *The Athenaeum*, February 2, 1884, 156.

<sup>136</sup> *Northern Italy*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Baedeker, 1903), xxv.



picture-dealer's and you will find three or four high-coloured 'views' of it."<sup>137</sup> James' tone captures his disdain for repetitive souvenir images of Venice; he is a few sentences away from celebrating the actual, physical city in contrast to its reproduced views.

Giacomo Guardi, Francesco's son, continued the tradition of supplying view scenes for tourists into the nineteenth century, but his paintings were seen as nostalgic.<sup>138</sup> These view paintings did not depict historical moments, such as the entrance of Napoleonic troops into the Piazza San Marco. In keeping with the atmosphere of connoisseurship that has always surrounded the view paintings, Giacomo Guardi's works were often described as technically inferior pieces in guidebooks, in surveys of the view paintings, and later in the scholarship on the *vedutisti*.<sup>139</sup> As both the art historical narrative and indeed nineteenth-century *vedute* themselves suggest, the innovative work of Venice's view painters ends with the end of the Venetian Republic.

### 1.1.3 *Survey of the scholarship on the vedutisti*

Venetian view paintings have often been considered as decorative works featuring repetitive scenes and thus have not garnered the critical attention devoted to Venetian artists of the Renaissance and to the eighteenth-century paintings of Giambattista and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo. In recent scholarship, even as visual culture is studied in greater detail, studies of the *vedute* remains rooted in connoisseurship.<sup>140</sup> Scholars place emphasis on the development of Canaletto's style and the history of ownership of the paintings, and they bring to life the commercial exchanges between patrons and

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<sup>137</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 7.

<sup>138</sup> Alessandro Bettagno, *Venetian Drawings of the Eighteenth Century* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1972), 63.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> See Charles Baddington, Review of Filippo Pedrocchio's *Visions of Venice: Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 144, no. 1192 (July 2002): 440. Baddington is the voice of most contemporary scholarship on the view painters in that his review focuses on the apparent errors in dating included in Pedrocchio's survey and on the choice and quality of the images reproduced.

artists.<sup>141</sup> The view paintings have been studied largely in *catalogues raisonnés*, in which attention is placed on dating and authenticating the paintings.<sup>142</sup> This formalist tradition through which the narrative of Venetian view painting has been created by art historians is vital in that it never loses sight of the actual art object. However, an issue that has been overlooked is the tourist context for these paintings. Precisely because of their popularity as souvenirs, *vedute* were low in the hierarchy of different genres of painting. Yet, they are essential to a study of how local artists and tourists engaged with Venice's public spaces in the eighteenth century.

Twentieth-century scholarship on the *vedutisti* developed in the 1950s with the work of art historians F.J.B. Watson and Michael Levey. Watson published an important article on Visentini's preparatory drawings for his engravings of Canaletto's paintings. The preparatory drawings had been until that point considered the work of Canaletto and only in 1948 attributed to Visentini. Watson, setting the stage for future scholarship on the *vedutisti*, devotes his attention to how the drawings are similar or different from the final engravings, adding that even those that include Canaletto's name are "clearly the work of the same hand as the rest of the group," which is to say Visentini's.<sup>143</sup> In 1959, Levey prepared the first comprehensive study of the view paintings in his book on eighteenth-century Venetian art. Levey refers to Canaletto's paintings as "picture-souvenirs," as images that were made to be useful, as mementoes, as advertisement, as decorative filler, and as a sign of status for collectors.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> See Bettagno's *Venetian Drawings of the Eighteenth Century* and Pedrocco's *Visions of Venice*, both cited above. In the 1989 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue, *Canaletto*, Bettagno in "Fantasy and Reality in Canaletto's Drawings," also focuses on the artist's evolving style and working method, noting that the paintings offer "harmonious effects" (42) but without considering why such harmony would be a goal. The 1989 Met catalogue includes other essays that are in the same vein, such as Viola Pemberton-Pigott's on the development of Canaletto's technique, and Levey's which explores Canaletto's playing with perspective and argues that Canaletto "seldom created a fully convincing tonal relationship between sky and water" (22).

<sup>142</sup> See Antonio Morassi's *Guardi: L'opera completa*, cited above; Diane De Grazia and Eric Garberson's catalogue of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Italian painting in the National Gallery in Washington (New York: Oxford, 1996); and Roberto Contini's catalogue of the Thyssen-Bornemisza's collection of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Italian painting (London: Philip Wilson, 2002).

<sup>143</sup> F.J.B. Watson, "Notes on Canaletto and His Engravers- II," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 92, no. 573 (December 1950): 352.

<sup>144</sup> Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 95.

More recent studies of eighteenth-century Venetian art also avoid analyzing the content of the view paintings in favour of patronage studies. In 1996, Francis Russell explored the relationship between Guardi and his British patrons, focusing on why Guardi adopted particular viewpoints in the various paintings. Russell concludes that Guardi painted a scene from a new angle because the buyer, Lord Brudenell, already owned *vedute* painted from other perspectives.<sup>145</sup> Recent scholarship on Canaletto's work suggest he engages in realism and in illusionism, but little mention is made of which elements of Canaletto's visual vocabulary may suggest his tendency to idealize and which speak of his realist tendencies.<sup>146</sup> Pedrocco's *Visions of Venice*, for example, focuses most on which paintings by Canaletto, Bellotto, Marieschi, and Guardi derive from either their sketches or those of other artists.

Over the years some scholarship on Venetian view painting has gone beyond connoisseurship. Haskell's work in the 1960s on Guardi and his patrons, as noted earlier, offers insight into why certain intellectuals and patrons specifically purchased Guardi's canvases instead of Canaletto's. Ronald Paulson, in his 1971 study of Pietro Longhi's paintings of Venetian interiors, considers how, in a Canaletto painting, the "analytic, ordered view" tends to be an interior moved out onto the street, since Venice was "the city par excellence for closed views; its squares, colonnades, passageways, and canals were social space that was more significant than private living space."<sup>147</sup> However, analyses like his, which link perspectival representations of space to Venice's cultural and civic identity, are rare. More recently, the exhibition catalogue for the State Hermitage Museum's 2005 exhibit on eighteenth-century Venetian art does place emphasis on the political aspects of the *vedute*. Guest curator Henk W. Van Os argues that Canaletto and Guardi "produced a grandiose décor for a society on the verge of disintegration," and he does not minimize the decorative but instead suggests that this

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<sup>145</sup> Russell, "Guardi and the English Tourist," 9.

<sup>146</sup> See Alessandro Bettagno's *Canaletto: Disegni, Dipinti, Incisioni* (Venezia: Neri Pozza, 1982); J.G. Links's *Canaletto* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); and Martin Clayton's *Canaletto in Venice* (London: Royal Collection Publication, 2005).

<sup>147</sup> Ronald Paulson, "Living Space in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Art: Longhi and the View Painters," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 467.

“ultra-expensive wall-paper” can be recognized as a reaction to Venice’s political situation. He sees the paintings as signs of “how vibrantly and spectacularly artists will disguise the fact that all is coming to a close.”<sup>148</sup> Importantly, Van Os acknowledges that the ornamental can express the political.

By virtue of being repeatedly seen by Grand Tourists, the most popular view paintings, namely those of the Grand Canal and of Piazza San Marco, participated in organizing a tourist’s experience of Venetian spaces. Yet, scholarly work on the eighteenth-century view paintings does not focus on the topic of viewers’ perceptions. The formal devices, such as perspective, colour, and brushwork, in Canaletto’s and Guardi’s view paintings have much to tell the observer about what the two *vedutisti* conveyed through paint about their city and how the paintings participated in reflecting and shaping the patterns of tourist culture in Venice, specifically in the ways the city was both visited and perceived.

### *1.2 Patrons, Grand Tourists, and the vedute*

By purchasing and viewing Venice in miniature, eighteenth-century collectors and tourists cultivated a sense of knowledge and ownership of Venice. They established in their libraries and viewing rooms dominion over a city that had been chronicled and catalogued for them by local painters. Although Guardi’s patrons included prominent Italian intellectuals, British visitors to Venice were the largest group purchasing *vedute*, and thus the focus in this section of the chapter will be on how British patrons and their fellow Grand Tourists displayed, viewed, and engaged with the paintings. Since this dissertation highlights how the producers and consumers of souvenir views of Venice intersected, attention will be given to the ways in which patrons collaborated, often quite

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<sup>148</sup> Henk W. Van Os, “All that Glitters” in *Venezia: Art of the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Lund Humphries, 2005), 38, 24, and 17.

tangibly, with the view painters in the production of souvenir views; the ways tourists came in contact with the view paintings while in Venice; and the ways in which tourists conceived of Venice in their published travel writing. Indeed, tourists often referenced the paintings as the prompt for their specific expectations and perceptions of the city and, in so doing, fostered similar connections in their readers.

### *1.2.1 Displaying Venice: Patrons as collaborators, display practices, and Smith's gallery as a tourist space*

Canaletto and Guardi depicted their city for patrons interested in repeated, miniature views from various points of view.<sup>149</sup> Smith not only prompted Canaletto to reduce the size of his paintings to make them more portable as souvenirs of the city,<sup>150</sup> he also encouraged the painter to focus on making variations of his Grand Canal and Piazza San Marco views, which Smith knew would appeal to buyers.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, well-heeled visitors to Venice did not only commission particular views they had seen to commemorate their journey; they often specifically commissioned similar views of Venice from different perspectives. These patrons and buyers thus had a hand in shaping the souvenir images produced for them to such an extent that the cityscapes can be seen as a collaboration between the artist and his client. The reduction in size of the view paintings, an early change prompted by Smith, combined with each collector's search for multiple viewpoints, which also dictated to a certain extent the works being produced, speaks to a desire on the part of the collector-tourists to take in as

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<sup>149</sup> Brudenell, one of Guardi's British patrons, already had views of the Grand Canal by Marieschi and Marieschi's apprentice Francesco Albotto but nevertheless commissioned Grand Canal views from Guardi, notably from more oblique viewpoints. It was not simply the view of Venice itself but the angle from which the view was depicted that Brudenell sought since, as Francis Russell surmises, he lacked such a perspective of the Grand Canal in his collection (Russell, "Guardi and the English Tourist," 9).

<sup>150</sup> While the size of Canaletto's paintings varies throughout his career, his earliest paintings, which were not painted for buyers secured by Smith, are often in the range of 140 cm x 200 cm or larger. From the late 1720s on, numerous paintings of his tend to be smaller in scale, in the range of 40 cm x 80 cm, although Canaletto still painted larger-scale views for wealthier collectors.

<sup>151</sup> In a letter written in November 1754, the British politician and art historian Horace Walpole states that Smith "had engaged Canaletti for a certain number of years to paint exclusively for him, at a fixed price, and sold his pictures to English travellers" (*The Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. 3 (London: Bentley, 1840), 77).

many and as similar visions of Venice as possible, all at a glance. To wit, Piozzi acknowledges that while in Venice “one sits longing for a pencil to repeat what has been so often and exquisitely painted by Canaletti.”<sup>152</sup> The impulse to collect various perspectives of similar views suggests an attempt to interiorize Venice, domesticating it within the confines of a sketchbook or home gallery, and thus, deliberately or not, establishing authority and order over the geography of the city.

View paintings catered to an interest in miniaturization and repetition. These two qualities have practical roots: smaller canvases are more portable and affordable, and repetition is a response to mimetic desire. But, the repeated views and the scale of the canvases also speak to a specific trend. In eighteenth-century Venice, as Monnier phrases it, “the diminutive was paramount, and the moment anything showed signs of a tendency to expansion, it was immediately suppressed.”<sup>153</sup> As Monnier notes, the plays of local Venetian Carlo Goldoni “could be induced to sparkle by no loftier themes than a fly, a beauty spot, or a silver spoon” and “small cabinet pictures were beginning to take the place of the fresco.”<sup>154</sup> Smith, whose Venetian residence displayed numerous Venetian cityscapes precisely rendered on a small scale, certainly exhibited the aesthetics of the period.

The display practices popular among collectors created narratives about Venice. Since similar views painted from slightly different perspectives were displayed together, the viewer saw Venice catalogued and scrutinized from every angle. The city feminized for centuries as *‘la serenissima,’* a serene Venus rising from the sea, is in these view paintings a beauty repeatedly sitting for her portrait and obligingly offering up a slightly new angle with each likeness. Smith’s Palazzo Balbi, which looked out over the *volta*, the bend in the Grand Canal, from its location on the Calle del Dragon, was the prime tourist space for such observations. As Ruth Bomberg writes in her study of the palace’s gallery, Canaletto’s view paintings were displayed in “Smith’s residence bought by him in 1740. [...] Here they would be fully admired by English visitors to Venice who never failed to make a visit to

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<sup>152</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 171.

<sup>153</sup> Monnier, *Venice in the Eighteenth Century*, 36-37.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

Smith's famous library and gallery."<sup>155</sup> Frances Vivian, in her research on Smith's patronage of Canaletto, notes that British visitors such as Robert D'Arcy Holderness, who was the British Ambassador to Venice in the 1740s, referred to Smith's library and gallery as the "cabinet" or "*il museo di Smith*."<sup>156</sup> The gallery encouraged tourists to convene and associate, and it functioned as a display case for an ideal, miniature Venice.

The canvases in Smith's gallery were often painted and hung as pendants. Eglin emphasizes that most British patrons commissioned Canaletto to paint pairs of views, either of the Piazza San Marco and Piazzetta, or of the Grand Canal with one painting of the Canal almost always including the Rialto Bridge.<sup>157</sup> These pendants may have had a stereoscopic effect on the viewer, creating a slight sense of three-dimensionality. Cesare Brandi, in his work on the *vedute*, has suggested that Canaletto "does not construct a receding image but one that is approaching."<sup>158</sup> The viewer, though, is not drawn into the painted scene but rather observes it from a superior position. Paulson has suggested that the stereoscopic effect in a Canaletto painting "brings forward details to the spectator, and draws his attention to the relationship of the part to the total structure, rather than allowing him to submerge himself in an atmosphere. The effect is supported by the enclosure of space which prevents the eye from wandering off into the sky."<sup>159</sup> Paulson's emphasis on sky as a framing element in the view paintings prompts attention to the various other framing elements that visitors to Smith's gallery experienced. The tourist ritual of viewing the paintings at the Palazzo Balbi, a practice specific to Smith's well-connected visitors,<sup>160</sup> provided multiple framed views. The paintings themselves, their frames, their placement in a gallery space with windows framing views of the Grand Canal, and the

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<sup>155</sup> Bomberg, *Canaletto's Etchings: Revised and Enlarged Edition of the Catalogue Raisonné*, 2. Smith lived in the palace, and established its viewing gallery, before purchasing the building in 1740.

<sup>156</sup> Vivian, *Il console Smith: mercante e collezionista*, 49.

<sup>157</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 120.

<sup>158</sup> Cesare Brandi, *Canaletto* (Milan: Mondadori, 1960), 34.

<sup>159</sup> Paulson, "Living Space," 468.

<sup>160</sup> The collector Richard Rawlinson records in a journal entry dated July 20, 1735 that "this day [he] went to see Mr. Smith and his fine library" (cited in Stuart Morrison, "Records of a bibliophile: the catalogues of Consul Joseph Smith and some aspects of his collecting" in *Book Collector* 43 (1994): 27-28.

palace itself were all a series of boxes within boxes. These various frames evoke the boxed spaces of the camera obscura, which was a fixture on the streets of Venice, and, like the camera obscura, Smith's gallery of views presented Venice framed in miniature. A visitor to Smith's had her act of viewing framed multiple times, with the final frame being the view outside the Palazzo Balbi's windows, with a vantage point that, to the left, offered a long view of the Rialto Bridge.

By opening his gallery by invitation to tourists, Smith fostered a tourist culture within his residence in Venice. The experience of viewing the paintings was part of a ritual of aesthetic appreciation and conversation among like-minded travellers, as many tourists noted in their travel journals and memoirs.<sup>161</sup> Smith promoted such exchange on a greater scale as well, making the experience of viewing his cityscapes accessible to an even wider public through his association with the printer Giambattista Pasquali whom he paid to print Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings.<sup>162</sup> The Pasquali publishing house was known for its esoteric and unconventional texts. Many of its publications were stamped as having been printed in London, Milan, or Amsterdam to avoid the stricter Venetian censorship laws that came with the return of the Jesuits.<sup>163</sup> Smith, in keeping with Protestant support of Venice against the papacy, published through Pasquali *Paolo Sarpi giustificato* in 1753, a text celebrating the religious reforms of the sixteenth-century scholar, scientist, and anti-papist Sarpi who successfully encouraged the Council of Ten in 1606 to resist Pope Paul V's attempt to force Venice to submit to the Vatican's increased presence in secular matters.<sup>164</sup> In the

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<sup>161</sup> Lady Anna Miller, in her *Letters from Italy*, humorously admits the physical toll of such dutiful aesthetic appreciation when she writes, after visiting the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, that "I only wish you to believe that [the frescoed ceilings] have great merit as paintings, that they are symbolical, mysterious, that I got a pain in my neck from looking up at them and was tired to death of hearing them explained" (*Letters from Italy*, vol. 2 (London: Edward Dilly, 1776), 7. The passage is also quoted in Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*, 192.

<sup>162</sup> Vivian, *Il console Smith*, 13-14.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 103. As Vivian notes, Pasquali also published Diderot's preface to his *Encyclopédie*, Goldoni's comedies, and Giuseppe Parini's satirical poem, *Il giorno* (1763-1801), which criticized the nobility and attracted the attention of the *Illuministi* in Lombardy who condemned capital punishment and state use of torture. See also Federico Barbierato, "La Bottega del cappellaio: Libri proibiti, libertinismo e suggestioni massoniche nel '700 Veneto" in *Studi veneziani* 44 (Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2002), 327-361, and also cited in Muir, *The Culture Wars*, 167.

<sup>164</sup> For more on Sarpi, see David Wootton's *Paolo Sarpi: Between Renaissance and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982).



spirit of intellectual curiosity rather than the dissemination of a particular agenda, Smith also paid Pasquali to publish religious books and political treatises that were more conventional.<sup>165</sup> Through his association with Pasquali, the city's foremost collector of Venetian views fostered conversation and debate among the well-read in his museum-palazzo and in the city's cafés and squares, foreshadowing the collecting in book form of opposing political ideas during the summer of 1797. Smith and Pasquali's decision to make available a series of officially sanctioned as well as more subversive texts participates in the creation of a culture of information and conversation that resisted the authoritative power of the Republic. Smith's library and gallery were spaces Smith curated both for himself and for tourists. The various texts he published and the view paintings he promoted, in which Canaletto often includes figures in conversation, formed part of the Grand Tourist's experience of the city.

Along with Smith's gallery, picture shops selling copies of Canaletto's and Guardi's view paintings also offered opportunities to see painted cityscapes of Venice *in situ*. As referenced in the 1757 report on Venice's artisans, the shops purchased view paintings at low prices from impoverished artists and then sold the paintings to tourists at a high profit.<sup>166</sup> Federico degli Erri devotes attention to the Fontana picture shop in his study of the tourist market for view painting in eighteenth-century Venice.<sup>167</sup> Pedrocco and Fabrizio Magani, in their study of commercial activities prompted by the popularity of view paintings as souvenirs, emphasize that "the success of the picture shops [...] was due to the success of the genre of view painting, which in turn depended almost entirely on tourist demand."<sup>168</sup> In addition to these shops, tourists who were in Venice on August 16<sup>th</sup> were able to witness the exhibition of paintings outside the church and *scuola* of San Rocco, a scene Canaletto

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<sup>165</sup> For more on Smith's collection of books, see Thomas Frognall Didbin's *Bibliomania, or Book-Madness: A Bibliographical Romance* (London: Bohn, 1842), 34-51.

<sup>166</sup> Pedrocco, *Visions of Venice*, 26.

<sup>167</sup> See Montecuccoli degli Erri's "I 'botteggeri da quadri' e i 'poveri pittori famelici,'" 143-166.

<sup>168</sup> Fabrizio Magani and Filippo Pedrocco, *Officina Veneziana: Maestri e botteghe nella Venezia del settecento* (Crema: Centro Culturale San Agostino, 2002), 74. The original Italian is "il successo delle botteghe da quadri nella Venezia settecentesca e anche dovuto al successo di un 'nuovo' genere, la veduta, la cui fortuna dipende quasi esclusivamente dalla domanda straniera."

depicts in one of his most well-known paintings. Both Canaletto and Bellotto sold their view paintings at these exhibitions.<sup>169</sup>

Painted views of Venice could also be seen by tourists when paintings were displayed in the Piazza San Marco during fairs.<sup>170</sup> Artisans were allowed to set up tents in the square on these days, a fact that Canaletto incorporates into his paintings of the Piazza San Marco (fig. 1.3). Painters set up two mobile picture tents per year.<sup>171</sup> The popularity of view painting among tourists suggests that painters without wealthy patrons or agents would not have missed the opportunity to sell their views directly to tourists, without the picture shops as middlemen. Clearly, it was not only those with connections to Smith but also less illustrious tourists who were surrounded, especially at this particular stop on their Grand Tour, by myriad painted representations of the city they were visiting.

Significantly, the view paintings did not offer a bird's eye view of the city from a bell tower. Instead, the paintings provided viewers with perspectives that, although altered to include more of the city's architectural details, could be arrived at while on foot and in gondola. Piozzi writes of the possibility of "climbing the beautiful tower which stands, as everything else does, in St. Mark's Place,"<sup>172</sup> but she, like most of her contemporaries, does not write of having in fact climbed the bell tower, or any other *campanile* in the city. Since the souvenir paintings of Venice did not present such viewpoints, the experience of seeing the city from above was not sought after. Instead, the Grand Canal and Piazza San Marco seen from a slightly raised position, as in that of a top floor window or bridge, were the perspectives offered to tourists. The painted canvases tourists saw in collections back home, in Smith's gallery, or in the city's picture shops and squares offered tourists a sense of control over the labyrinthine city. They presented accessible perspectives, thus further contributing to the tourists' propensity to compare their actual experience of the city to these souvenir views.

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<sup>169</sup> Baker, *Canaletto*, 62.

<sup>170</sup> Bernard Aikema, *Il collezionismo a Venezia* (Venice: Marsilio, 2005), 169.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 156.

### 1.2.2 *Writing Venice: View paintings in Grand Tourist discourses on travel*

The writings of Grand Tourists serve as evidence of the fact that travellers were often aware that their perceptions of Venice were being shaped by the representations of the city they saw displayed both at home and in Venice itself. For example, George Dennis, who contributed content on Italian art to the popular Murray guidebooks, writes in “The City of the Doge, or Letters from Venice” of his first sight of the city: “we shot beneath a bridge and into the Grand Canal, and then the glories of Venice burst upon me. Then I was indeed in Venice—in the Venice of my imagination—the Venice of Canaletti.”<sup>173</sup> As noted earlier, Piozzi’s memoir of her first impressions of Venice begins with a comparison of the actual Venice to the painted views of the city she saw in London. Describing the Piazza San Marco, she writes that its “first appearance [...] revived all the ideas inspired by Canaletti, those especially which one sees at the Queen of England’s house.”<sup>174</sup> American travellers often saw their first Canaletto paintings while in London. In his travel memoir *Young Americans Abroad*, John Overton Choules describes the eclectic objects on display in the Sir John Soane’s collection in Lincoln Inn Fields, noting that “the views of Venice by Canaletti are very fine.”<sup>175</sup> Not only architecture but local life was also seen through the frame of a view painting. The Irish novelist Marguerite Gardiner, known for her friendship with Lord Byron, writes in her memoir *The Idler in Italy* of observing fishermen at work, noting that “the whole scene resembled a fine Canaletti picture.”<sup>176</sup> The influence of the Venetian view paintings even extended to observations of one’s own city: an anonymous review of festivities on the Thames described the scene as “a magnified representation of one of Canaletti’s best and brightest delineations of Venetian scenery, with all [the]

<sup>173</sup> George Dennis, “The City of the Doge, or Letters from Venice, July 1839” in *Bentley’s Miscellany*, vol. 4 (New York: Mason, 1839), 621.

<sup>174</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 77.

<sup>175</sup> John Overton Choules, *Young Americans Abroad* (Boston: Gould, 1853), 140.

<sup>176</sup> Marguerite Gardiner, *The Idler in Italy*, vol. 2 (London: Colburn, 1839), 73.

picturesque variety of outline [of] a vast number of structures stretching to the water's edge [...] and all covered with clusters of human beings.”<sup>177</sup> Tourists were also keen to have the Venice they had seen represented in word and art confirmed as the actual Venice. Burney, in his 1771 account, found that “the actual Venice” did not correspond to his “romantic ideas of Venice,” ideas formed “after having examined the view paintings of Canaletto” before setting off on his travels.<sup>178</sup> Piozzi, in contrast, declares that “this wonderful city realizes the most romantic ideas ever formed of it.”<sup>179</sup> As these statements suggest, the temperament of the chronicler determined the city's apparent success or failure in corresponding to expectations shaped by texts and images.

Grand Tourists, being diligent chroniclers, often published their impressions upon returning home, and thus participated in shaping their readers' views on the cities described and the souvenirs collected. As Chloe Chard and Derek Gregory have suggested in their respective work on travel writing, Grand Tourists knowingly created imaginative geographies for themselves.<sup>180</sup> Writing home, they invented the otherness of those they described and used hyperbole to describe the foreign as different.<sup>181</sup> Their writing, though, was not enough of a record for them of the architectural marvel that was Venice. View paintings were the necessary evidence.

Before the invention of the camera, view paintings were tourists' proof that they had been to Venice as well as their talisman against the vagaries of memory. The tourists themselves acknowledge these two impulses. Piozzi tells her reader that when she and her husband “were at Rome, we purchased a fine view of St. Mark's Place, Venice.”<sup>182</sup> The visual seems to trump the written: travellers wanted to present family and friends with a visual sign that their voyage had been edifying

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<sup>177</sup> Anonymous, Review of Thames festivities in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, part 2 (London: Colburn, 1831), 294.

<sup>178</sup> Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 146.

<sup>179</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 157.

<sup>180</sup> For more on the concept of imaginative geographies, see John Agnew and James Duncan's *The Power of Place* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), as well as Duncan, in his collaborative project with Derek Gregory, entitled *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>181</sup> In *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, Chard analyzes particular tropes in travel writing, such as the themes of intensification (49), of incomparability (53), of profusion (56), and of excess (57).

<sup>182</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 189.

and sophisticated. The many paintings collected by wealthy tourists were brought home to their galleries, which were often opened to the public. A visitor to the gallery of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey notes that “we put our names and residence down in the visiting book and were conducted by a [...] well-dressed housekeeper around the splendid suite of apartments. [...] In one room was a beautiful collection of Canaletti.”<sup>183</sup> As the memoirs of Dennis, Piozzi, and numerous others suggest, these *vedute*, seen before seeing Venice itself, often encouraged the eye to perceive the three-dimensional Venice as a two-dimensional picture.

The experience of travel, and specifically the visitor’s conflation of the actual and the reproduced view, has been the subject of much scholarly work. John Frow has argued that the tourist’s reality is “figural rather than literal” and that representations of a tourist site are “lived as real” by us and we are thus part of a collective perception.<sup>184</sup> Frow argues that the sign (the image) is part of the signifier (the object or site) so that the city itself, when viewed in person, seems to be a “life-sized reproduction of the original.”<sup>185</sup> The original would be a painting of the Piazza San Marco, for example. For Piozzi and others, these were the view paintings on display in London, which they had seen before embarking on their Grand Tour. Frow’s assertion that viewers perceive the reproduction as the original could be nuanced, though. As the memoirs of travel quoted here make clear, tourists were often aware that their perception of the city they were visiting was a palimpsest of what they had already read and seen.

Significantly, Venice has long been associated with Santa Lucia, the patron saint of sight.<sup>186</sup>

Indeed, one of the most well-known local proverbs about the city references the ocular: “*Venezia, chi*

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<sup>183</sup> Anonymous review (possibly by James Elmes) in *Annals of the Fine Arts*, vol. 5 (1820): 416.

<sup>184</sup> John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia,” *October*, vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 125-126. In arguing that there is no authentic experience to lose, Frow moves away from Dean MacCannell’s work on staged authenticity in tourist centres in which MacCannell implies that there is an authentic experience of the city or culture that lies beyond reach of the foreigner.

<sup>185</sup> Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia,” 130.

<sup>186</sup> Appropriately, the patron saint of sight, Lucia, now gives her name to Venice’s train station, which provides most tourists with their first sight of Venice and which was built on the site of the Santa Lucia church. Lucia, a third-century Christian living in Siracusa, refused to marry a pagan, was denounced as a Christian, and had her eyes gouged out; she is

*no la vede, no la prezia*” (‘who does not see Venice cannot appreciate her’), which can be traced to a sixteenth-century poem by Andrea Calmo. This idea would have been familiar to many visitors to Venice since Shakespeare famously quotes the line in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, the memoirs of travel to Venice often place emphasis on the visitor’s first glimpse of the city. Reinforcing this, Piozzi, when asked to translate into English an epigram in Venetian, tells her readers that she “could never succeed till I had been upon the Grand Canal.”<sup>188</sup> Despite the value placed on painted views of the city, tourists still prized the actual sight of Venice.<sup>189</sup>

The view paintings also shaped local Venetians’ perceptions. In a letter dated September 1759, Algarotti, the prominent Venetian philosopher and art connoisseur, praises Canaletto’s attention to detail and implies that the view paintings themselves prompted a more engaged viewing experience when admiring the city itself. He writes that in Canaletto’s canvases “neither boats nor gondolas are missing, both of which Canaletto excels in painting” and he adds, “I have heard said that many Venetians wonder which part of the city have they not yet seen painted.”<sup>190</sup> Although Canaletto painted iconic spaces, namely the Piazza San Marco, the Grand Canal, and the Piazza seen from the waters of the Bacino di San Marco, with only brief forays into the peripheral corners of Venice, his views seem to have given both tourists and locals the sense that the Venice they saw was thoroughly represented in the painted views. Venetians themselves seem to have adjusted their perceptions of their city to have them accord with popular representations.

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often depicted holding her eyes on a platter. The church of San Geremia, in Venice’s Cannaregio *sestiere*, displays her relics.

<sup>187</sup> The Venetian proverb is a variation on the couplet “*Venezia bela, fabrica sul mare/ Chi no la vede, no la pol stimare*,” which was well known in England. In *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1595), Shakespeare has Holofernes tell Jaquenetta “I may speak of thee/as the traveller doth of Venice/Venetia, Venetia/Chi non ti vede, non ti pretia (IV, ii).

<sup>188</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 186.

<sup>189</sup> Venetians also echoed the proverb that Venice must be seen to be appreciated. Goldoni, in his 1787 memoirs, describes the city of his birth as one that his reader “cannot possibly imagine without having seen her. Images, maps, models, and descriptions are not enough: one must actually look upon her.” (Carlo Goldoni, *Memorie* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993), 55.) (“*Venezia è una città straordinaria che non è possibile farsene un’idea senza averla vista. Non bastano carte, piantine, modelli, descrizioni: bisogna proprio vederla.*”)

<sup>190</sup> Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti*, vol. 5 (Livorno: Coltellini, 1764), 77. (“*Non mancano al quadro né barche né gondola, che fa in eccellenza il Canaletto [...]; e le so dire che parecchi Veneziani han domandato qual sito fosse quello della città ch’essi non avevano per ancora veduto.*”).

View paintings hid the less pleasing aspects of Venice. In the second half of the century, British travel writing often focused on the Republic's abuses of power, the loose mores of its citizens, and the unhygienic nature of the city's public spaces, all to provide a contrast with England's democracy and propriety. In *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents*, published in 1783, William Beckford, the British novelist and politician, describes being so affected by the contrast between the beauty of the Piazza and the horrors he had heard about the prisons in the Palazzo Ducale, which for the English were a symbol of the despotism and corruption of the Republic, that he "could not dine in peace, so strongly was my imagination affected; but snatching my pencil, I drew chasms, and subterranean hollows."<sup>191</sup> For Beckford, the beauty of the Piazza is made even more poignant because of the inhumane treatment occurring behind the ducal palace's façade. For other tourists, the beauty of the Piazza was marred by Venetians leaving "great tokens of their liberty," as John Northall observes in his *Travels through Italy* (1766).<sup>192</sup> Piozzi also records that "all about the Ducal palace is made so very offensive by the resort of human creatures for every purpose most unworthy of so charming a place that all enjoyment of its beauties is rendered difficult to a person of any delicacy."<sup>193</sup> The habit of urinating and defecating in the square, often as a gesture of dissatisfaction with the social and political status quo, was banned once the city was seized by Napoleon at the end of the century. Before this change, though, the practice, along with knowledge of the prisons, was often cited in mid-century British travel memoirs aimed at mocking the Venetian Republic's assertion of its citizens' liberty.

An important dichotomy emerges: tourists seemed to want legendary horror, scandalous behaviour, or examples of local impropriety in the written word while seeking out an idealistic Venice for their visual souvenirs. Eglin observes that "the Venice of English language travel literature is difficult to reconcile with the Venice presented in the work of Canaletto and his imitators, but the

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<sup>191</sup> William Beckford, *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents* (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1783), 79.

<sup>192</sup> Cited in Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 84.

<sup>193</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 173.

vogue for these productions powerfully suggests the travellers wanted to see and remember Venice quite differently than travel writers described it.”<sup>194</sup> While travel writing could be salacious in its discussion of Venice’s corrupt mores and critical of the Republic’s treatment of its citizens, travellers wanted to conjure up for themselves images evoked by these words while entrusting locals with the business of depicting the cityscape as ideal.

The painted views were expected to depict an ideal Venice because these souvenirs of travel, not the memoirs or private sketches, would be prominently displayed upon returning home. By the middle of the century, the Grand Tour was coming under scrutiny: the ostensibly instructive nature of the tour of Europe was being questioned by critics who considered treasures housed in England to be study enough and who were aware that the tour was an opportunity for travellers to elude their chaperones and tutors in order to experience the debauchery of the continent.<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, female Grand Tourists were considered at risk of being influenced by the looser morals they would encounter among the local population.<sup>196</sup> Eglin emphasizes that “the practice of travel had to be defended with clear evidence of salutary ideological results.”<sup>197</sup> Although Eglin does not suggest the link, Canaletto’s paintings functioned as the visual ‘proof’ of the positive aspects of the tour since they presented Venice as a serene city of architectural delights, filled with figures representing the hard-working poor, and with an emphasis on the intellect and social graces of the numerous groups of patricians depicted in conversation in Venice’s most well-known city spaces.

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<sup>194</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 104.

<sup>195</sup> Redford notes in *Venice and the Grand Tour* that fear of venereal disease was also an argument against travel to the continent, especially to Italy, with satirical texts printed in England about the “syphilitic alumnus” of the Grand Tour and his “Venetian whore” (cited in Redford, 21-22). Jeremy Black, in *Italy and the Grand Tour*, emphasizes that in England homosexuality was referred to as the “Italian vice” (Yale: Yale UP, 2003, 130).

<sup>196</sup> For a study of the challenges and assumptions faced by women travellers, see Dolan’s *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (New York: Harper, 2001).

<sup>197</sup> Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 90.



### *1.3 Canaletto, Guardi, and the representation of central spaces in Venice*

View paintings participated in creating a discourse about Venice, as the travel memoirs of Grand Tourists make clear. Moreover, these pictorial representations trained tourists to experience Venice as a collection of views, of which the Grand Canal and the Piazza San Marco were the most important. Although both Canaletto and Guardi painted peripheral corners of Venice, the bulk of their *vedute* solidified for the viewers the essential sites to visit. Thus, the paintings participated in scripting tourist movement in the city by drawing visitors to key sites.

In this section of the chapter, I consider how the paintings function in positioning the beholder as having authority over the view, and I also devote attention to how the figures contribute to the paintings' various claims about the city. I also focus on the stylistic differences between Canaletto and Guardi since whenever the two painters were referenced by contemporary tourists or art connoisseurs it is their differing style that was brought to the fore. Using the two painters' views of the Piazza San Marco as examples, I will argue that Canaletto's paintings of the square make the claim that Venice is timeless, a city that transcends its own political uncertainties. Such images of order and good government also served to counter claims that the Grand Tour was descending into lasciviousness. In contrast, Guardi's views of the square, painted later in the century, present the city as one in flux and turmoil, and thus participate in the growing concerns about the Republic's stability. A comparison of Canaletto's and Guardi's idiosyncratic painterly styles provides insight not only on tourist spaces and modes of looking but also on how local political anxieties crept into souvenir art.

### 1.3.1 *The Piazza San Marco in political discourse*

The Piazza San Marco, as Venice's principal civic space, was for centuries a lodestone for the political since it was the site for government-sanctioned events staged to promote a sense of unity.<sup>198</sup> After the Republic conceded defeat to Napoleon, the Piazza was the site of choice for acts of dissent against the new political order. When Canaletto and Guardi painted the Piazza, they painted a space steeped in notions of identity and power, a symbolic valence that Venice's other often-depicted central space, the Rialto Bridge seen from the Grand Canal, does not exert, as evidenced by the fact that during the fall of the Republic political demonstrations both in support of the French and in protest against their arrival were centered on the Piazza. The square's ceremonial functions and civic sculpture had for centuries emphasized that Venice was powerful precisely because it was not dependent on the whims of one ruler.<sup>199</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, the Piazza San Marco was the setting for a series of published tracts promoting or bemoaning French control of Venice. The Piazza's cherished allegorical figures of Venetian military might and civic virtue, such as the bronze horses above the basilica, the figure of Justice atop the Porta della Carta, and the lion of Saint Mark on his column in the Piazzetta, were given dialogue in the various tracts, serving as mouthpieces celebrating the new French regime or calling for the return of the Republic. In printed pamphlets, leaflets, and broadsheets posted in public

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<sup>198</sup> In the Renaissance, for example, the Piazza San Marco was seen as "the metaphorical loci of the community, the space for all, or almost all, citizens" (Elizabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2002), 270).

<sup>199</sup> David Rosand notes that the image of the lion of Saint Mark "conferred an independent legitimacy upon the [...] maritime state" and symbolized the sense of security that the Republic presented itself as offering its citizens." (*Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001), 5-6). The spoils of war integrated into the Piazza after the Fourth Crusade's sack of Constantinople in 1204, specifically the bronze horses atop the basilica and the marble tetrarchs at its base, also served Venice's republican image well: the four horses and four tetrarchs evoke the idea of the many, namely the doge, the Council of Ten, and the magistrates and administrators, working as one for the sake of the common good. For more, see Marilyn Perry, "Saint Mark's Trophies: Legend, Superstition, and Archaeology in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 45.

areas in and around the square, these allegorical sculptures speak to the people, attempting to unify them either in support of the French or in nostalgic patriotism for the Venetian Republic.

A number of examples from these texts emphasize how charged the Piazza San Marco was as a political space both in the decades before and during the fall of the Republic. In “The Discourse of the Four Horses of the Piazza: Bellafronte, Bizzarro, Belmore, and Serpentino,” the bronzes horses atop the basilica are described as for years being reduced to skinny, melancholy hypochondriacs, aligning this *quadriga* with the Republic’s malaise. The text declares that with the arrival of the French the horses are rejuvenated as they hear the crowds chant “*Viva la libertà!*”<sup>200</sup> One of the horses confesses that before the revolution he saw “people dressed in black coming and going in the square, which aggravated his melancholy, but now he sees colour, green and blue, colours that are a gift to the eye, colours that are united with red and with white.”<sup>201</sup> These colours bring together those of the French and Italian flags.<sup>202</sup> The dialogue given to Venice’s four horses promotes the flag, the values of the French Revolution, and Napoleon’s presence in Italy. Furthermore, by giving dialogue critical of the former Republic to civic sculpture that had for centuries been associated with the Republic’s power, the text reframes the Piazza San Marco as a space that is critical of the Venetian Republic’s rule.

Instead of opting for a complete erasure of the symbols of the Venetian Republic, the Napoleonic army sought to shift public opinion by issuing pro-French material from the mouths of those very symbols. The lion of Saint Mark, though, often remains in the published texts a supporter of the former Venetian state. Since the lion was perceived as both a religious symbol of Mark the evangelist and a symbol of the Venetian state, Napoleon ordered the removal of numerous leonine

<sup>200</sup> Anonymous, *Scritti sortiti nella Rivoluzione di Venezia seguita il 12 maggio 1797*. Libreria Marciana. C183c96.40, 448-449. (“*Discorso che fanno i quattro cavalli di Piazza: Bellafronte, Bizzarro, Belmore, e Serpentino.*”)

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 449. (“*Nel tempo passato cosa vedevamo tutte le mattine; non si vedeva altro che passare e avanti, e indrio tanti vestiti di negro a lungo che ci faceva piuttosto malinconia che altro, ed ora non vediamo altro, il color verde e blo, colori che rallegano l’occhio, uniti anche al color rosso e bianco.*”)

<sup>202</sup> The Italian *tricolore*, influenced by the French revolutionary flag, first appeared in January of 1797 in the Italian region of Reggio Emilia which was under the protection of the Cispadane Republic, under the auspices of Napoleon (Michael Rappaport, *The Napoleonic Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013, 124.)

sculptures.<sup>203</sup> The figure of the lion was often styled in the pro-French texts as an inquisitor, so omnipresent that the Piazza's sculpture of Justice on the Porta della Carta once saw "only lions: atop the column, a lion, under my feet, a lion, to my right, a lion."<sup>204</sup> However, in these texts, the French writers often resist speaking for some of the surviving lions. In a text issued by the Cordella printing house, the two lions on the façade of the Church of San Basso, which has a side façade attached to the Piazza San Marco, discuss the political changes they witness. '*Dritto*,' the lion on the right, declares he is more at peace now that Venice is in order and neither children nor pigeons climb on him while '*Sinistro*,' the lion on the left, bemoans the lack of gaiety he once enjoyed viewing under the Venetian Republic's rule. Giving a philosophical reply, his companion, the lion on the right, cheers him up by asserting that "we are happy and carefree. [...] Do not think of the bad. Whoever thinks about tomorrow will feel anxious all today."<sup>205</sup> With these lines, the lion, the quintessential symbol of Venice, acknowledges his friend's sense of uncertainty and suggests how Venetians should react to political change.

Clearly, pictorial forms were seen as having the power to influence and shape identities. James Leith, in his work on the urban planning of the French Revolution, has noted that eighteenth-century thinkers, influenced by John Locke, believed that "monuments and public buildings could provide useful instruments for re-educating the masses," an idea brought about by what Leith describes as "an exaggerated belief in the potency of images."<sup>206</sup> The conceit of expressing political opinions through allegorical figures is, of course, not unique to the eighteenth century or to the particular historical

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<sup>203</sup> As Predrag Matvejevic notes in *The Other Venice*, General Claude Victor-Perrin decreed on 30 Floreal 1797 that images of the lion were prohibited in Venice. Matvejevic cites Victor-Perrin's declaration that the Venetian authorities had displayed "images of Saint Mark with great ceremony in the hope of re-inflicting the terror of the Inquisition upon their honest and honourable citizens" (London: Reaktion, 2007, 45.)

<sup>204</sup> Anonymous, *Scritti*, 449. ("Che Leoni: sopra la Colonna un Leone, sotto a miei piedi un Leone, a destra un Leone.")

<sup>205</sup> Anonymous, "*Feste and allegrezze che fanno i due Leoni posti nella Piazzetta di San Basso*," in *Raccolta di tutte le carte pubbliche stampate*. Stampa Francesco Andreola, 24 maggio 1797. Libreria Marciana. C183c. 98, 476. (The lion on the right states "è un piacere di non vedersi scherniti dai puttelli. [...] Il piu che ci dava fastidio erano i facchini di piazza che ci montavano sul dorso" and then tells his companion "*Va là, che sei matto a pensare a queste cose; stiamo allegramente, e non pensiamo a niente. Passi oggi, e venga domani, e non penso mai al male. Chi pensa a domani sta male tutto oggi.*")

<sup>206</sup> James Leith, *Space and Revolution* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991), 27.

moment of the Republic's fall. But, as both Leith and Richard Wittman show in their respective work on eighteenth-century approaches to architecture, buildings were often, from the mid 1700s on, "represented as speaking aloud."<sup>207</sup> Referring to the trend as that of "actor-buildings reciting dialogue," Wittman argues that the goal of such personification was to "constitute the sudden actuality of a nation more palpably," which could certainly be the goal of the French in Venice who were expected to foster a new sense of civic unity. The tendency to endow tangible architectural structures with abstract thoughts occurs at what Wittman describes as times of "underlying dislocation," which was the case in Venice at the end of the 1790s.<sup>208</sup>

After the entry into Venice of Napoleon's troops, the Piazza San Marco became the space in the city that witnessed the most change and divisiveness. Napoleon's alterations to Venice's architecture and urban plan included the addition of the Napoleonic wing of the Piazza, the tearing down of the San Geminiano church in the square to make room for a ballroom, and, near the Piazza, the establishment of public gardens which contrasted with Venice's tradition of private green spaces.<sup>209</sup> Before these changes, Napoleon, in 1797, limited the rituals associated with carnival that took place in the square. The Venetian Carnival, whose central space for over six hundred years was the Piazza, became increasingly aimed towards tourists.

Venetians saw the changes to the Piazza as an attack on their identity. Despite the fact that gestures of dissent and rebellious writings against French and later Austrian rule were punished with the death penalty, texts expressing dissatisfaction with the new order, such as the ones quoted earlier in this chapter, were indeed published and public gestures of rebellion took place. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1797, the French military placed a Tree of Liberty, with a Phrygian cap, in the square. Flanking the tree were two statues symbolizing Equality and Fraternity and burning on a pyre in the square was the

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<sup>207</sup> Richard Wittman, "Architecture, Space, and Abstraction in the Eighteenth-Century French Public Sphere," *Representations* 102 (Spring 2008): 1.

<sup>208</sup> Wittman, "Architecture, Space, and Abstraction," 21.

<sup>209</sup> Ennio Concina, *Storia dell'architettura di Venezia dal VII al XX secolo* (Milano: Electa, 1995), 301.

ducal insignia. Venetians gathered in the square and began to sing “*Albero senza vesta/Berretta senza testa/Libertà che non resta/Quattro minchioni che fanno festa.*”<sup>210</sup> The lines declare that the tree is naked, the cap is headless, liberty will not last, and, as a reference to the tree, the sculptures, and Napoleon himself, four idiots are having a party.<sup>211</sup> A few days earlier, a crowd that had gathered in the Piazza to threaten the Venetian patricians thought to be French accomplices was dispersed with cannon fire that killed many, prompting the dissenters to shout “*Viva San Marco,*” which was also the people’s earlier refrain as they reacted against the doge handing over power to Napoleon’s army.<sup>212</sup> The chant shouted in the square celebrates not only the permanence of the city’s patron saint but also of the Piazza itself as a touchstone for civic identity.

By 1797, the Piazza San Marco was no longer the site of community and allegiance it had ostensibly been during previous centuries but was instead a site of competing ideas, with the square’s well-known allegorical figures courting various allegiances. The square was both the main site for acts of political dissent against French rule and its sculptures were the spokespeople of choice in various political tracts. Clearly, the Piazza did not become a political space only in the final days of the Republic’s rule. Both as a physical space and as a space represented in texts and images, the Piazza had longstanding status as the barometer of the city’s political climate.

### 1.3.2 *Evoking timelessness: Canaletto’s Piazza San Marco*

The view paintings produced before the fall of the Republic are also part of the political history of eighteenth-century Venice. In Canaletto’s paintings of the Piazza San Marco, despite the attention to contemporary dress and the gathering of groups in conversation, Venice’s central space is rendered timeless and static. Cloaks, tents, and the omnipresent laundered sheets hanging from

<sup>210</sup> Laura Ragg, *Crises in Venetian History* (London: Methuen, 1928), 226.

<sup>211</sup> Ragg provides an even more polite translation and does not interpret the reference to ‘four men.’

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

windows do not rustle in the wind. The details do not evoke movement, and this is a common element in many of his view paintings. In *Piazza San Marco: looking South-East* (fig. 1.3), for example, which was purchased from Canaletto by the Earl of Carlisle in 1740 and displayed in the picture gallery at Castle Howard,<sup>213</sup> the flagstaffs are unadorned by flags, thus reinforcing the sense of order and calm, a feeling emphasized by the fact that the figures depicted are in clearly-delineated groups with much space between them, an element that also recurs often in Canaletto's view paintings. The composition in both these examples, representative of many others, is open rather than crowded, with emptiness, or the space between people and things, favoured over a bustling crowd or a dramatic scene. The Venice Canaletto depicts is never hurried or cramped: he paints an escape from the anxieties of the moment.

As noted earlier, a common element in Canaletto's paintings is the fact that the beholder is in a superior position, looking down from a slightly elevated vantage point at the orderly scene. Canaletto keeps the viewer at a remove: he or she is audience member rather than actor, never immersed in the scene depicted, and this quality reinforces the painting's function as a view staged for the foreigner's enjoyment. Moreover, the physical distance between the viewer observing from above and the Venetians depicted in the scene reinforces another, metaphorical, distance, that between the painting's representation of ideal daily life and the actual interactions and activities in the Piazza, which, as Piozzi noted, often included the habit of locals relieving themselves in and around the square. The position of the beholder, above the scene and thus separate from it, accentuates the fact that the painting with its idealized version of Venetian civic life is, likewise, at a remove from ordinary life, separate from the political, social, and daily realities of the Venetians depicted.

Canaletto often alters perspective to include as many sights as possible, which accentuates his tendency to idealize specific realities. His organization of space is not limited by the confines of an actual viewpoint. In the paintings of the Piazza San Marco, especially those that present views of the

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<sup>213</sup> Baker, *Canaletto*, 64.

Riva degli Schiavoni, the perspective is often deliberately skewed so that more of the eastern portion of the Riva is visible than would in reality be seen from the Piazzetta.<sup>214</sup> For example, in *Bacino di San Marco from the Piazzetta* (1735), the viewer looks out towards the waters of the Bacino, a view framed by the corner façade of the ducal palace on the left and, on the right, by one of the columns of the Piazzetta (fig. 1.4). Although the eastern end of the promenade of the Riva degli Schiavoni, with its row of waterfront buildings, would not be visible from this vantage point, Canaletto includes it here as a backdrop to the ships and sails, thus conflating the view of the water when looking straight ahead from the Piazzetta with the view of the Riva seen when the visitor, once arrived at the end of the Piazzetta, looks east. As a rebuttal to British claims that the Grand Tour introduced innocent travellers to the licentious behaviour of continentals, Canaletto's *vedute* present pleasing groups of industrious working-class locals and refined patricians congregating in and around an urban centre that has nothing scandalous to hide, one that in fact offers wide and long views out from its civic centre to the farther corners of its terrain.

Canaletto presents a Piazza San Marco that exists under clement weather and always at two particular times of day. His attention to detail includes the addition of shadows extending behind each figure. The length of these shadows, coupled with his blue skies, signals that the paintings present Venice in a perpetual mid-morning or mid-afternoon. Indeed, these busy hours of work and commerce serve Canaletto well since they bring together Venetians of different social classes and they present the city as active and industriousness, in contrast to the prevailing sense among foreigners that Venice was a shadow of its former glorious self. The paintings, when viewed at galleries in England or at Smith's Venetian palazzo, present a Venice in which time does not pass. This unchanging quality reassures viewers and makes the claim that Venice continues to be an essential part of the Grand Tour.

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<sup>214</sup> As Margaret Doody has suggested in *Tropic of Venice*, Canaletto shows "more than any real life viewer could ever see from any one point of view" (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007, 231).



### 1.3.3 Evoking change: Guardi's *Piazza San Marco*

In contrast to Canaletto, Guardi depicts Venice's Piazza as a space in flux through his characteristic brushwork and his focus on the movement of tents, capes, and shadows. His *Piazza San Marco*, from 1780, presents half the square in shadows, a space peopled by figures that are quite literally blending into each other and into the background, especially in the darker left side of the painting (fig. 1.2). His more agitated brushwork was seen by those purchasing and writing about the views as being in contrast to the restrained style of Canaletto. The Irish writer and vicar Matthew Pilkington, in his 1810 *Dictionary of Painters*, writes that Guardi's "views of Venice have excited in Italy and on this side of the Alps the admiration of those whom the brilliancy of his effects and the taste of his method prevented from perceiving how much he wants of the precision and solidity of the master."<sup>215</sup> Although Pilkington, like many of his contemporaries, incorrectly sees Guardi's particular brushwork as a lack of skill, his comparison nevertheless highlights the "solidity" of a Canaletto in contrast to the "effects" of a Guardi. While Canaletto presents the viewer with a Venice that makes claims of constancy and order, Guardi's Venice is shifting and unstable. His paintings seem to wrestle with the atmosphere in an attempt to depict transience through the relatively permanent medium of paint.

Guardi was painting at a time when Canaletto's neoclassical style dominated the tourist market for souvenir views. His busy brushwork, bent figures, emphasis on darkness, and the often unstable nature of the buildings he depicts react against the certainty and fixity of Canaletto's Venice. In his *Piazza San Marco* from the 1760s (fig.1.5), the omnipresent laundry hanging out the windows of the Procuratie Vecchie and Nuove is a visual trope in Canaletto's paintings as well. However, the white

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<sup>215</sup> Matthew Pilkington, *A Dictionary of Painters from the Revival of Art to the Present Period* (London: Fuseli, 1810), 2.

sheets in Canaletto's painting do not become one with the columns of the buildings whereas in the Guardi the columns seem to be wavering along with the washing. As Levey writes, in a Guardi painting "nothing is quite still."<sup>216</sup> Moreover, the basilica in Guardi's paintings of the Piazza is a collection of shadows and light (figs. 1.2, 1.5, 1.6) rather than the substantial mass presented by Canaletto (fig. 1.1). Since Guardi's paintings of the city resist sharp delineations between sky, sea, objects, people, and architecture, they participate in a debate about whether the precision and clarity of Canaletto's cityscapes are indeed a hallmark of the viewer's actual visual experience.

Unlike Canaletto's paintings, Guardi's do not reassure or curb anxieties. In Guardi's paintings, the sky contributes to the sense of foreboding since its colouring and contours often register as both sky and sea. Rather than the reassuring clear skies often present in Canaletto's paintings, the sky above Guardi's Piazza suggests that the elements are conspiring against Venice. Indeed, the threat of subjugation either by outside military forces or by the lagoon itself was in the late eighteenth century seen by foreigners as an inevitable punishment for Venetian decadence.<sup>217</sup> Guardi's paintings of Piazza San Marco depict an environment that seems stronger than the figures. The square, through his focus on movement, seems insubstantial and hinged between sea and sky. The figures are caught under a sky that, in its sea-like qualities, seems to overpower them (fig. 1.2). Although Guardi follows Canaletto in depicting well-spaced groups of figures in Venice's civic centre, his deliberate eschewing of what contemporary writers referred to as Canaletto's precision and solidity offers viewers a Venice that is tumultuous rather than serene.

In Guardi's work, as in Canaletto's, the beholder is positioned above the scene and perspective is often altered so that the painting includes as many of the Piazza's neighbouring architectural wonders as possible. However, Guardi does not provide as high a vantage point as Canaletto's does in his Piazza paintings. Moreover, Guardi's blurring of architectural details and figures into the

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<sup>216</sup> Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 129-130.

<sup>217</sup> Doody, *Tropic of Venice*, 28.

atmosphere does not offer as much of a feeling of ocular superiority for the viewer as in Canaletto's crisply delineated cityscapes. For example, in Guardi's *View of the Piazzetta San Marco towards the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore*, from the 1770s (fig. 1.6), which presents a view of the Bacino di San Marco similar to that in Canaletto's 1735 *Bacino di San Marco from the Piazzetta* (fig. 1.4), the façade of the ducal palace and the base of the bell tower are painted with thick layers of paint so that the details blend into each other. The viewer is presented with buildings that seem to be in a state of change and decay, rather than with a souvenir image featuring exacting architectural details. The base of the bell tower and its colouring, for example, become one with the frayed tarps set up above the Piazza's kiosks. The viewer is nevertheless elevated above the scene, such a positioning no doubt catering to what patrons and purchasers expected, in light of the popularity of Canaletto's *vedute*. Indeed, Guardi's British patron, John Strange, wanted Guardi to paint scenes that were "clear," which suggests that Strange was looking for a Canaletto by Guardi.<sup>218</sup> Like Canaletto's painting of the Bacino di San Marco, Guardi's also skews perspective to incorporate more of the architectural sights of the area. In the Canaletto, it was the Riva degli Schiavoni that was made to extend, impossibly crescent-like, into the waters of the basin, while in the Guardi the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, which is indeed seen from the Piazzetta, is ferried from its position in the Bacino to the very edge of the Piazzetta and angled so that it appears an extension of the Riva degli Schiavoni. The bringing closer to the Piazza San Marco of architectural elements in its vicinity is in keeping with the main purpose of the view paintings as representations for tourists: the purchasers expected as many important elements of the area as possible in their souvenir.

While Canaletto's paintings mask political anxieties, as well as anxieties associated with travel to the purportedly decadent city, Guardi's do the opposite: through stylistic details and imagery of decay, they suggest that Venice's political and topographic uncertainties need not be suppressed but

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<sup>218</sup> Cited in Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 135.

rather depicted for tourists as part of the character of the city. Guardi's Venice is an urgent, shadowy place, an atmosphere brought about by the relative roughness of his style and the inclusion of details that suggest movement and shift. Ostensibly, Guardi's paintings function, like Canaletto's, as souvenir images of the city, but they also react against the ideal prospect presented by Canaletto.

#### 1.3.4 *Figures in the view paintings*

Canaletto and Guardi's view paintings are peopled with figures that draw the eye since they are the human element set against the backdrop of grand architecture. In Canaletto, especially in his later work, the figures are at times simply a composite of dashes and dots, which indicates that after painting numerous similar views Canaletto adopted an artistic shorthand when depicting figures, a strategy he did not employ when painting architectural details, which are always meticulously rendered. This might lead to the conclusion that the figures are an after-thought, functioning entirely as simple indicators of scale. However, observing the figures allows the viewer to ascertain that the view paintings in incorporating figures of local Venetians present a narrative about the city that is based on socio-economic class: the poor work and the rich converse. The paintings included in this chapter are representative examples of this trope, one which is especially apparent in Canaletto and Guardi's Piazza San Marco paintings. The poor are shown either at the ubiquitous tented stalls in and around the Piazza or on the various boats moored along the Riva degli Schiavoni on in the Bacino di San Marco, and these poor are largely male, with their female counterparts, painted less frequently, shown with kerchiefs, shawls, baskets, and at times children as they cross the Piazza San Marco.

The upper middle classes and patricians are also most often male in the view paintings, their status signalled in the *vedute* by their powdered wigs and colourful cloaks, and they are depicted engaging in social interactions, often conversing, heads together, in small groups (fig. 1.1). At times,

these male figures are depicted with a young child in tow who points up to the architecture (fig. 1.5). This is a recurring detail which suggests the patrician child is being taught the heritage to which he has claim. Upper-class women are also depicted, often with attention to a sartorial element, such as the rose-coloured gown of the female figure cloaked in black in the lit portion of Guardi's painting. Guardi often paints these female figures from behind, the skirts of their gowns rustling and kicking up as they walk, adding to the sense of movement characteristic of his paintings.

The figures depicted are Venetians, not tourists. By not offering tourists representations of themselves, these souvenir views of Venice emphasize that the tourists are outsiders. At the same time, the tourist, as an all-seeing observer, is overseeing the figures displayed below who are each performing their roles, of working poor or patrician, for the benefit of the viewer who has purchased the souvenir.

The tourist-viewer observes that while the working poor who are painted in the Piazza San Marco views are not identified as ethnically different from their patrician counterparts, those working on boats wear red caps which signal that they are labourers, specifically immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, from the Dalmatian coast and Greece.<sup>219</sup> In Canaletto's *The Pier, looking towards the Mint with the column of Saint Theodore* (1742), for example, thirteen of the figures in the Piazzetta and on the gondolas are wearing the vermillion cap (fig. 1.7).<sup>220</sup> Recently, Predrag Matvejevic, in *The Other Venice*, has written that the Riva degli Schiavoni "once rested upon logs transported from Istria," from the Dalmatian coast, and that Venice's last defenders, in 1797, were "those very Schiavoni—Slavs—whose ancestors had been chained to the oars of Venetian galleys."<sup>221</sup> Greek

<sup>219</sup> The Venetian Republic, early in its history, created a trade route to Schiavonia, as the Dalmatian coast was known, and ruled the region beginning in 1420. Many of the *schiaconi* immigrated to Venice and established a confraternity, the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni in 1451. The eastern shoreline near the Piazzetta was named the Riva Dalmatia, 'vulgo de' Schiavoni,' a vulgarization that has now become the official name of that portion of the boardwalk. The presence of the 'schiaconi' in Venice is now memorialized in the boardwalk that bears their name, the Riva degli Schiavoni.

<sup>220</sup> The Sforza Castle gallery lists the title in Italian as *Il Molo, verso la Zecca con la Colonna di San Teodoro*.

<sup>221</sup> Matvejevic, *The Other Venice*, 20 and 94. Matvejevic writes that "few recall the Scavunian regiments who fought on the streets and shores of Venice's twilight" (94) and notes that the early nineteenth-century chronicler Ippolito Niero, in

immigrants were also numerous, and established the church of San Giorgio dei Greci. As William H. McNeill's research on immigration during the Venetian Republic has shown, once Venetians stopped engaging in trade, Greek, Jewish, and Croatian communities in Venice began to work the trade routes.<sup>222</sup> These cultural groups were such a part of the identity of the multicultural port city that they figured in Carlo Gozzi's *fiabe*, or fables, of Venice written in the 1760s. Vernon Lee, in her 1880 *Studies of the Eighteenth-Century in Italy*, writes that unlike the narrow canals of Venice, which evoke Romantic poetry, Venice's Piazza San Marco reminds her of Gozzi's *fiabe*. She writes that she is prompted to "re-people [the square] with the crowd in domino and mask, the nobles in their scarlet *tabarro* mantle, the Greeks and Dalmatians in their plaited skirts and red caps," adding that "if we do this, we get the background of one of Carlo Gozzi's comedies."<sup>223</sup> As Lee's writing makes clear, for tourists the Piazza San Marco was a stage set filled with a cast of colourful characters. The painted scenes of Canaletto and Guardi reinforce this approach, presenting the figures as a collection of types artfully arranged for the benefit of the spectator.

Significantly, in Guardi's depiction of well-to-do Venetians in their central square, the figures are not arranged into conversational groups with as much frequency as in Canaletto. In the Guardi canvases already referenced above, for example, male patrician figures are often shown alone, near each other but not engaging with each other, while in Canaletto's scenes solitary figures in the Piazza are much rarer. This difference speaks to the fact that Guardi was less invested in Canaletto's project of depicting images of civic-mindedness and community fostered by good government. Moreover, since Guardi did not have the large British clientele of Canaletto he was less invested in curbing British anxiety about the corrupting influence of continental travel. Canaletto's upper-class figures

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*Confessions of an Octogenarian*, "paid homage to the 'faithful Schiavoni' who 'quiet and despondent' lowered the [Venetian] flag to half-mast."

<sup>222</sup> William H. McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe, 1081-1797* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), xv. Reminding us that we are all connected as a result of the invasions and trade routes of distant ancestors, McNeill points out that modern-day Venetians have French, Greek, Slavic, Turkish, and Arab blood.

<sup>223</sup> Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth-Century in Italy* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1880), 280.

stand together under blue skies, straight-backed as sentinels, their very presence seeming to guard against lascivious behaviour (figs. 1.1, 1.3, 1.4). In contrast, Guardi's patricians are often walking away from the viewer (fig. 1.5), hunched under their capes (figs. 1.5, 1.6), heading further into shadows (figs. 1.2, 1.5). Beyond the fact that Guardi's more mysterious patricians are not reassuring promotional images for the Grand Tour, the figures are functioning, like his recurring dilapidated tents, crumbling façades, and shadowed, windy scenes, as markers of uncertainty and anxiety in the public space in Venice traditionally associated with order, control, and civic virtue.

The *vedute* of Canaletto and Guardi suggest how Venetians reacted to the gradual political and economic decline of their city. Canaletto and Guardi's view paintings of the Piazza San Marco are both souvenirs for tourists of the architecture and activity of the city and a record of local artists negotiating, through commercial art, the various symbolic valences of Venice's most politically-charged public space.

#### *1.4 Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings: Le prospettive di Venezia as a tourist map*

In the late 1720s, Smith commissioned Antonio Visentini, painter, engraver, and professor of architecture at the University of Venice, to engrave a series of Canaletto's *vedute* from Smith's own collection. Visentini engraved fourteen: a set of twelve paintings of various views of the Grand Canal that Canaletto had made for Smith in the 1720s and which Smith displayed in his gallery, as well as two other festival paintings Canaletto painted for Smith in 1734.<sup>224</sup> These last two views, the thirteenth and fourteenth in the book, are of the regatta along the Grand Canal and of the Bucintoro, the doge's elaborate gondola, arriving at the Piazzetta with the Piazza San Marco, seen from the Bacino di San Marco, as backdrop. Canaletto's paintings, with their "obsession with linear

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<sup>224</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 16.

demarcation,”<sup>225</sup> lent themselves well to the medium of engraving and also acted as guidebooks themselves, cordoning off areas of interest. The prints of these engravings were published as a book in 1735 by the Pasquali publishing house, with Smith funding the project that would make his collection of Venetian views accessible to other collectors and further cement the status of his gallery of Canaletto paintings. The book published by Pasquali was given the Latin title *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum, addito Certamine Nautico et Nundinis Venetis*, or *The Prospect of the Grand Canal of Venice, with the addition of the Nautical Contest and Venetian Market*. As I will argue below, Visentini’s book of engravings further proscribed tourist movements when visiting Venice, charting a gondola circuit in images for the visitor, with the circuit presented in the book echoed in the itineraries included in eighteenth-century guidebooks.<sup>226</sup> I will also consider how the shift in medium, from painting to engraving, removes the ethnic specificity of the labourers who figured prominently in the canal-side activity Canaletto depicted in colour.

Smith and Visentini’s project saw numerous editions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, moving from a book initially aimed at a rarefied clientele of collectors to a travel souvenir for the general tourist. The initial print run of the 1735 first edition of *Prospectus Magni Canalis* was small and aimed at an exclusive group of connoisseurs, as can be gleaned from Smith’s correspondence. In a letter to the collector Samuel Hill dated July 1730, Smith, keen to have the book he funded turn a profit, encourages Hill to purchase copies by highlighting the special printing of this first edition. Smith writes that “the prints of the views and pictures of Venice will now soon be finished. I’ve told you there is only a limited number to be drawn off, so if you want any for friends,

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> The gondola was presented as the method of choice for seeing works of art in earlier texts on Venice as well, such as the writer and artist Marco Boschini’s illustrated poem *La carta del navigar pitoresco*, from 1660. For more on Boschini, see *La carta del navigar pitoresco*, ed. Anna Pallucchini (Florence: Leo Olschki, 1966). Eighteenth-century guidebooks and Visentini’s book of engravings are, like nineteenth-century commercial souvenir albums, in continuity with this earlier tradition.



speak in time.”<sup>227</sup> The popularity of the first edition prompted a second in 1742, with the same prints included in its first section and two other sections with twenty-four additional images, again engraved by Visentini from Canaletto’s paintings.<sup>228</sup> It was this format and ordering of views, with a first section featuring the fourteen views of the 1735 edition and second and third sections with the twenty-four views, which was maintained in subsequent editions. In print from 1735 to 1840, the *Prospettive di Venezia*, as the project became known, went through two editions in the 1750s, both published by Pasquali and both including the same prints as in the 1742 edition, as well as a series of reprints in the 1780s, and a nineteenth-century edition issued by the Battaglia publishing house in the 1830s and again in 1840.<sup>229</sup>

While the first and second limited editions were intended for a coterie group of collectors, subsequent editions were accessible for purchase by *forestieri*, foreigners visiting Venice as tourists. The text that accompanies each edition varies, from simple captions in Latin in the first two editions of 1735 and 1742 to a preservation of the Latin title but the addition of introductory notes in Italian about the history of the project in later editions. The 1836 edition published by Battaglia was especially intended for tourists, with a French preface introducing the images.<sup>230</sup> The later eighteenth-century editions and those of the nineteenth century had larger print runs and were produced at a lower cost: they were intended for tourists, both those from Italy and elsewhere, as a relatively inexpensive souvenir book of Canaletto’s illustrious Venetian views.<sup>231</sup>

Although the Canaletto paintings included in Visentini’s book of engravings were displayed in Smith’s gallery as a series of views, their migration to the medium of engraving, and specifically to book form, further accentuated the serial nature of the collection of views and offered a new viewing

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<sup>227</sup> Cited in W.H. Chaloner, “The Egertons in Italy and the Netherlands, 1729-1734,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 32, no. 2 (March 1950):164.

<sup>228</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 24.

<sup>229</sup> Dario Succi, “La fortuna editoriale delle *Prospettive di Venezia*” in *Le Prospettive di Venezia, con il catalogo ragionato delle incisioni* (Mestre: Vianello, 2008), non-numbered pages.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

practice for Canaletto's well-known works. The book of engravings encouraged viewers to move quickly from one image to the next, in contrast to the way art was expected to be enjoyed when viewed *in situ*. The semi-public display of view paintings at the Smith residence in Venice reinforced, at least ostensibly, well-bred viewing practices founded on a prolonged aesthetic gaze and sustained discussion of the works being seen. The visitor to Smith's gallery moved slowly from one view to another, often in the company of fellow travellers, with Smith as host. In contrast, the succession of images to be flipped through in Visentini's book of engravings sped up the viewing of these representations of Venice so that the city, in its miniature form, could be consumed at a faster rate. The ease with which Canaletto's views could now be taken in, alone or with company, at any time, and from the comfort of one's armchair, provided the tourist with control over the pace at which Venice presented itself in images. This, along with Visentini's preservation of the beholder's raised vantage point, reinforced the position of superiority over the scene that the views afforded the tourist.

#### *1.4.1 Engravings in the 1742 edition: Charting and proscribing tourist movement*

Although tourists who purchased the book of Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings could determine the speed at which they viewed the collection of prints, the book itself, being a pre-bound collection of views, dictated the order in which the views were presented. The views in the first section of the book are arranged in a rather meandering order: instead of a formal, downstream sequence of Grand Canal views, the prints in this section, when taken together, capture what would have been various movements by locals and tourists downstream and upstream along the waterway. The second section of the book is structured as a more linear route along the Grand Canal, but with a series of backward glances to the views that have been passed. The third section, consisting of prints of various squares in the city, is, like the first two sections, also based on movement through the

canals, with this final section offering what would have been a sightseeing circuit via hired gondola to various churches and squares in the city. Since the book, especially in its later editions, was a souvenir of travel, the bound set of views possibly determined the order in which the corresponding actual views of Venice were remembered as well. The book re-members, that is to say re-organizes, the tourist's memory of physically moving through Venice.

I will focus on the 1742 edition published by Pasquali since it is the edition on which all later tourist editions were based. The thirty-eight views are divided into three sections, each with a frontispiece: the first section contains the fourteen views that comprised the 1735 edition, which ends with a view of the Piazza San Marco; the second section features ten views of the Grand Canal and two of the boardwalk on either side of the Piazzetta; the third section focuses on Venice's squares, with ten views of various *campi* and two final views of the Piazza San Marco. The book presents exclusively horizontal views in keeping with Canaletto's canvases. The central areas of Venice are favoured over peripheral views, with most images being of the Grand Canal. Venice's Arsenale, although mentioned in guidebooks, is not depicted in Visentini's book, possibly because of the decrease in Venice's naval and economic power. Although the third section of the book offers views of significant *campi*, and thus goes beyond the more well-known Grand Canal images, the Piazza San Marco area is lead up to dramatically and given pride of place as the final image with which the collection leaves the viewer in each of its sections. In fact, each section can be seen as a series of images that chronicles a particular tourist circuit whose aim is to increase anticipation for the most desired view, which is of the Piazza. This tourist desire for the most quintessential view is enticingly delayed as other views are presented, and it is ultimately fulfilled in the concluding image of each section.

*1.4.1.1 The first section of the 1742 edition*

The first fourteen views, which comprised the entire 1735 edition and the first section of all later editions, eschew the sequence, suggested by topography, of following the Grand Canal from its northern point down towards the Bacino di San Marco. Clayton considers that “the order of the engravings as published is puzzling” and suggests that “it is very doubtful that this reflects the order in which the paintings were conceived and executed.”<sup>232</sup> He notes that Canaletto’s sketches for his later Grand Canal paintings present views in sequence, with no jumps back and forth along the canal.<sup>233</sup> First moving down the canal, then upstream, and then changing course again, the first fourteen views in the book of prints begin at the Rialto, the geographic centre of Venice, and meander south along the Grand Canal towards the church of Santa Maria della Salute at the Dogana (fig. 1.8). The next image in the series turns back to look at the Grand Canal, as would a tourist in gondola when arriving at the Bacino (fig. 1.9). This northward view eases the transition to the next image, which offers a return to the Grand Canal with a view of the Rialto. The viewer is now headed towards the Santa Chiara canal, the beginning of the Grand Canal. After a few images, a brief shift away from the northbound route provides an image from the west side of the Grand Canal towards the east, with a view of the Cannareggio canal flanked by the Palazzo Labia, although the palace, omitted from the Latin caption, is not the focus of the image. Instead, the image gives prominence to the sense of moving towards the Cannareggio canal from the Grand Canal. The book then returns to charting the northbound route up to the Santa Chiara basin and then, once the basin is depicted, the series jumps to an image that has the viewer, as always, floating slightly above the Grand Canal but now headed towards the Piazza San Marco. The final and fourteenth viewpoint is from the Piazzetta and the Isola di San Giorgio

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<sup>232</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 25.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

Maggiore, with the Piazza San Marco, the civic and festive centre of Venice, viewed from a dramatic distance, with the physicality of the square, its hawkers, tourists, and market stalls pleasantly left just out of view (fig. 1.10). As in Canaletto's paintings, the raised vantage point in these images places the viewer at a distance from the scene, a distance that offers a comprehensive and idealised view.

The unusual order in which these first fourteen prints are presented has several effects on the viewer. The book encourages the tourist to follow its lead and meander back and forth along the canal. Moreover, the organization of the fourteen prints, with movement up and down the canal, captures the various routes inevitably taken by tourists in gondola over the course of their stay in Venice as they head to various sites of interest. Rather than present a didactic sequence that maps the Grand Canal, the manner in which the prints shift downstream and upstream calls attention to the comings and goings, the bustle of activity, along Venice's main water route. The views also engage the tourist-viewer's sense of familiarity with Venice, encouraging him or her to remember the physical experience of being in gondola along the Grand Canal and to notice when the images back track or jump ahead. Ultimately, though, when viewed upon a tourist's return home, the prints create a palimpsest record of the Grand Canal for the viewer, with the memory of the route physically taken partially overwritten by the permanent route laid down in the book.

#### *1.4.1.2 The second section of the 1742 edition*

The second part of the book of prints focuses on backward glances, akin to the tourist in gondola turning back at particular moments to remember more fully the view of the Grand Canal just passed. This section takes the viewer down the Grand Canal, beginning at the Santa Chiara basin, and heading towards Rialto and the Piazza San Marco, with one look back towards the north for a view of the Grand Canal from Palazzo Bembo towards the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, followed promptly by

a return to the southbound route towards Rialto, and another look back a few images later for a view of the Rialto bridge. The book includes backward glances when there is a turn in the canal, replicating the glances of a tourist headed by gondola towards the Bacino di San Marco and reinforcing these backward glances as essential to the experience of visiting Venice.

As in Canaletto's views, the Visentini engravings are accompanied by a caption that situates by providing specific landmarks as coordinates. In this second section of the book, noteworthy palaces, such as the Vendramin-Calergi, are featured in the captions. The palaces chosen are often those that influenced the architecture of later Venetian palaces or take the name of significant figures, such as the Palazzo Bembo, home of the Renaissance scholar, and the Palazzo Flangini, home of the seventeenth-century architect. Although a map of Venice is not provided, the engravings' rational order, in contrast to the previous section, urges the viewer to experience a gradual and clearly-demarcated arrival to the Piazza San Marco and its environs. In his description of the engravings in this second section of the book, J.G. Links notes that "the distant background of the last picture has become the foreground of the present one."<sup>234</sup> This structure allows and also expects viewers to prepare for their trip by situating themselves in advance along the canal. The penchant for charting one's route is in contrast to the next century's emphasis on getting lost in order to fully experience Venice, as I will highlight in the following chapter when I turn to nineteenth-century guidebooks and photographs of peripheral canals. Furthermore, the second section of the book of prints, like the first, operates as if the views are a memory-trigger for tourists to recall their Grand Canal ride and, specifically, to remember their viewing experience of taking in the sights along the Grand Canal and then re-situating themselves along the Canal. This section places emphasis on the mode of looking a tourist engages in while in gondola on the city's main waterway.

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<sup>234</sup> J.G. Links, *Views of Venice* (London: Dover, 1971), 48.

This second section of Visentini's series ends with two views of the Riva degli Schiavoni from the viewpoint of a boat along the canal. The penultimate view presents the Palazzo Ducale, Piazzetta, and Riva degli Schiavoni looking east. The final view looks west, towards the church of Santa Maria della Salute and the route just taken by the tourists along the Grand Canal (fig. 1.11). The penultimate view is the one the tourists see when they first look east along the Riva degli Schiavoni as their gondolier guides the boat to the dock. The final image is the one tourists enjoy after having disembarked from the boat: they look west along the boardwalk for a view of the Santa Maria della Salute church seen across the canal from the Piazzetta where the tourists, their gondola tour complete, now stand. These last two prospects, along with the backward glances offered throughout this section, serve as visual evidence that the book of prints offered an embodied experience for the tourist to model.

#### *1.4.1.3 The third section of the 1742 edition*

The third section of the book of prints of Visentini's engravings also charts a tourist sightseeing circuit. In this case, it is a circuit through the *sestieri*, the six districts of Venice. The section is organized with an awareness of the canals that link important churches and squares. It presents Venice's *campi*, or squares, initially in a counter clockwise motion, beginning with the Campo Zanipolo in the Castello *sestiere*, with a view of the church of Santi Giovanni e Polo from a minor canal, moving on past another Castello square adjacent to the Cannaregio *sestiere* and on to another in the San Marco *sestiere* close to Rialto, before depicting the San Polo *sestiere*, specifically the Campo San Polo, which would be arrived at either by crossing the Rialto bridge or taking a gondola across the Grand Canal. Indeed, if we take the engravings as charting an itinerary, the route requires that, as was the custom in the eighteenth century, a tourist would hire a gondolier and be

taken to see the different *campi*, disembarking to walk into the squares and visit the churches, before continuing in gondola along the canals.

The images in this third section also offer insight into which sites beyond the Grand Canal and Piazza San Marco were considered especially noteworthy and how tourists moved from one site to another. After the Campo San Polo, the next image features the neighbouring Campo San Rocco, with a view of the Scuola di San Rocco, which was often visited since it features a two-floor painting cycle by Tintoretto. The following engraving, still moving counter clockwise through Venice, jumps to the Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo, again asserting by its inclusion that its church was one not to miss. Since the Accademia bridge was only built in the nineteenth century and public *vaporetti* introduced in the 1880s, the only routes from the Campo San Rocco in San Polo to the Campo Zobenigo in the San Marco *sestiere* were either by foot, then by *traghetto*, which is the public gondola that traverses the canal, and then by foot again, or by private gondola. From Campo Zobenigo, the route adopts a brief clockwise motion to visit the Campo San Stefano, most likely because, given the topography of the *sestiere*, tourists would have walked to it as their gondolier waited at the previous campo.

Significantly, what these engravings in Visentini's third section offer is a gondola route for tourists sightseeing beyond the Grand Canal. The prints indicate that when tourists returned to their waiting gondolier at the Campo Zobenigo they should be taken, in a clockwise/diagonal motion, along the Rio di Verona, Rio Fuseri, and Rio San Zulian to the square featured in the next engraving, the Campo Santa Maria Formosa, and its church. The next important church in the tourist circuit seems to have been the Gesuiti, with its *trompe d'oeil* green and white marble evoking sumptuous folds of damask silk. The church, well north of the previous stop, is at the Fondamente Nuove, in the north of Cannaregio and is thus a significant detour that initially may seem better placed right after the relatively nearby church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, which was the first stop on the itinerary. However, the aesthetic appeal of the canal route from Santa Maria Formosa to Gesuiti and the church's interior



itself must have warranted the detour. Directly south from the Gesuiti, the next stop on the route in the book of prints is the Campo Apostoli near the Strada Nova in Cannaregio. The image features a sliver of water at its edge to emphasize that the viewers of the image are sitting in a gondola on the canal. After the Apostoli view, the page turns and the viewers are promptly inside the Piazza San Marco, with their back to the basilica, the base of the bell tower at their left and, facing them, bare flagstaffs allowing for an unobstructed view across the wide square towards the church of San Geminiano. While the armchair tourist holding the book travels promptly to the Piazza, the actual tourist enjoys a long glide along the Grand Canal from the Apostoli or a shortcut through minor canals, before arriving at the Piazza.

The last engraving in this last section of the Visentini collection finally satisfies by providing an image of the Piazza San Marco with a view of the basilica and bell tower at the end of the expansive square. Just as tourists converged onto the Piazza San Marco, the three sections of the book of prints culminate with an image that creates an impact not only because it presents the city's main square and most recognizable architecture but also because it mirrors and cultivates the anticipation of approaching the square. The publication of the engravings participated in fostering tourists' interest in having their gondola ride organized to culminate in a significant aesthetic moment, the approach on foot to the Piazza San Marco.<sup>235</sup>

#### 1.4.2 *Figures in the engraved views: Effects of the shift in medium from painting to engraving*

Visentini's engravings reproduce the details of Canaletto's paintings, but the shift from painting to engraving removes most traces of cosmopolitanism. This is due to both the lack of colour,

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<sup>235</sup> In nineteenth-century editions of Visentini's engravings, the image of the Bacino di San Marco with the doge's Bucintoro, which ends the first section of the 1735 edition, was placed first. Nineteenth-century publishers of the visual guidebook wanted to show the drama of the Piazza San Marco area immediately, but actual nineteenth-century guidebooks, as we will see in the next chapter, still favoured an itinerary that, like the Visentini series, offered a slow arrival to the Piazza.

which prevents the sartorial details that indicate different ethnic groups from being noticed, and the medium of engraving's inability to depict with great precision the facial details on the already miniature figures in the original Canaletto. As a result, Venice in the engravings is less a cosmopolitan port city and more a city of rather homogeneous figures.

Visentini's engraving of Canaletto's *The Pier, looking towards the Mint with the column of Saint Theodore* (fig. 1.7) is a pertinent example of the engravings' partial erasure of sartorial details and facial features. In Venice, as in other European cities, the centuries-old mandate that minority groups be identified by the colour of their caps was still in place in the eighteenth century.<sup>236</sup> In Canaletto's painting, as discussed above, the labourers working on the gondolas and those carrying pails of water on the boardwalk are wearing the red cap that indicates they are *schiaconi*, Slavic immigrants. In Visentini's engraving, because of the medium rather than because of any deliberate intention on the part of Visentini or Smith, the lack of colour makes the caps difficult to distinguish as being those worn by this large immigrant population (fig. 1.11). Canaletto foregrounded these labourers and placed the Venetian patricians with their powdered wigs in the background, but in the engraving the differing social classes of the foreground and background figures cannot be distinguished. For example, one cannot, when viewing the print of the Visentini engraving, determine if the figures under the arcaded walkway on the right are upper class. Nevertheless, the medium of engraving does not remove all small-scale sartorial detail: two of the men in the trio of figures standing at the right below the column are wearing turbans, but this detail that attests to the ethnically-diverse landscape of Venice is much more apparent in the Canaletto, especially since Canaletto calls attention to it by colouring one turban red and the other blue. The third figure in this trio, who looks out towards the viewer, is wearing a yellow cap in the Canaletto painting, and this most likely

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<sup>236</sup> As Eric Silverman writes in *A Cultural History of Jewish Dress*, "the color of one's hat was no trivial matter [...]. Everyday privileges often hinged on the hue and style of one's clothing" (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 58.

identifies him as Jewish since Jews were required for centuries to wear identifying yellow caps.<sup>237</sup>

Visentini does engrave the figure's moustache, but his probable ethnicity as a Jew in the city is only evident if one has already seen the original painting.

With noticeable signs of multiple ethnicities eliminated in the book of prints produced from Visentini's engravings, the tourist takes home images that, albeit inadvertently, present Venice as having a more uniform populace. As a souvenir both of Venice and of Canaletto's *vedute*, the book of prints records and values the Venetian topography and architecture depicted by Canaletto more than Canaletto's attention to the details associated with the many figures he included in his paintings.

#### 1.4.3 *Influence of souvenir views on the tourist circuit included in eighteenth-century guidebooks*

Five years after the first publication of Visentini's engravings as a book of prints, Giovanni Albrizzi published *Il forestiere illuminato* (1740), an illustrated guidebook for foreigners in which Albrizzi begins with a description and images of the Piazza San Marco, its ducal palace, bell tower, and library. Clearly influenced by Venetian opera and the stage set style of Canaletto's paintings, Albrizzi writes that the Piazza, framed by porticoes, colonnades, statues, and other ornaments, "resembles a noble and majestic theatre."<sup>238</sup> He advises tourists to spend six days in Venice, one for every *sestiere*, or neighbourhood, in the city,<sup>239</sup> and thus shapes the tourist circuit as a function of Venice's administrative organization of space. Louis Marin has argued that itineraries engage in a "spatializing process": the repetitive structures of parades and processions, he writes, "re-inscribe through their itineraries, that is, through the narrativity of their various sequences, a hierarchized and

<sup>237</sup> Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), 24. When the French took control of Venice at the end of the eighteenth century, the centuries-old edict requiring Jewish men to wear the yellow cap was abolished as was the segregation of Jews to the city's ghetto.

<sup>238</sup> Giovanni Albrizzi, *Il forestiere illuminato* (Venice: Albrizzi, 1740), 47. Albrizzi writes that the Piazza "rassembra un nobile e maestoso teatro."

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 7. Albrizzi writes in Italian, "sei giornate, giusta il numero dei sestieri."

articulated system of values of which that narrativity is a manifestation.”<sup>240</sup> If, as Marin proposes, parades and processions legitimate social, political, and religious institutions, the same claim can be made about written and visual guidebooks since they too script behaviour and legitimize what is of cultural and social importance. Albrizzi’s guidebook focuses especially on the San Marco, Castello, and Cannaregio *sestieri*, all of which feature prominently in Canaletto’s *oeuvre* and would be included, two years after the guidebook was published, in the third section of the second edition of Visentini’s book of engravings. Albrizzi’s organization of tourist sites in the Castello *sestiere* creates a circular movement, much like the organization of Visentini’s images of Venetian *campi*, which serves as further evidence that the circuit was one taken by tourists. This circuit was solidified as essential with the publication in the span of two years of both the guidebook and the 1742 edition of the book of prints.

While the book of prints published by Pasquali and funded by Smith presents the tourist circuit as a function of Venice’s geographic, not administrative, organization of space, Albrizzi’s guidebook, with its organization by *sestiere*, is still guided by the way the *vedutisti* represented space. Canaletto, and by extension Visentini, divides up the space he depicts so that, as Paulson writes, “the spectator [is...] mentally blueprinting and reconstructing the whole complex of divided spaces.”<sup>241</sup> Albrizzi’s guidebook does the same since the tourist is making spatial connections between the *sestiere*-based circuits proposed in each section. Both the guidebook and the book of prints cater to and further promote interest in what Brian Dolan, in his work on the Grand Tour, has described as the “principles of particularisation,”<sup>242</sup> with the images chronicling and organizing the city just as the diligent tourist would chronicle and organize her thoughts in detail both during and after a day’s sightseeing. In his analysis of Canaletto’s paintings of London, Mark Hallett writes that “the city is depicted as a rhythmic assemblage of architectural landmarks [...]. Canaletto’s distinctive shorthand of masts and

<sup>240</sup> Louis Marin, *On Representations*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 43 and 47.

<sup>241</sup> Paulson, “Living Space,” 468.

<sup>242</sup> Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*, 192.

sails geometricize and order [the] social space.”<sup>243</sup> The focus on ordering is evident in Canaletto’s Venetian views, which demarcate spaces worthy of tourist attention; in the Visentini book of prints, which structures the tourist circuit based on Venice’s water and land topography; and also in Albrizzi’s presentation of Venice’s sights by *sestiere*. These examples of parcelling Venice into manageable areas for tourists seem to have influenced a prominent book of art scholarship later in the century, Zanetti’s 1771 *Della pittura veneziana*, which presents a survey of Venice’s art organized by *sestiere* and topography, in contrast to traditional surveys of art organized chronologically such as Zanetti’s earlier *Descrizione di tutte le pubbliche pitture della città di Venezia*, published in 1733, before Visentini’s series and Albrizzi’s guidebook organized Venice for tourists via topography and administrative regions.

View paintings, topographically-organized engravings, and *sestiere*-based guidebooks and art books presented Venice in souvenir images and texts as a series of linked yet cordoned spaces. While this stage set effect in Canaletto’s work has often simply been seen as the result of his training in stage design, Jackson Cope, in his study of Goldoni’s plays, has argued that both Goldoni’s staging for plays set in England and Canaletto’s organization of space “display the admired orderly effects of philosophic restraint [and] calm of mind.”<sup>244</sup> Canaletto’s views, Visentini’s engravings, and guidebooks by Albrizzi and others represented Venice, *la serenissima*, as serene, rational, and palatable for tourists steeped in neoclassicism. As William Ivins has stated in his work on print culture, “the symbolic report of an event is of greater importance than the event [since] we think and act on the symbolic report and not on the concrete event.”<sup>245</sup> Visentini’s engravings especially, since they were often reproduced, are an example of just such a “symbolic report” in that they, along with

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<sup>243</sup> Mark Hallett, “Framing the Modern City: Canaletto’s Images of London,” *Canaletto and England*, eds. Michael Liversidge and Jane Farrington (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries, 1993), 48.

<sup>244</sup> Jackson I. Cope, “Goldoni’s England and England’s Goldoni,” *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (January 1995): 117.

<sup>245</sup> William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 180.

view paintings, travel literature, and guidebooks, became what tourists thought of and acted upon, to use Ivins's wording, before, during, and after their time in Venice.

### 1.5 Conclusion

In their travel writing, Grand Tourists often happily reported that Venice lived up to its representations. Piozzi, writing during her first visit in 1785, acknowledges the effect of the view paintings on her conception of Venice when she declares that "it was wonderfully entertaining to find thus realized all the pleasures that the excellent painter had given us so many times reason to expect."<sup>246</sup> As well as being souvenir views, the paintings produced by Canaletto and Guardi are the visual records of the period leading up to a moment of political change, especially when one considers the *vedutisti*'s paintings of Venice's most political space, the Piazza San Marco. Canaletto, catering to the neoclassical tastes of his British and American clientele, presents a Venice in constant afternoon sun and this image of stability, in contrast to the often seedy descriptions of the city in the period's travel writing, helped to promote the salubrious effects of the Grand Tour at a time when the tour's more decadent aspects were under scrutiny. Guardi, in contrast, presented for his more eccentric patrons a faded Venice that was often shadowed in mystery and uncertainty, with architecture and figures blending into a tumultuous atmosphere. Canaletto, though, more so than Guardi, incorporates in his view paintings the immigrant labourers whose toil helped to maintain the fortunes of the Venetian Republic for so long. With patricians conversing in the Piazza San Marco and the poor working in the stalls and boats, Canaletto's paintings offer the viewer a collection of types and present a class-based narrative about the city.

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<sup>246</sup> Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections*, 150.

The books of engravings produced by Visentini and sold by Pasquali and Smith partially erase these details in the Canaletto works, instead bringing to the fore possible patterns of tourist circulation in Venice. The three distinct sections of the 1742 edition each proposes a tourist route in gondola: first a meandering one, then a more orderly route along the Grand Canal, with backward glances to the noteworthy views one has just passed, and finally a tour by gondola and by foot to the various interior squares and churches of the city. Each section of the book of prints ends with images of the Piazza San Marco, which further attests to the fact that both the tourist circuit in gondola and the tradition of view painting in Venice reinforced the Piazza as the city's most significant tourist and civic space, a reality that would be further emphasized at the end of the century by the many published tracts and public gestures set in the square after the fall of the Republic.

The tourists who saw these various views of Venice, in galleries back home, in Smith's palace on the Grand Canal, as copies made by poor artists and sold to Venice's picture shops, or as prints in the various book editions of Visentini's engravings, were not simply passive recipients of souvenir views. Piozzi's desire while in Venice to try her hand at sketching what Canaletto had depicted is one of many examples that can be understood as an attempt to insert one's own particular reaction to the city and move away from being a tourist whose perceptions were determined by images. Furthermore, the book of prints, with its images that could be viewed in private and at a fast pace, in contrast to the travel ritual of contemplating art *in situ* among like-minded company, provided a different viewing practice that gave the viewer more control over his or her engagement with the souvenir view. Smith certainly collaborated closely with the local *vedutisti* and his involvement is a prime example of how producers and consumers of views intersected, but the tourists themselves actively engaged with the visual representations of Venice both in their travel writing, which in turn shaped their readers' views of the souvenir imagery, and in their physical movements in the city as they followed or departed from the organization of space demarcated for them.

## Chapter Two

### Nineteenth-Century Souvenirs: Photographs of the City

#### 2.1 Introduction

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the tourist experience of visiting Venice was affected by two major technological shifts. In 1846, a newly-built rail bridge connected Venice to the mainland. By making the island city accessible more quickly and less expensively, rail travel fuelled and facilitated the tourist desire to experience a city written about rhapsodically in letters and guidebooks.<sup>247</sup> The second technological development was the onset of commercial photography in the 1850s. With this, souvenir images were for the first time available inexpensively to the growing number of upper middle-class foreigners convening on Venice from North America and Western Europe.<sup>248</sup> While information on nineteenth-century tourist numbers in the city has not been recorded for posterity, the rise in shops selling views of Venice suggests tourism increased towards the end of the century. In the 1880s and 1890s, Venetian photographers not only operated their own studios but also sold their photographs to the numerous shopkeepers who turned to selling souvenir views as a

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<sup>247</sup> For a study of the history of the Italian rail system, see Albert Schram's *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). Sanna Turoma, in *Brodsky Abroad: Empire, Tourism, and Nostalgia*, cites 1846 as the "turning point when Venice was connected to the mainland by a viaduct; in 1857 a railway opened; and after 1871, when Monte Cenis, the first railroad tunnel through the Alps, opened the 'hordes of tourists' in Venice became a repeated phrase in travel journalism (Madison: U of Wisconsin, 2010), 154. John Pemble, in *Venice Rediscovered* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) also emphasizes that the railway prompted an increase in tourism.

<sup>248</sup> In *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, John Tagg states that the number of middle-class clients posing for daguerreotype portraits in the 1840s and 1850s "created for the first time an economic base on which a form of portraiture could develop that was accessible to a mass public" (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988, 43). As for souvenir images of city views, which Tagg does not focus on, the *British Journal of Photography* published "Notes on Passing Events" on May 1, 1874, anonymously written by a 'Peripetetic Photographer," in which the reader is told that folios of views of Venice are "excellent" and "cost only two pence in Venice" (*The British Journal of Photography*, eds. Sir William Crookes, T.A. Malone, et al, vol. 21, 1874, non-numbered page).



profitable venture. Despite the many points of sale for images of the city, supply was being depleted at such a rate that local photographer Tomaso Filippi records making weekly runs to various shops to restock.<sup>249</sup> A letter sent to Filippi by one of his clients in the late spring of 1897 succinctly attests to the tourist demand. Emilio Aickelin, a shopkeeper on the busy via 22 Marzo, asks Filippi to send him all his hand-coloured and black-and-white city views because “*mi manca tutto*,” ‘I am missing everything.’<sup>250</sup>

In light of the nineteenth-century tourist’s seemingly insatiable demand for mass-produced souvenir photography, this chapter investigates how Venetian photographers chose to present the daily world of their city for foreigners. The promise of an ostensibly authentic ordinary moment captured by a local photographer galvanized tourists to purchase numerous ‘views,’ as the photographs were called. This term aligns the photographs with the earlier ‘views,’ the painted and engraved *vedute* of the eighteenth century. Like many of their eighteenth-century predecessors, tourists were aware that their expectations and perceptions were being shaped by commercial souvenirs. I will argue that nineteenth-century visitors, like the Grand Tourists before them, were not passive recipients of tourist culture but rather consumers whose aesthetic, and increasingly literary, interests were incorporated into souvenir images by the local producers of these images. Displayed prominently in parlours back home, the photographs were perused by those who had chosen them in Venice and those who might one day visit the city, thus structuring experiences with the city and creating views, both literally and metaphorically, for tourists.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Letter from shopkeeper Ada Aickelin, whose store at 2038 via 22 Marzo carried Filippi’s souvenir photographs, to Tomaso Filippi dated March 11, 1897, in folder marked ‘Corrispondenze Clienti 1896-1899’ in the Archivio Filippi. Aickelin tells Filippi that “*mi farebbe un grande piacere se passasse da me*,” which makes it clear that Filippi hand-delivered his merchandise to various stores, and, given the number of requests, seems to have done so numerous times a month. Filippi’s personal and commercial archive of letters, notebooks, and photographs is housed in Venice at the *Ufficio Conservatori delle Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione di Venezia* (IRE).

<sup>250</sup> Letter from Emilio Aickelin to Filippi dated May 24, 1897, in folder marked ‘Corrispondenze Clienti 1896-1899.’

<sup>251</sup> Margaret Plant, *Venice: Fragile City, 1797-1997* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 128. Nineteenth-century practices of showcasing souvenir images, in which the photographs were prominently featured in parlours either as albums or as single images in a revolving display case, are discussed in the next chapter.

The focus in this chapter is on images of Venice produced by local photographers, namely Carlo Ponti, Carlo Naya, and Tomaso Filippi, who photographed their own city for commercial purposes.<sup>252</sup> While there were a number of foreign photographers working in the city such as Lorent August, a pioneer of large-format city views, Auguste Bisson, the first to photograph Mont Blanc, and John Hobbes, who worked on Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, they tended to photograph the city for published collections or exhibitions with the aim of documenting a foreign city and culture.<sup>253</sup> In contrast, the photographs made by Venetian photographers were the ones purchased in great numbers by foreigners and contributed to the city's presentation of itself to tourists. The century of photography's inception witnessed tendencies and shifts in Venetian souvenir art that have, through the repetition that is inherent in the photographic medium, shaped a collective pre-memory of Venice. Reflecting on this process, Margaret Doody suggests that "consciously or not, modern visitors still see Venice through nineteenth-century lenses and suppositions."<sup>254</sup> The photographs produced in the nineteenth century participated in creating those lenses and suppositions.

In 1882, Henry James wrote with characteristic elegance on Venice, one of his best-loved subjects, intimating that the proliferation of images of Venice had resulted in the actual city taking a back to seat to its own signifiers:

Venice has been painted and described many thousands of times, and of all the cities of the world is the easiest to visit without going there. Open the first book and you will find a rhapsody about it; step into the first picture-dealer's and you will find three or

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<sup>252</sup> Naya also photographed Venice's heritage buildings, architectural details, and art for the city's archives and restoration projects. Filippi was commissioned by book publishers and art historians. In the early twentieth century, requests for photographs of documents and exhibitions were popular. For example, a professor in Naples commissioned Filippi to photograph Casanova's letters (in a letter dated August 18, 1910 in the folder labelled "Corrispondenza Laboratorio fotografico"). Bernard Berenson, writing from the Villa I Tatti in Florence, enlists Filippi to photograph the Church of San Antonio Abate in the Friuli region north of Venice. Filippi's letter to Berenson, dated April 6, 1910, points out the difficulties in photographing large-scale paintings, many of which were in "*cattiva condizioni*," poor condition (in the same folder as above, Archivio Filippi). Significantly, Filippi took on these commissions mostly after the 'craze' for souvenir photographs that kept him busy in the 1880s and 1890s.

<sup>253</sup> For more on non-Venetian photographers who photographed Venice, see Dorothea Ritter's *Venice in Old Photographs, 1841-1926* (London: Calmann and King, 1994).

<sup>254</sup> Doody, *Tropic of Venice*, 345.

four high-coloured ‘views’ of it. There is notoriously nothing more to be said on the subject. Every one has been there, and every one has brought back a collection of photographs.<sup>255</sup>

This excerpt from James’ travel writing alludes to the *Ricordo di Venezia*, a souvenir album of commercial photographs that tourists could assemble themselves by choosing their favourite images.<sup>256</sup> The observation that “everyone has brought back a collection of photographs” tells us, with James’ unmistakable note of disdain, that this act of purchasing had by the early 1880s already become a tourist duty. The quotation marks around the word “views” suggests that James holds the word with pincers, criticizing third-rate copies of Canaletto’s paintings. To him, the purchasing of souvenirs is anathema to those seeking out a more authentic travel experience. However, just as James uses quotation marks for “views” the same can be used for the notion of the “authentic” moment, as James himself realizes when he states that for the tourist “originality of attitude is impossible.”<sup>257</sup> James is writing a hundred years before Susan Sontag observes that “the camera makes everyone a tourist in someone else’s reality and eventually in one’s own.”<sup>258</sup> For him, the proliferation of souvenir photographs distances the tourist from his or her lived experience, diminishing the experience of seeing the city for the first time and for oneself.

While James eschewed “the young Venetians who sell bead bracelets and ‘panoramas’ [and] are perpetually thrusting their wares at you,” most other tourists succumbed to this “magnificent treadmill,” as James describes it.<sup>259</sup> The American writer and philanthropist Mary Elizabeth Sherwood, reminiscing at the end of the century about her 1869 visit to Italy, writes:

The square of St. Mark’s is the core of Venice, the scene of its life and movement!

What a place to ‘go a-shopping’ is this famous square! Beads from Murano, Byzantine

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<sup>255</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 7. James’ piece on Venice was first published in *Century Magazine* (November 1882, 2-23).

<sup>256</sup> In the next chapter, I focus on serial images, specifically the ones collected in the *Ricordo di Venezia* album.

<sup>257</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 10.

<sup>258</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 57.

<sup>259</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 11.

mosaics, turquoise ornaments of Oriental fashion, gold chains of Venice; long, slender, and delicate goblets, winged lions for your watch-chains; rings with *Ricordo di Venezia* for a legend; shops full of bric-a-brac, [...], fans with which Jessica may have once flirted, pictures, photographs [...]. Take a pot of gold when you walk around the Piazza.<sup>260</sup>

One of the photographs tourists inevitably brought home while “a-shopping” in the Piazza was of the Piazza San Marco itself, looking towards the basilica and bell tower (fig. 2.1).<sup>261</sup> In contrast to descriptions such as Sherwood’s of a crowded square filled with tourists purchasing souvenir photographs and trinkets, and, notably, in contrast to Canaletto’s paintings of the square as one bustling with activity, the Piazza is most often photographed almost empty, most likely in the early morning. There is not a souvenir stall in sight and only a handful of tourists and locals. The decision to avoid photographing the square at its most hectic, along with other conventions that emerge when studying commercial souvenir photographs of Venice, will be explored in detail in this chapter.

This chapter’s central argument, and one of the through lines in this project, is that souvenir images became spaces of tourism themselves that semaphore, as in visually signal, a Venice. Specifically in the nineteenth century, commercial souvenir photographs present a Venice that shifts away from its most popular eighteenth-century incarnation, namely Canaletto’s depiction of power and vitality. Canaletto’s paintings emphasized the bustle and commerce of daily life in the Piazza. Despite this difference, both Canaletto’s paintings and many of the souvenir photographs of Venice’s central spaces promote Venice as timeless. However, by expanding the views offered to tourists with the addition of peripheral canals, the photographs also present the city as mysterious and inaccessible, which can be aligned with the atmosphere that Guardi evoked in his *vedute*. Furthermore, unlike the

<sup>260</sup> Mary Elizabeth Wilson Sherwood, *Here, There, and Everywhere* (New York: Herbert S. Stone, 1898), 40-41.

<sup>261</sup> Of the many photographs of the Piazza San Marco taken from virtually the same angle during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, I am including one by Filippi dated 1895. All of Filippi’s photographs have been digitized during a decade-long process begun in 1997 by the IRE and can now be viewed online at [www.tomasofilippi.it](http://www.tomasofilippi.it).

view paintings of the previous century, which did not depict tourists prominently if at all, a genre of souvenir photographs emerges that makes tourists the central focus, thus presenting the city as a backdrop for foreigners to enact their roles as tourists.

In the following introductory sections of this chapter, I begin by highlighting the parallels between the nineteenth-century souvenir photographs and the eighteenth-century souvenir paintings since these speak to an attempt on the part of the photographers to create continuity and align their images, seen by many at the time as mechanical and devoid of artistic skill,<sup>262</sup> with their more established painted predecessors.<sup>263</sup> I then provide an overview of Venice's social and political situation during the unification of Italy, with an eye to factors that affected tourism, before considering how tourists conceived of themselves. I devote attention to tourist fascination with Gothic and Romantic literature since these elements are evident in the souvenir images produced for tourists, especially in the case of photographs of the Bridge of Sighs and of peripheral canals and bridges.

After a survey of the scholarship on Venetian photography and attention to Venice's status as a centre of commercial photography, this chapter studies single photographs – images sold separately as opposed to those sold in albums – and gathers the city spaces photographed for tourists into two categories. The first type can be referred to as central spaces, landmarks that were essential to the tourist experience, such as the Piazza San Marco area, as well as the Grand Canal, Rialto Bridge, and Bridge of Sighs. The second type of space photographed can be described as peripheral, and includes minor bridges and canals. My analysis calls attention to the representational strategies photographers used to depict these two often-photographed spaces.

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<sup>262</sup> In 1863, the *London Review* notes that “last week we dealt with photographers in their power of copying. What shall we say to their power of producing original pictures? This, with merely mechanical and optical means, would appear an almost hopeless task, and that attempts of this sort usually fail is not surprising.” The editor of the *Photographic News: A Weekly Record of the Progress of Photography* includes this in the September 18, 1863 edition of the journal dedicated to tracing the development and reception of the new medium.

<sup>263</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the repetitive quality of the eighteenth-century *vedute* was also derided by some during their heyday as lacking in imagination, and later nineteenth-century guidebooks tended to celebrate photographs over painted copies of Canaletto's cityscapes. However, the originals themselves by Canaletto and Guardi, which could be seen in various public and private galleries, were certainly viewed positively in the nineteenth century, despite Ruskin's critique of Canaletto, with Guardi's style preferred by those with a sensibility for impressionistic scenes.

The effect of a reproduced image on a viewer's perception is also relevant here, as it was in the previous chapter on eighteenth-century view paintings and engravings.<sup>264</sup> The Rialto Bridge itself, for example, is a "life-sized reproduction of the original," the original being, paradoxically, photographs of the bridge.<sup>265</sup> This reversal of signified and signifier in the tourist engagement with the souvenir view, which came to the fore in a number of eighteenth-century tourist writings studied in the previous chapter, continues with the nineteenth-century souvenir photographs, and it is again, and even more emphatically, the tourists' own writings that support this claim.

Due to the much greater volume of souvenir images of the city readily available both in Venice and in parlours back home, nineteenth-century tourists, even more than their Grand Tourist predecessors, became both actual tourists and tourists of images: they 'toured' the physical spaces of Venice and the spaces in the photographs. In my study of the nineteenth-century output of souvenir images of the city, which were largely produced by locals for tourists, I draw on the writings of both tourists and photographers. While Canaletto and Guardi left no record of their engagement with the eighteenth-century souvenir industry, Filippi meticulously chronicled his observations on the popularity of souvenir photographs. My contribution here incorporates his letters, photographs, and notebooks. This archive has not received much critical attention before now despite the fact that the documents and the extensive collection of photographs offer a wealth of details about both the visual conventions in the photographs and the tourist culture of purchasing photographs during this period in the history of Venice's production of souvenir imagery.

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<sup>264</sup> See Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, eds. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York: Routledge, 2004), as well as Gilles Deleuze on the positive and subversive aspects of repetition in *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), and Georges Van Den Abbeele's *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1992).

<sup>265</sup> Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," 130.

### 2.1.1 Constancy and change in souvenir views of Venice

Representative of many similarly-composed photographs of the Piazza, Filippi's (fig. 2.1) echoes the perspective and framing of the Canaletto painting discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter (fig. 1.1). As in the painting, the view of the square is framed by the arcades of the Procuratie Vecchie on the left and the Procuratie Nuove on the right, their receding horizontals leading the eye to focus on the basilica and, in front of it, the wide, open space of the Piazza. Canaletto's painting, though, provides a wider view of the square, with the basilica further in the distance, but the composition is nevertheless similar. The photograph is taken from a slightly elevated vantage point, as is Canaletto's painting, thus giving the viewer a superior position over the scene. In both, though, the vantage point is not an exclusive one, specific to one individual in a particular location, such as an opera box, or an impossible-to-locate narrow canal, but a shared, common one, that could be accessible to all, thus both the painting and photograph provide a public construct of the city, as befits Venice's key civic space.

By the late nineteenth century, the view of the Piazza looking towards the basilica had already travelled through different media. The Canaletto painting itself was engraved by Visentini and included at the end of almost every edition of his *Prospettive di Venezia* from the mid 1700s until the 1830s.<sup>266</sup> In 1837, Canaletto's perspective of the Piazza is included in Ermolao Paoletti's four-volume guidebook *Il fiore di Venezia*, engraved this time by an artist named G. Moretti, and with a stockier basilica and foreshortened figures, but with the same length of shadow that Canaletto depicts cast over the Procuratie Nuove and the base of the bell tower (fig. 2.2). Filippi, and before him Ponti and Naya, continued to photograph the same scene, from the same vantage point. Not only do

<sup>266</sup> Dario Succi, "Venezia nella felicità illuminata delle acqueforti di Antonio Visentini," in *Le prospettive di Venezia: Dipinte da Canaletto e incise da Antonio Visentini* (Mestre: Vianello, 2008), non-numbered pages but see especially the section entitled "La fortune editoriale delle Prospettive di Venezia" as well as the catalogue information for image 44.

photographs of central spaces such as the Piazza borrow the framing and perspective of eighteenth-century souvenir views, but the tourist culture of purchasing photographs and experiencing the city through mass-produced, affordable, and portable images was an extension of the eighteenth-century penchant for purchasing the book of prints of Visentini's engravings of the city.

Two other views of the Piazza San Marco remain constants in the history of Venetian souvenir images. The view of the Piazza San Marco, seen head-on from the waters of the Molo, is one, as is the convention of photographing the basilica up close, with the Porta della Carta entrance to the ducal palace and a hint of the palace's distinctive pink Verona marble at the far right of the image. This framing has travelled, with only slight variations, from the eighteenth century, where it was depicted in paint but not in Visentini's collection of engravings, to the mid-nineteenth century, when it appears as an engraving in the *Fiore* guidebook (fig. 2.3), to the later nineteenth and early twentieth century when it is often included in *Ricordo di Venezia* albums (fig. 2.4).

Besides reproducing a view in its entirety, photographs of Venice's main tourist sites also preserve the division of Venetian spaces adopted by the eighteenth-century *vedute*, with subtle variations that speak to an increase in tourism and a growing awareness of tourists' expectations. Nineteenth-century photographs continue the tradition of providing a horizontal view of the Rialto Bridge from the vantage point of a boat on the Grand Canal. However, in the eighteenth century, paintings and engravings of Rialto give viewers the structure in its surroundings, with the palaces of the Grand Canal on either side (fig. 2.5). In contrast, nineteenth-century photographs often focus exclusively on the bridge, as in Naya's 1870 photograph (fig. 2.6). Other photographs of Rialto give tourists the bridge in the background and a Venetian in the foreground (fig. 2.7), in a scene that satisfies the tourist tendency to sentimentalize the city's residents as quaint and idyllic.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Scenes of local life were also popular souvenir photos, but these images, which rework genre scene conventions, are beyond the scope of this project. Henry James considers that the poor are kept poor, and Venice is kept picturesque, for tourists. Filippi, though, moves away from 'types' in some of his genre scenes, which suggests an attempt to capture the



As well, photographs of the Riva degli Schiavoni often replicate the eighteenth-century division of the waterfront promenade into westward and eastward images, but again with alterations that nod towards tourism. Canaletto's pair of paintings of the Riva, one looking east and the other looking west (figs. 2.8a-2.8b), were popular pendants he often painted, with slight variations, for British patrons, and a version of these two views is also included in the second part of Visentini's collection of engravings. The convention of dividing the Riva into two images, one looking west and the other east, continues in the nineteenth century, with the same wide expanse of sky and rather busy waterfront that echoes the eighteenth-century paintings. However, instead of giving us the Molo and a view of the church of Santa Maria della Salute in the westward image, as Canaletto did, Filippi and Naya often focus more on the Riva itself, signaling its importance as a promenade for tourists (fig. 2.9). Furthermore, the photographs looking towards the east are not cropped at the Piazzetta but instead take care to include the Riva's signpost of tourism, the Hotel Danieli, opened in 1822. The *Fiore di Venezia* guidebook of 1837 also includes an engraving of the Molo looking east. Significantly, the caption is not 'Riva degli Schiavoni' or 'Molo,' but 'Albergo Reale di Danieli,' that is to say Hotel Royal Danieli, thus encouraging tourists to position themselves as observers not only of Venice but of their own tourist experience (fig. 2.10). The photographs signal that the accoutrements of tourism, such as hotels and promenades, were becoming themselves tourist sights.

Quite influential as a mid-century guidebook, *Il fiore di Venezia* also introduces engravings of three tourist spaces that are adopted a few decades later by photographers: the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale, which at the time was the only part of the palace opened to most visitors, the Bridge of Sighs (fig. 2.11), which will be discussed in depth below, and a view of the Piazzetta looking

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individual Venetians that are not being made to pose as types, although he also produces photographs of the latter, in which locals perform their own ethnicity to coincide with the views of the dominant society.

south.<sup>268</sup> These views, when reproduced in photographed form, were restocked often.<sup>269</sup> The view of the Piazzetta gives us the gothic arches of the ducal palace at the left of the image, the columns of Saint Mark and Saint Theodore framing a distant view of the Isola di San Giorgio, and the façade of Sansovino's library (fig. 2.12). Although Canaletto sketched the view twice in 1729, first in a preparatory sketch now in Windsor (fig. 2.13), and then in a more refined sketch now in a private collection, he never painted it and Visentini, consequently, never engraved it.<sup>270</sup> A version of that vantage point, though, finds itself in Paoletti's *Fiore* guidebook in 1837 (fig. 2.14), although the image does not accurately depict the church of San Giorgio Maggiore on the island of the same name and is framed on the right by a lamppost rather than by the arches of the library. Nevertheless, the popularity of the *Fiore* guidebook and its engravings may have prompted photographers to provide tourists with these three additions to the compendium of Venetian views.

The nineteenth-century photographs also introduce new spaces and visual elements to the city's canon of souvenir views. The first is a panorama of Venice, specifically of Dorsoduro's Dogana, which was its customs office, and the church of Santa Maria della Salute, separated from the Piazza by the Bacino di San Marco waterway, and photographed from the Piazza's bell tower (fig. 2.15).<sup>271</sup> With this bird's eye photograph, and others such as a view of the Riva looking down from an upper window of the ducal palace, photographers quite literally expanded the perspectives offered to tourists. These views from a substantial height do not have sketched, painted, or engraved antecedents in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries and seem instead to emerge with the advent of commercial photography in Venice. While they are a clear departure from the stage-set quality of Canaletto's

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<sup>268</sup> The Palazzo Ducale housed administrative office until 1923, when it became a museum (Source: Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia).

<sup>269</sup> Written in pencil on letters Filippi received from shopkeepers, Filippi himself or an assistant noted the photographs of city spaces that needed to be restocked most often: the list includes the spaces cited above as well as the island of San Giorgio, the Rialto Bridge, the Grand Canal, the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, and a detail of the stone lions in the Piazza San Marco (See annotations to letter sent by Emilio Aickelin dated May 24, 1897 in 'Corrispondenze Clienti, 1896-1899').

<sup>270</sup> Clayton, *Canaletto in Venice*, 103.

<sup>271</sup> The French photographer August-Rosalie Bisson, mentioned earlier, was one of the first to provide this perspective in 1862 (Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 38).

paintings, they still do the same work as Canaletto's images, albeit from a different vantage point: the panoramas, like the seemingly-enclosed eighteenth-century *vedute*, suggest the tourist/viewer has authority and control over the foreign.

Another novel view that emerges with the onset of photography is that of the lagoon or canals punctuated by a solitary gondola as opposed to the previous convention of depicting a busy, gondola-filled Grand Canal (fig. 2.16). There is a precedent for this image, although the photographers themselves may not have been aware of it: around 1765, Francesco Guardi painted a solitary gondolier plying the waters of the lagoon (fig. 2.17). However, the painting was never displayed in Venice and was in Milan by 1898.<sup>272</sup> Nevertheless, as in Guardi's painting, the local gondolier's face in these photographs is not shown. He is photographed from behind, or at an angle that hides the face. Like the photographs that focus only on the Rialto Bridge, these of the solitary gondola, with or without a gondolier, may have been read by tourists as timeless since the images excise most contemporary details.

Other photographs of gondoliers on the Grand Canal do include tourists whose sartorial details necessarily convey a particular historical moment. The face of the local gondolier in these photographs remains obscured, although his anonymity and central presence can be thought to confer onto him an aura of mystery that elevates him from the earlier pictorial tradition of locals being used simply as accessories that give scale and depth to the scene (fig. 2.18). These photographs give figures, even those whose faces are hidden, primacy. They, along with photographs of tourists feeding pigeons in Piazza San Marco (fig. 2.19), are the most significant departures from the souvenir views of the eighteenth century and were bought by the tourists being photographed and also by others shopping for souvenir views in the photographers' studios. As will be discussed in the next section of

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<sup>272</sup> Mauro Natale, "Scheda per *Gondole sulla laguna*" in *Catalogo dei dipinti* (Milano: Museo Poldi-Pezzoli, 1982).

this chapter, the business of Venetians documenting tourists can be seen as an ethnographic project in reverse in that the local is the one compiling the record.

The photographs of solitary gondolas, manned or unmanned, with or without tourists, evoked Romantic and Victorian poetry. Indeed, the poetry of nineteenth-century England seems to have, at least in part, prompted a portion of the commercial output of Venetian photographers. Catering to the penchant among British and American visitors for the figure of the solitary wanderer, a hallmark of Romanticism, and for Victorian literature's idealization of a Venice in decay, photographers began to produce very popular *clair de lune* photos of central spaces such as the Piazza San Marco (fig. 2.20). As well, they focused their lens on peripheral spaces within Venice, such as minor canals and bridges that suggest a stolen moment, away from the tourist fray (fig. 2.21). These photographs of peripheral spaces were often sold without the captions specifying location that normally accompanied souvenir photographs.<sup>273</sup> The final section of this chapter, which focuses on the peripheral spaces captured by Venetian photographers, highlights the intersection of British literature and Venetian souvenir art.

By 1874, souvenir photography was one of Venice's largest industries.<sup>274</sup> In an anonymous article published in May of 1874 by the *British Journal of Photography* and written by a "Peripatetic Photographer," the reader is told that "it appears that the secret of cheap photographic art in Venice is the fact that the dark room in which the photographer prepares his plates is, in most instances, within a few minutes' walk of the most picturesque, notable, and graphic subjects in that historic and world-famed old republic. The facility with which fresh negatives may be obtained prevents any local artist from using old or bad ones [...] and competition keeps prices down and ensures the keeping up of

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<sup>273</sup> The *Ricordo di Venezia* souvenir albums, though, do not seem to include photographs of peripheral spaces but only of distinguishable, locatable sights, with accompanying captions, thus lending support for the argument, developed in the following chapter, that the albums functioned as a visual guidebook.

<sup>274</sup> Costantini, "Carlo Naya," 37. Costantini does not reference the review cited below but does refer to the photographer and journalist Stephen Thompson's descriptions of the tourist penchant for Venetian photographs.

quality.”<sup>275</sup> Venetian photographers had created the tourist ritual of sorting through countless reproductions of a city, selecting those that held a personal or symbolic valence, and purchasing them as a tangible memory. The image of Piazza San Marco, for example, was often the visual symbol of the tourist’s trip to Venice.<sup>276</sup>

As this analysis of the constancy and change in souvenir views of Venice has shown, nineteenth-century photographs preserved many of the conventions of the previous century’s view paintings, namely the framing and perspective of the Piazza San Marco seen from a window overlooking the square with a view directly across to the basilica, the Piazza seen from the waters of the Bacino di San Marco, as well as a closer view of the basilica itself. The photographs also preserved the division of space established in the eighteenth-century souvenir views but with an eye to the hotels and walkways that were increasingly filled with tourists. While these conventions were maintained, new approaches emerged as well: photographers offered panoramic views of Venice, they photographed tourists, and, catering to tourist sensibilities for the Venice described in nineteenth-century British poetry, they offered images of a melancholy, decaying Venice focused on a solitary gondola and peripheral canals and bridges. Given these many different visual conventions in the souvenir photographs and the high volume of photographs sold during the period, it becomes clear that a substantial part of the tourist experience of visiting Venice now included being surrounded not only by the city but by myriad versions of its reproduced self.

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<sup>275</sup> Anonymous review, *The British Journal of Photography*, eds. Sir William Crookes, T.A. Malone, et al, vol. 21, May 1, 1874, non-numbered page.

<sup>276</sup> Upon receiving by mail a souvenir photograph of Piazza San Marco, a certain Dr. Thomas W. Parsons writes his friend a poem in which he re-imagines his own visit to Venice. This poem will be analyzed in more depth in the following chapter. The poem is published in *The Critic*, March 2, 1889, 105.

### 2.1.2 *Social and political changes in nineteenth-century Venice, and their relation to tourism*

Venice was seen by both locals and foreigners as vulnerable and without a solid identity during much of the *Risorgimento*, the movement to unify Italy that began in 1815 and ended with unification in 1870. Even before this, when Venice, an independent republic for ten centuries, conceded defeat to Napoleonic troops in 1797, the city witnessed a period of upheaval as Napoleon altered the spaces of the city, adding gardens, destroying churches, ordering Venetians, wisely, to bury their dead off the island, and discouraging public urination in and around the Piazza, among other reforms.<sup>277</sup> Alterations in Venice's urban plan were the most minor of the shifts Venice experienced. Venetians for centuries had associated power and stability with the Council of Ten and the elected doge. By 1815, they had witnessed the defeat of the Napoleonic troops, the arrival of the Austrians, the return of Napoleon, self-crowned King of Italy, the defeat of Napoleon, and the return of Austrian rule. By the unification of Italy, Venetians had experienced the first and second Italian Wars of Independence, which lasted from 1848 until 1859, the second of which was so bloody it prompted the founding of the Red Cross, and they had welcomed the crowning of Vittorio Emanuele as King of Italy in the 1860s, which helped achieve the Veneto's independence from Austria in 1866.<sup>278</sup> Venetians were not unanimous in their support for the *Risorgimento*, with a portion of the population ambivalent about the drive for nationhood, and this was part of a larger crisis of identity throughout the newly-formed Italy.

Ruskin's influential *Stones of Venice*, published in two volumes between 1851 and 1853, was written a few years after Venice's unsuccessful 1849 revolt, led by Daniele Manin, against Austrian rule. The revolt, during which cholera broke out and Austria restricted food supplies to Venice in an

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<sup>277</sup> McGregor, *Venice from the Ground Up*, 312.

<sup>278</sup> For a study of each of these events, see Charles L. Killinger's *The History of Italy* (Westport, Greenwood, 2002).

attempt to starve the population, added to the sense that Venice was fragile and impoverished, a theme that recurs in Ruskin's text, along with the contrasting theme that Venice is timeless.

The commercial souvenir photographs of peripheral spaces, such as decaying bridges and narrow canals, and those that focused on tourists as a welcome source of income for an impoverished city can certainly be read as images that were in dialogue with the many social and political changes the city had witnessed in the preceding decades. In contrast to these images, the photographs of central spaces devoid of figures, while certainly melancholy in their stillness and emptiness, emphasize the architectural elements of the city that had not changed for centuries, such as views of the Piazza looking towards the basilica and the solidity of the Rialto Bridge, and thus functioned as markers of permanence despite a century of social and political change.

A Venetian proverb from the middle of the century captures the local state of mind: "*Soto i Venezian, vin da diese an; soto Manin e Tomaseo, aqua a aseo*" ('Under the Venetians, we enjoyed ten-year old wine; under Manin and Tomaseo, vinegar water').<sup>279</sup> When Manin declared Venice free from Habsburg rule during the 1848 revolution, he freed Niccolò Tomaseo, a novelist who had been jailed for advocating freedom of the press, and together in March of that year they established a new Venetian Republic, known as the Republic of San Marco. Although they joined with the Piedmont region to fight Austrian rule, Manin and his supporters were not keen on a broader nationalistic cause but rather were focused on Venetian independence. Once Austria placed the city under siege, Manin, faced with a starving population and few resources to continue the rebellion, surrendered by the end of August 1849.<sup>280</sup> While many Venetians celebrated Manin and Tomaseo despite Venice's increasing poverty, others idealized the days of the Venetian Republic, as is evident in the proverb above.

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<sup>279</sup> Venetian proverbs are collected in Cristoforo Pasqualigo's 1882 anthology *Raccolta di proverbi veneti* (Treviso: Arnaldo, 1882) and in G.A. Cibotto's *Proverbi del Veneto* (Milan: Martello, 1977).

<sup>280</sup> The *Westminster Review* of 1859 informs its readers that Tomaseo, "better known as the patriot and journalist, the defender of Venice, than as the poet," was "the friend and confidant of Manin, [and] stood side by side with him during that heroic defense which has forever illustrated the name of Venice in heroic times" (Anonymous article, *Westminster Review*, vols. 72-73, July-October 1859, 252).

Moreover, the recently-united nation of Italy was also experiencing a crisis about what would bind its collection of diffuse regions, each with its own dialect, customs, and history. The rhetoric among both sympathizers in England and in Italy was that it was in the process of ‘waking up,’ a metaphor made popular by the twenty-year-old poet Goffredo Mameli’s 1847 poem, written before he participated in the unsuccessful 1848 rebellions against Austrian rule in the Italian states.<sup>281</sup> The poem, which became the Italian national anthem in 1948 and was known beforehand as the *Inno di Mameli*, begins with the line “*Fratelli d’Italia, l’Italia s’è destà*” (‘Brothers of Italy, Italy has arisen’). A decade later, tapping into the metaphorical language of Mameli’s poem and the mid-century European revolutions, the *Westminster Review* of 1859, which was read by the many British and American tourists who continued to travel to Italy during the ongoing period of political strife, notes that the profusion of Italian nationalist literature, beginning with Alessandro Manzoni’s celebrated novel *I promessi sposi* (1827), should be “hail[ed] as the best and surest evidence of Italy’s regeneration, both national and intellectual. [...] This is a hopeful symptom: it proves that Italy has awakened from its slumbers, awakened to a new and healthy existence.”<sup>282</sup>

The metaphor of an Italian awakening, and often of an awakening that had yet to be achieved fully, became a trope throughout the century, before, during, and after the unification of Italy. In the 1860s, for example, the writer and political figure Massimo D’Azeglio, in his influential, posthumously-published *I miei ricordi* (1867), declares that “the most dangerous enemies of Italy are not the Austrians but the Italians themselves [...] because they want to create a united country by changing the country while they do not seem to realize that to be successful they must first change themselves.”<sup>283</sup> Leone Carpi, in 1879, quotes D’Azeglio’s famous line that “we have made Italy now

<sup>281</sup> For a nineteenth-century account of the *Risorgimento*, and Mameli’s role as a nationalist and poet, see Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco’s *Italian Characters in the Epoch of Unification* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1890), 317.

<sup>282</sup> Anonymous, *Westminster Review*, 253.

<sup>283</sup> D’Azeglio writes in Italian that “*i piu pericolosi nemici d’Italia non sono I Tedeschi, sono gli Italiani [...] per la ragione che gl’Italiani hanno voluto far un Italia nuova [e...] pensano a riformare l’Italia, e nessuno s’accorge che per*



we must make the Italians,” and reiterates that Italy lacked “a typical national character and the collective pride of national dignity that renders a people powerful.”<sup>284</sup> The prevalent nationalist discourse in the latter half of the century was that the country was vulnerable because its identity was still very much in flux.

Simultaneously, and perhaps not surprisingly in light of the prevailing rhetoric, artists and writers began to focus more than ever before on the vulnerability of Venice. Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice* shaped tourists’ perception of Venice as paradoxically timeless but also ephemeral and affected by the ravages of time. Describing the city as “a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak, so quiet, so bereft of all but her loveliness,” Ruskin writes that “we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City and which was the Shadow.”<sup>285</sup> Ruskin states that his project is to “endeavour to trace the lines of this image before it be forever lost, and to record, as far as I may, the warning which seems to me to be uttered by every one of the fast-gaining waves that beat, like passing bells, against the Stones of Venice.”<sup>286</sup> The line subtly alludes to the tale of the Corinthian maid who traces the shadow of her beloved’s profile before he departs. While Ruskin aims to preserve the declining Venice, he also emphasizes that the only aspect of Venice that is not ephemeral is “her loveliness,” a beauty aligned, through allusions to the Corinthian maid, with pictorial representation.

Although Ruskin asserts in his preface to the 1851 volume that “there is not a building in Venice, raised prior to the sixteenth century, which has not sustained essential change in one or more of its important features” and notes that the basilica, while seeming harmonious, “is an epitome of the changes of Venetian architecture from the tenth to the nineteenth century,” he often focuses on

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*riuscirci bisogna prima che si riformino loro*” (cited in Alberto Mario Banti’s *Il Risorgimento italiano* (Rome: Laterza, 2008), 221).

<sup>284</sup> Carpi writes in Italian that what is lacking in Italy is “*il carattere tipico nazionale, e quell fiero ed altro sentimento collettivo della dignità nazionale, che rende potenti i popoli*” (cited in Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, 222).

<sup>285</sup> John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice* (New York: Benedict, 1851), 1.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

descriptions that imply the city is unaffected by the passage of time.<sup>287</sup> This immediacy is most evident in the chapter in volume one appropriately entitled “The Vestibule,” in which Ruskin acts as a *cicerone* for his readers, guiding us to Venice by boat from the waiting room that is Mestre: “we come to a low wharf [...] with long steps on each side leading to the water, which latter we fancy for an instant has become black with stagnation; another glance undeceives us—it is covered with the black boats of Venice. We enter one of them, rather to try if they be real boats or not, and glide away.”<sup>288</sup> The description, here, unlike in the informational passages on architecture, reinforces the tourist assumption that everything in the Venetian lagoon is unchanging, despite the fact that the railway had recently begun to link Venice to the mainland. Ruskin’s use of the present tense positions the approach by boat as though it has always and will always be the way to Venice. The view is similar “to a painted scene,” as he tells his reader, that is to say permanent, unchanging.

Influenced perhaps by the fact that Italy was in a transitional state and aware of the popularity of Ruskin’s preservation of the city through words and images, Venetian photographers began to produce souvenir views for tourists of what was seemingly unchanging and timeless. These photographs mitigate both the anxiety of a century of political turmoil as well as the assumption that the city was a shadow of its former self. In many of their photographs, Venetian photographers reacted to a period of intense turmoil by recording the quiet of their city, changing in the constant play of light on water, but in no other way, free of bodies that would historicize the city, with no sign of the train station that deposited so many tourists in the city or of the Grand Canal as the busy water route for all the arriving goods and tourists. The Venice that is semaphored in these photographs of the Piazza San Marco and the Grand Canal is a Venice for tourists but, blissfully for the tourists themselves, devoid of tourists. These photographs of central spaces without figures function as

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., vii-viii.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 361.

souvenirs of the architecture and topography, and by extension souvenirs of what can be seen as enduring, rather than souvenirs of the tourist culture.

The tendency among tourists to see Venice as quintessentially unchanging was reinforced or even scripted by the omnipresent souvenir images, specifically those that presented iconic Venetian sites as permanent spaces in an ephemeral world. James, in his travel writing, reinforces centuries-old tropes that Venice has been endlessly written about and that the city is apart from the modern world. Telling his readers that “it is not forbidden, however, to speak of familiar things,” James declares that “for the true Venice-lover Venice is always in order. There is nothing new to be said about her certainly, but the old is better than any novelty. It would be a sad day indeed when there should be something new to say.”<sup>289</sup> Bemoaning signs of modernity, James writes in 1892 that “Venetian life, in the large old sense, has long since come to an end, and the essential present character of the most melancholy of cities resides simply in its being the most beautiful of tombs. Nowhere else has the past been laid to rest with such tenderness, such sadness of resignation and remembrance. Nowhere else is the present so alien, so discontinuous.”<sup>290</sup> The reference to Venice as a tomb can also be applied to some of its souvenir images: like a gravestone or tomb, the photographs of central spaces devoid of tourists (fig. 2.6) memorialize the city’s past by focusing exclusively on its architecture and topography. James urges his readers to “turn away” from the tourist circus of the Piazza San Marco and “both from the purchasers and from the vendors of *ricordi*.”<sup>291</sup> Ironically, his idealization of a lost past may very well have been influenced by precisely those pervasive photographs, or *ricordi*, of timelessness sold in the Piazza.

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<sup>289</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 7.

<sup>290</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 33.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

### 2.1.3 *The influence of Gothic and Romantic literature on souvenir imagery and tourist conceptions of Venice*

Gothic literature, notably Ann Radcliffe's novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and Romantic poetry, especially Lord Byron's poem *Childe Harold* (1818), had a profound effect on tourist conceptions of Venice and on the souvenir imagery produced for those visitors. In this section, I first establish that tourists were aware of the influence texts and images had on their experience of travel. I then consider Gothic literature, and particularly Radcliffe's novel, as a key element in how Venice was imagined by tourists before focusing on British Romanticism, especially Byron's persona and writings, which captured the imagination of Italian writers during the *Risorgimento* and, throughout the century, prompted tourists to see Venice through a Romantic lens. This lens can be referred to as a Romantic gaze, a phrase I borrow from John Urry's work on tourism in which 'romantic' with a lower case 'r' refers to the viewpoint of the elite tourist and the collective gaze is the perspective of the masses. Here, I redefine the term to refer more specifically to Romanticism, thus the capital 'R,' and I suggest that the Romantic gaze is not in opposition to the collective gaze but can in fact be seen as one of the popular ways of seeing and representing the city. As evidence of how tourist taste and interests participate in shaping the souvenir imagery sold to them, souvenir photographs of Venice's Bridge of Sighs and of the city's peripheral spaces often incorporate an aesthetic that can be closely linked to Gothic and Romantic sensibilities.

Nineteenth-century travellers often noted that images and texts put pressure on the notion of authenticity associated with a tourist space. As the excerpts from James' travel writing have shown, visitors were aware that their own perception was being shaped by words and images.<sup>292</sup> Other

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<sup>292</sup> On how James' perception of various cities was "filtered" through literary texts, see Rosella Mamoli Zorzi's "*The Aspern Papers: From Florence to an Intertextual City, Venice*" in *Henry James' Europe: Heritage and Transfer*, eds.

writers, while aware of the ability of photographs to influence perception, nevertheless sought out what they considered were authentic moments. Marcel Proust, in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, describes photographs as fragments and, after returning from a trip to Venice, his autobiographical narrator compares looking at photographs of the city to reading only “selected passages” of the classics.<sup>293</sup> Proust celebrates memory as more powerful than the photograph in its ability to evoke more than the visual sense; however, he realizes, in despair, that his memory has become snapshot-like. While he attempts to resist the realization that a photograph can begin to supplant memory, Proust ultimately acknowledges what he describes as the “potency” of photographs.<sup>294</sup> The photographs that prompt Proust’s thoughts on the function of photography as a secondary memory in which the image registers as timeless are, in fact, those of Venice’s central tourist spaces without figures.

The individual’s perception is also a hallmark of Gothic literature. The Gothic genre, derided in its heyday as simply popular fiction in contrast to the more elevated status enjoyed by Romantic poetry, incorporates a number of elements of Romanticism, such as a focus on the individual, an interest in the sublime and the supernatural, and, as a reaction against the environmental effects of the Industrial Revolution, a celebration of nature, with faith in nature often replacing faith in religion.<sup>295</sup> Gothic novels also incorporate an added element: an atmosphere of mystery.

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Dennis Tredy et al (Cambridge: Open Book, 2011), 103-112. Oscar Wilde quipped that after looking at Japanese woodblock prints he “felt an irresistible desire to wander and go to Japan where I will pass my youth sitting under an almond tree, drinking amber tea out of a blue cup, and looking at the landscape without perspective” (*The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Oxford, 1962, 119). Wilde develops the tongue-in-cheek idea that Victorian England was so conditioned to see images as representational that travellers might expect a Japanese landscape to follow the conventions in Japanese woodblock prints. Aware that representations of a city affected a tourist’s perception and were a construct even if presented as natural, Wilde adds, in his writing on Japan, that “there is no such country; there are no such people” (Ibid.). He is acknowledging that, as a result of the proliferation of souvenir views, the actual view takes a backseat to the reproduced view.

<sup>293</sup> See Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, begun in 1907, especially the last volume, translated into English as *Time Regained: In Search of Lost Time* (New York: Modern Library, 1999).

<sup>294</sup> For more on Proust’s writings on perception, see Elena Gualtieri, “Bored by Photographs: Proust in Venice” in *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), 33-37.

<sup>295</sup> While Gothic novels were considered ‘low’ art and Romantic poetry ‘high’ art in Victorian England, this binary, as Robert Miles emphasizes in his work on Radcliffe’s novel, “does not bear close scrutiny” (“Popular Romanticism and the

Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, published at the end of the eighteenth century, includes a short passage describing the central character Emily's arrival in Venice by gondola. Arriving at sunset, Emily observes the palaces on the Grand Canal "crowned with airy yet majestic fabrics" and finds that "touched, as they now were, with the splendour of the setting sun, [they] appeared as if they had been called up from the ocean by the wand of an enchanter rather than reared by mortal hands."<sup>296</sup> Once the sun sets, Radcliffe's diction focuses even more on Emily's perception of the moonlit scene: she "thought she perceived a gondola" and hears distant notes of music coming to her from across the water. This moves her and her "eyes filled with tears and sublime devotion" as she "gazed, and listened, and thought herself in a fairy scene."<sup>297</sup> Robert Miles, in his recent work on the novel, highlights what he refers to as the "pre-Romantic values" in Radcliffe's novel, most notably a focus on the sublime in nature. Emily's gondola ride and the Venice she conjures up are both beautiful and vaguely threatening, in keeping with Edmund Burke's classic definition of the sublime.<sup>298</sup>

Although Radcliffe never visited Venice, her short description of the city in *Udolpho* became so well-known that it often supplanted the experience of the actual city in the eyes of many tourists. Most notably, Byron's peripatetic speaker acknowledges in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* that his Venice is the result of "Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, and Shakespeare's art" which "had stamp'd her image in me."<sup>299</sup> Radcliffe's novel established the trope that nighttime Venice was when the city was most mysterious, and thus inaccessible, as well as simultaneously most authentic, and thus most thoroughly experienced. Venice at night is a motif that is taken up in the popular *clair de lune* photographs of the city, which I will focus on later in this chapter. Emily's perception of the city, which in turn shaped readers' perceptions of the city, "created a myth of origin for the many later

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problem of belief in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*" in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism, and the Gothic*, eds. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 117.

<sup>296</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mystery of Udolpho: A Romance, volume two* (London: Robertson, 1795), 35-36.

<sup>297</sup> Radcliffe, *The Mystery of Udolpho*, 36 and 39.

<sup>298</sup> See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Dodsley, 1757).

<sup>299</sup> George Gordon Byron, *Childe Harold*, 12.

imaginings of Venice in the nineteenth century,” as Barbara Schaff notes in her analysis of the novel.<sup>300</sup> Schaff locates this influence not simply in Radcliffe’s descriptions of an illusory Venice but in the fact that Radcliffe focuses on Emily’s impressions. Radcliffe presents the city, as Schaff writes, “from Emily’s perspective, and far more important than the romantic setting is Emily’s perception of it” since she “never sees anything at all in Venice without immediately constructing her own fantasies of Venice as a result.”<sup>301</sup> Radcliffe’s novel gives readers the sense that Venice, more than any other city, allows for encounters with the self. Gothic novels often feature settings that function as objective correlatives for the central characters’ state of mind, and the castle of Udolpho is no exception. Likewise, Venice, in Radcliffe’s novel, is an extension of Emily’s sensibilities. Appropriately, a novel about perception shaping reality has itself shaped tourist encounters with Venice.

Romanticism in its broader sense also shaped tourist conceptions of travel in the nineteenth century. British Romanticism, which is often understood to begin with Wordsworth and Coleridge’s publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, cultivated an interest in altered consciousness, the supernatural, infinite striving, and nonconformity. The theme of alienation surfaces in much Romantic literature; for the Romantics, the artist’s failure in achieving his quest attests to the greatness of his aims.<sup>302</sup> Furthermore, as George Dekker emphasizes in his work on Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1817), which can be read as a satire of the Gothic novel and of Romantic sensibilities, Romantic literature often deliberately established “tourist fictions” when describing particular places and tourist sites and thus engaged in a “sophisticated play with ‘fact’ or authenticity.”<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Barbara Schaff, “Venetian Views and Voices in Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Braddon’s *The Venetians*” in *Venetian Views, Venetian Blinds: English Fantasies of Venice*, eds. Manfred Pfister and Barbara Schaff (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 91-92.

<sup>301</sup> Schaff, “Venetian Views and Voices,” 89.

<sup>302</sup> For a succinct survey of the literary movement, see *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).

<sup>303</sup> George Dekker, *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 20. See also Keith Hanley and John K. Walton, *Constructing Cultural Tourism: John Ruskin and the Tourist Gaze* (London: Channel View, 2010).

British Romanticism influenced Italian literature as well. Robert Dombrowski has suggested that in Italian Romanticism the past is recognized “as a refuge of eternal beauty and harmony which the poet himself creates, fully aware that it is nothing but a beautiful illusion.”<sup>304</sup> This poetic awareness prompted two contrasting impulses among Italian Romantics, exemplified by two of the period’s most influential writers. In Ugo Foscolo’s writing, the beautiful illusion of a harmonious past is to be “cherished” while in Giacomo Leopardi’s it must be “dissolved.”<sup>305</sup> Significantly, the Venetian photographs of central and peripheral spaces are similarly split. The photographs of peripheral spaces, as will be discussed, with their focus on impermanence and ambiguity, suggest the dissolution of eternal beauty and harmony while the photographs of central spaces, by contrast, preserve an aura of timelessness, in keeping with Foscolo’s belief that poetry, and art in general, must function as “the memory of civilization.”<sup>306</sup>

While Italian Romantics did not ground their philosophy in descriptions of Venice or specifically use Venice as inspiration, Byron certainly did. In Venice, Byron’s poetry contributed to the mythology of the city itself, shaped its spaces of tourism, and affected the way locals chose to represent their city spaces for tourists. In *Childe Harold* (1812-1818), which will be considered in detail below, Byron coins the phrase ‘Bridge of Sighs’ to refer to the bridge linking the ducal palace to the state prisons. This Romantic poem had a formidable effect on both souvenir images and travel writing, with the bridge becoming an essential tourist site. In *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), Mark Twain rhetorically asks “what one would naturally wish to see first in Venice? The Bridge of Sighs, of

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<sup>304</sup> Robert Dombrowski, “Writer and Society in the New Italy,” in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, eds. Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 462.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 463. In Foscolo’s 1802 epistolary novel *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (*The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis*) the creation of illusions or myths is seen as an intrinsic aspect of civilization since it helps counter disillusionment. In contrast, Leopardi’s poetry, such as “*Canti*” (1835) and “*Grandi idilli*” (1828), rejects the impulse to seek inspiration and sustenance in an idealized past. Most of Leopardi’s writings were censored during his lifetime (Giovanni Carsaniga, “Leopardi,” 420).

<sup>306</sup> Giovanni Carsaniga, “Foscolo,” in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, eds. Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 413.



course, and next the Church and Great Square of St. Mark.”<sup>307</sup> Twain’s tongue-in-cheek phrasing makes it clear that the Bridge of Sighs had supplanted the Piazza as Venice’s top tourist attraction.

Indeed, the bridge became such a mandatory element of tourist itineraries because of its prominence in travel writing and souvenir images that by the end of the century some travellers had tired of hearing it praised. For instance, the 1895 edition of the Baedeker guidebook on Italy advises that “too much sentiment need not be wasted on the Bridge of Sighs” and quotes the American writer William Howells who maintained that the bridge is a “pathetic swindle.”<sup>308</sup> The bridge, of course, continued to hold great appeal, in large part precisely because of the repeated mentions and images of it that Howells found so tedious. To wit, the Anglo-French poet Hilaire Belloc, in his 1910 collection of essays entitled *On Something*, recalls a visit to Italy and writes that “the best known from pictures is the Bridge of Sighs in Venice.”<sup>309</sup>

Romantic literature also participated in making Venice’s peripheral canals and bridges a subject of commercial souvenir photography. Souvenir photographs of solitary figures in motion traversing a bridge or guiding a gondola through narrow canals evoke a Romantic awareness of the ephemeral. Referenced in the previous chapter, Wordsworth’s sonnet *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic* (1802) set the stage for other Romantic poems that both bemoan and idealize Venice as once permanent but now transient. Perhaps acknowledging its impact, the photographer Stephen Thompson placed Wordsworth’s sonnet first in his 1869 *Venice and the Poets*, his collection of photographs of Venice accompanied by well-known poetry set in the city.<sup>310</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, in *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* (1818), reinforces the Romantic emphasis on the forces of change and describes Venice’s “conquest-branded brow/Stooping to the slave of slaves/From thy

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<sup>307</sup> Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 161.

<sup>308</sup> *Baedeker’s Handbook for Travellers in Italy* (London: Baedeker, 1895), 255.

<sup>309</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *On Something* (New York: BiblioLife, 2008), 120.

<sup>310</sup> Stephen Thompson, *Venice and the Poets* (London: Provost, 1869), 1.

throne among the waves.”<sup>311</sup> Developing the aesthetic of decay and transience that the Romantics anchored in images of Venice, Shelley highlights that “all is in its ancient state/ Save where many a palace gate/With green sea-flowers overgrown/Like a rock of ocean’s won/Topples o’er the abandoned sea/As the tides change sullenly.”<sup>312</sup> The tides serve as a metaphor for political change: while Venice seems to be unchanging, “in its ancient state,” Venetian palaces attest to the pervasive effect of time, the elements, and outside political threats. In *Childe Harold*, Byron too presents the city, as Tony Tanner phrases it, as having a “beauty which comes to birth and is perceived only in the moment of its vanishing and so it can never be had or held but only ‘retraced’ and remembered—experienced as absence, appreciated as loss.”<sup>313</sup> Echoing Romantic poetry, photographs of peripheral spaces place aesthetic emphasis on the notion of the ruin, the aesthetics of decay, and the heightened beauty of the transient.

Because of their aesthetic link to Romanticism, the photographs of the periphery, as well as those of the Bridge of Sighs, although seemingly innocuous, can be read as having political undertones. Byron, who had anti-imperialist leanings, symbolized rebellion and revolution to his British readers and, perhaps even more so, to citizens of Italy and Greece.<sup>314</sup> To evoke his aesthetic in photographs, even those created after Italy’s unification, was a subtle expression of the democratic ideals that were synonymous with Byron and his *oeuvre*. Edoardo Zuccato argues in his analysis of Byron’s influence that Byron’s anti-authoritarian views were “ambiguous enough to be used by the Italian nationalists as they wished.”<sup>315</sup> However, Italian nationalists did not need to comb the depths of Byron’s work to find poetic expressions of their political struggle. In the first part of one of Byron’s

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<sup>311</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Lines Written among the Euganean Hills” in *The Works of Percy Shelley in Verse and Prose*, vol. 1 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880), 362.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired*, 45-46.

<sup>314</sup> Jerome McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, ed. James Soderholm (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 45 and 113. For more on Byron’s life and works, see Fiona MacCarthy’s *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Farrar, 2004) and Jonathan David Gross’s *Byron: The Erotic Liberal* (Boston: Rowman, 2001).

<sup>315</sup> Edoardo Zuccato, “The Fortunes of Byron in Italy (1810-1870)” in *The Reception of Byron in Europe*, ed. Richard Cardwell (London: Thoemmes, 2004), 88.

popular poems *Ode on Venice* (1819), his speaker mourns that “thirteen hundred years/ Of wealth and glory turn’d to dust and tears [...] And even the Lion all subdued appears/ and the harsh sound of the barbarian drum/ With dull and daily dissonance, repeats/ The echo of thy tyrant’s voice along/the soft waves, once all musical to song.”<sup>316</sup> In Byron’s lament for Venice’s loss of independence, Austria is the “tyrant” creating dissonance in once musical waters.<sup>317</sup>

In the first half of the century, as Italians set their sights on independence from Austria, Austrian officials perceived Byron as such a threat that analyses of his work by Italian writers were censored. Giuseppe Mazzini, one of the *Risorgimento*’s leading political figures and journalists, anonymously published a comparative analysis of Goethe and Byron in 1839 in which, as Peter Cochran has noted, he favors the rebellious Byron rather than the calm Goethe.<sup>318</sup> Writing on the reception of Byron’s poetry in Europe, Cochran has succinctly stated that Emperor Ferdinand of Austria’s Italian prisons were “full of potentially Byronic writers, for to write against [the emperor] was to write Byronically.”<sup>319</sup> Clearly, Romanticism in Italy was political: Byron’s socialism and his belief in the rights of the individual helped spur the Italian Wars of Independence.<sup>320</sup>

Although Byronism as a cultural phenomenon in Italy wielded influence for most of the century, many scholars see this as ending with the unification of Italy. Giovanni Iamartino, in his work on Italian Byronism, has asserted that “despite the huge quantity of translations, Byron’s poetry no longer exerted any profound influence on the evolution of Italian literary taste and cultural trends

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<sup>316</sup> George Gordon Byron, “Ode on Venice” in *The Complete Works of Lord Byron*, vol. 7 (Paris: Baudry, 1825), 324.

<sup>317</sup> On Vittorio Emanuele’s rule, see Killinger, *The History of Italy*, 99.

<sup>318</sup> Peter Cochran, “Byron’s European Reception” in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 254.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 255. Similarly, Zuccato asserts that “Byron’s popularity became so great that he came to be regarded as a native Italian poet. Byron and Dante were often mentioned together as exiled, prophetic, and political poets (“The Fortunes of Byron in Italy,” 85).

<sup>320</sup> See Stephen Cheeke, *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 99. For a detailed study of the three Wars of Independence (1848-1866), in which the Italian states fought against Austrian rule, see Frank J. Coppa’s *The Origins of the Italian Wars of Independence* (London: Longman, 1992) and Lucy Riall’s *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London: Routledge, 1994).

from 1870 onwards.”<sup>321</sup> Once Italy was independent and unified, Byron’s liberal, democratic politics were no longer novel and his persona as a nineteenth-century Casanova was what fascinated the public. Iamartino notes that the first survey of Byron’s decadent life in Venice was published in 1881, a key date for this study of photography since it is in the late nineteenth century that photographs of Venice’s peripheral canals, with their Romantic aesthetic, first emerge.<sup>322</sup>

Indeed, the photographs as well as the fascination with Byron in tourist writing counter claims that the influence of Byron’s poetry waned. Byron’s persona and writing continued to have an influence after 1870, perhaps not in avant-garde literary or political trends, but certainly in the realm of visual and tourist culture, and especially in the tourist experience of visiting Venice. When Byron was living at the Palazzo Mocenigo, he became “a living tourist attraction, with visitors wandering uninvited around the palace, surprising him even in his bedroom.”<sup>323</sup> Richard Hoppner, the British Consul in Venice, chronicled the fact that early nineteenth-century British visitors to Venice would follow Byron as he walked about, “eyeing him [...] as they would have done a statue in a museum,” and would ask their gondoliers Byron-related questions to such an extent that the gondoliers “began administering to the taste and humours of their passengers, relating to them the most extravagant and often unfounded stories. They took care to point out the house where he lived, and to give such hints of his movements as would afford them an opportunity of seeing him.”<sup>324</sup> As Schaff notes in her study of Byron’s influence on tourist and local culture in Italy, the persona Byron cultivated through his poetry and in his various adventures served as “an attractive role model of distanced separateness from the hordes of other tourists.”<sup>325</sup> Later in the century, as Schaff argues, Byron’s world-weary speaker in *Childe Harold* especially appealed to middle-class tourists who wanted to distinguish

<sup>321</sup> Giovanni Iamartino, “Byron and Italy after 1870” in *The Reception of Byron in Europe*, ed. Richard Cardwell (London: Thoemmes, 2004), 107.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>323</sup> Hetty Meyric Hughes, *Venice: Poetry of Place* (London: Eland, 2007), 101.

<sup>324</sup> Cited in Barbara Schaff, “Italianised Byron—Byronised Italy,” in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, eds. Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2008), 110. The original source is Thomas Moore, *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1839), 417-418.

<sup>325</sup> Schaff, “Italianised Byron—Byronised Italy,” 110.

themselves through their elite sensibilities from the growing number of tourists, middle class like themselves, travelling abroad.

Foreign visitors without the luxury of living as expatriates in Venice, as Byron did, nevertheless had a desire to escape the city's central tourist spaces: they chronicle a move away from the tourist fray to search out alternate experiences. Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Théophile Gautier, among other writers, all urge their readers to explore beyond the city's central spaces and "not lose the useful faculty of getting lost."<sup>326</sup> As well, in an 1846 *Blackwood's Magazine* review of a piece of travel literature entitled *Fragments* by a certain Mr. Whyte, the anonymous reviewer praises Whyte for having taken "the right course" and "instead of confining himself to the stately Grand Canal or wizard magnificence of St. Mark's, he seems to have habitually traced all the lesser canals" whose architecture is "ruinous" and "dilapidated" as it "sinks into the green element."<sup>327</sup> The reader is told that it is this Venice that should be sought out since "there is, indeed, no spectacle that can be conceived more impressive than some of these smaller canals, particularly if you enter towards sundown."<sup>328</sup> Taking a gondola ride through peripheral waters was recommended not only because it provided a glimpse at what was considered a more authentic Venice but also because of the impressions these peripheral spaces evoked. In *Italian Hours*, James writes that "your brown-skinned, white-shirted gondolier, twisting himself in the light, seems to you, as you lie at contemplation beneath your awning, a perpetual symbol of Venetian 'effect.'"<sup>329</sup> Releasing the tourist from the duty of having to study the architecture of the *palazzi* when gliding on the Grand Canal, a gondola ride beyond central tourist spaces was meant to be solipsistic. The goal was not to study one's Ruskin or

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<sup>326</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 66. In travel literature, such as Wharton's *Italian Backgrounds*, and in novels set in Venice, such as James' *The Wings of the Dove*, getting lost in Venice is often associated with confrontations with the self and the desire to live an unfettered life.

<sup>327</sup> Anonymous review, *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. 59, 1846, 253.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 17 and 52.

Baedeker, nor to brush up against local life, but, in keeping with Romantic ideals, to cultivate an interior Venetian landscape for one's self.

When describing the peripheral spaces of Venice, travel literature often incorporated fragmentary imagery. One of the most representative examples of this, and of the desire to escape Venice's central spaces, is James's observation in 1882, in which he celebrates the aesthetic and atmosphere of the Venetian spaces that are distanced from the tourist circuit:

When I hear, when I see, the magical name I have written about these pages, [Venice], it is not of the great Square that I think [...] nor of the wide mouth of the Grand Canal [...]. I simply see a narrow canal [...]—a patch of green water and a surface of pink wall. The gondola moves slowly [...], passes under a bridge, and the gondolier's cry, carried over the quiet water, makes a kind of splash in the stillness. A girl crosses the little bridge, which has an arch like a camel's back, with an old shawl on her head, which makes her characteristic and charming: you see her against the sky as you float beneath her.<sup>330</sup>

James uses *qualia* in his descriptions of peripheral spaces, crafting an image that employs visual, auditory, and tactile imagery to create the sense of a complete experience. But, he also sees Venice in evocative fragments: a patch of water, a portion of pink wall, a local girl wearing a shawl. James Buzard, in his work on the history of tourism, notes that travel writing uses the motifs of the dream, of stillness, and of saturation, often when focused on small details. Making a link to Romanticism, Buzard argues that this "picturesque vision is a Coleridgean symbol, shot through with the essence of the whole for which it stands."<sup>331</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the British Romantic poet, defines the picturesque as "when the parts only are seen and distinguished, but the whole is felt."<sup>332</sup> Buzard describes the nineteenth-century tourist's gaze as a "panoramic-picturesque" view that "flattened

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>331</sup> Buzard, "A Continent of Pictures," 33.

<sup>332</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Bell, 1884), 324.

objects” so that the actual view becomes a “painted surface.”<sup>333</sup> This approach, though, suggests that the nineteenth-century tourist gaze supplanted the real, with the travelling “amount[ing] to an array of pictures.”<sup>334</sup>

The panoramic-picturesque tourist gaze, hardly celebrated in Buzard’s account, may in fact have been quite positive: if a tourist sees an actual scene as pictorial and flat she might be well-placed to acknowledge that her perception influences her reality, as Byron’s speaker acknowledges in *Childe Harold*. In his study of the tourist gaze, Urry argues that tourists are “collectors of gazes” and that the romantic gaze has more cachet than the collective gaze.<sup>335</sup> In his work on tourism and representation, Frow suggests that Urry’s concept of the romantic tourist gaze in which the tourist is a solitary, elite wanderer should not be considered distinct from the collective gaze in which the tourist is part of a group.<sup>336</sup>

James’ evocative description of passing under a bridge while gliding on a peripheral canal certainly speaks to the validity of seeing the solitary, romantic gaze as a Romantic and collective gaze since a host of other writers, many already quoted above, express the same singular gaze, one that was part of the collective experience of Venice among travellers. Sergio Perosa, in his Italian study of Anglo-American writing, has shown that James worked with the “archetype which then became a stereotype” of post-1797 Venice in which “decline, deterioration, and death were perceived as inherent in its beauty and its splendour; conversely, its beauty appeared especially attractive when corrupted, decaying, or in decline.”<sup>337</sup> Indeed, James’ use of ‘you’ rather than ‘I’ in the excerpt quoted above suggests that the gaze he describes is singular and yet also collective. The second-person pronoun addresses the traveller predisposed to such impressions and sensibilities.

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<sup>333</sup> Buzard, “A Continent of Pictures,” 34.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>335</sup> Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 44 and 59. Urry does not capitalize the adjective ‘romantic,’ and thus uses the term to refer, generally, to a gaze that is isolated and distinct from that of the dominant group, but this characteristic can also be associated with the gaze developed in Romantic poetry.

<sup>336</sup> Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia,” 147.

<sup>337</sup> Sergio Perosa, “*The Wings of the Dove* and the Coldness of Venice,” *The Henry James Review* 24 (2003): 281.

Both Radcliffe and Byron's writing fascinated tourists visiting Venice, with Byron himself acknowledging the influence of Radcliffe's imagined description of Venice on his conception of the city. Radcliffe's Gothic novel and Byron's poetry shaped tourist experiences both obliquely and quite explicitly. Tourists who read *The Mysteries of Udolpho* may have expected some version of the heightened atmosphere and mood of Emily's arrival on the Grand Canal, but what the novel did, more tangibly, was to bring about a greater interest in moonlit images of the city, an interest that continued well into the later decades of the century with Venetian photographers selling *clair de lune* photographs of tourist sites. Byron's poetry and, more generally, the Romantic interest in transience and decay, in nature overtaking the manmade, affected tourist perceptions of Venice, as James' travel writings suggests. Furthermore, tourists looked upon Venice with particularly Romantic eyes. The concept of the Romantic gaze as a popular, collective yet still literary and somewhat rarefied perspective on the city is useful shorthand for the tourist experience of seeing Venice. More tangibly, fascination with Byron's life prompted tourists to chart an itinerary for themselves that visited his Venetian haunts and, as will be discussed below, Byron's poem *Childe Harold* gave Venice a new space of tourism, the Bridge of Sighs, with the name being a coinage of Byron's and the view itself becoming one of the most visited and photographed tourist sites in the city.

#### 2.1.4 *Discourses on photography and a survey of the scholarship on Venetian photography*

Photographs in the nineteenth century were often seen as authentic markers that served as a spur for memory.<sup>338</sup> In an 1869 *Harper's Magazine* article entitled "Souvenirs of Travel" an unnamed writer pens a "reflection on the nature of souvenirs" in which photographs are lauded as essential

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<sup>338</sup> In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes adopts, to a certain degree, a nineteenth-century perspective on photography by asserting that a photograph provides a "certainty" and is "not a question of exactitude but of reality" (New York: Farrar, 1981, 80). He includes the example of a photograph of a slave market, which he saved but lost "like everything too carefully put away," which visually asserted that "such as thing [as slavery] had existed" (80).



purchases.<sup>339</sup> The reader is told that “photographs of the places seen rectify and perpetuate our recollections, and one could not have a more valuable souvenir or glimpse of Europe than a portfolio of large photographs. The traveller can supply this, in some degree at least, in Paris or New York, upon his return, but half the value of the picture is dependent on the recollection that you bought it on the spot, or picked it out as the best from among Alexander’s or Macpherson’s treasures in Rome or Carlo Ponti’s under the arcades of Venice.”<sup>340</sup> While literature and letters sent back home might have been considered with a hint of suspicion, with a sense that the writer was embellishing or creating his or her version of Venice, souvenir photographs were valued because they presented themselves as authentic views rather than personal interpretations of a scene.<sup>341</sup>

Twentieth-century scholarship on photography has dismantled assumptions about the veracity of the medium. In 1927, the cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer argued that the study of history and the art of photography, in seeking to compensate for the natural deficiencies of memory, both ironically present the reader or viewer with an alternate, often inaccurate, reality and sense of identity.<sup>342</sup> Kracauer set the stage for the argument that the seemingly documentary quality of photography must be held up to scrutiny. For example, Sontag suggests that in a photograph the world is reduced in a “poignantly reductive” way to a “trace, something directly stencilled off the real.”<sup>343</sup> John Tagg argues that the photograph is not a marker of a prior reality, or a preserved moment, but rather the photograph creates “a new and specific reality.”<sup>344</sup> Exploring different definitions of the ‘real,’ Tagg suggests that what is real about a photograph is beyond the material and is linked to the conscious and

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<sup>339</sup> Anonymous, “Souvenirs of Travel” in *Harper’s Magazine*, 1869, 250.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> For a study of nineteenth-century debates on how the new medium of photography should be viewed and classified, see Steve Edwards’ analysis of the 1862 International Exhibition in his piece “Photography, Allegory, and Labor,” *Art Journal*, vol. 55, no. 2 (1996): 38-44.

<sup>342</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography” in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 60-63.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 80 and 154.

<sup>344</sup> Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 3.

unconscious practices that create the fantasy of the photograph as evidence, as an objective document of the world.<sup>345</sup>

In her work on Ruskin's use of photographs, Karen Burns notes that Ruskin valued photography specifically for its "documentary use."<sup>346</sup> Interested in the "discourses that frame photographs as images of travel undertaken," Burns argues that these discourses are what give photographs their power as so-called documents. In the mid nineteenth century, there was a desire to dissolve the gap between the model, or subject, and the copy, the representation. As Burns emphasizes, photographic detail renders visible what can be overlooked by an observer and thus the photograph reverses the hierarchy of the copy and the original; the images provide more than what the original, the actual view, conveys. Burns argues that the copy becomes the most important referent, "a site of information and power."<sup>347</sup>

Clearly, in the twentieth century, a host of writers has emphasized that a photograph "falsifies reality,"<sup>348</sup> as Sontag phrases it, but these texts overlook the possibility that nineteenth-century experts in the burgeoning field of photography seemed, to a certain extent, to be aware that photographs did not accurately represent the visible world. As early as 1859, *The Photographic News* acknowledges that photographs are not extensions of the natural, or of actual perception, but can, if the techniques allow, be made to appear natural. In a set of anonymous remarks on an exhibition of photographs in France, in which Naya exhibited nine of his views of Venice, the magazine celebrates Naya's photographs but also notes that "the water that flows" under Naya's bridges "has succeeded tolerably well; but [...] it is something flat, smooth, still, brilliant, or velvety, resembling rather a

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>346</sup> Karen Burns, "Topographies of Tourism: 'Documentary' Photography and *The Stones of Venice*," *Assemblage* 32 (1997): 23.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>348</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 86.

sheet of polished metal or a board of varnished mahogany, but it is not *water*.”<sup>349</sup> Just as tourists were aware that their experience of the city was shaped by words and images, a growing number were also aware that commercial souvenir photography presented an altered and heightened reality.

Despite the many photographs available as objects of study and the relative wealth of archival material related to the commercial production of souvenir views of Venice, the prolific output of nineteenth-century Venetian photographers has received attention from only a handful of scholars. Italo Zannier and Paolo Costantini have made the most substantive contributions to the study of Italian photography.<sup>350</sup> Their work acknowledges the nineteenth-century tourist appetite for pictures but tends to avoid analyzing this desire or how the photographs function as objects that structure experiences with the city.

Zannier and Costantini have focused on the documentary quality of the images and engaged in a study of the innovations in the photographic process used by local photographers. In 2004, Valentina Michelotti wrote a thesis on the process of preserving and archiving Filippi’s collection of photographs and papers, a dissertation that begins with a section on the history of Filippi’s life and photographic production.<sup>351</sup> In 2002, the catalogue *Venezia paesaggio ottocentesco: le vedute di Tomaso Filippi, fotografo*, published to accompany an exhibit about the Archivio Filippi, included an article by art conservationist Giuliana Marcolini entitled “*Dietro le immagini, la voce delle carte*,” which highlights Filippi’s scrupulous chronicling of his photographic work.<sup>352</sup> Most work on

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<sup>349</sup> Anonymous article, *The Photographic News*, eds. William Crookes, et al, May 6, 1859, 102. The article suggests that a shorter exposure for the watery portions of the image, if such a technique were possible, would remedy the situation.

<sup>350</sup> Zannier, who pioneered the study of the history of photography in Italy, founded and edited the journal *Fotostorica*, and organized exhibits of photographs from both his archives and others. Costantini, who curated the Photographs Collection of Montreal’s Canadian Centre for Architecture, also devoted attention to studying photographs of Venice.

<sup>351</sup> Valentina Michelotti, *L’Attività dello studio fotografico di Tomaso Filippi a Venezia (1895-1948)*, (M.A.diss., Università degli Studi di Udine, 2004). The thesis can also be read at the Archivio Filippi in Venice.

<sup>352</sup> The catalogue is on display at the Archivio Filippi in Venice.

nineteenth-century photographs of Venice is in catalogue form and, in keeping with the catalogue genre, focuses largely on the material properties of the work and the history of production.<sup>353</sup>

As well, a number of coffee table books with high-quality reproductions of nineteenth-century photographs of Venice are available, often with informative annotations serving as points of departure for further research. In 1991, the Venetian writer Danilo Reato produced a three-volume compendium of Venetian photography entitled *Vecchie immagini di Venezia*, and in 1994 Dorothea Ritter published an anthology of old photographs of Venice with accompanying commentary. While these, and the writings of Zannier, Costantini, Michelotti, and Marcolini, have provided invaluable details concerning the history of photography in Venice and laid the groundwork for further study, the photographs themselves have not yet been analyzed nor have they been understood as being part of a history of souvenir views of the city.

### 2.1.5 *Venice as a centre of commercial souvenir photography*

Due to its unique aesthetic and geographic aspects, Venice was already hailed as the most photographed of cities when the medium was still in its infancy.<sup>354</sup> In 1841, the earliest daguerreotype of Venice was intended for an illustrated guidebook, perhaps echoing the 1837 *Fiore* publication that had incorporated engravings in its comprehensive guide to the city. Taken by the British phonetician Alexander John Ellis, while visiting Italy to prepare daguerreotypes that would be used to produce copper engravings, the photograph is of the Dogana and the church of Santa Maria della Salute, seen

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<sup>353</sup> The photographic work of the Fratelli Alinari, the Alinari brothers, who first began taking and selling souvenir photographs in their native Florence, has been taken up as an object of study. Most likely this is due to the fact that the Fratelli Alinari foundation opened a comprehensive museum and archive in Florence. Specifically, since 2002, Arturo Quintavalle, Carlo Bertelli, and Monica Maffioli have published studies of the Alinari images. The Alinari arrived in Venice in 1895, adding to the already competitive atmosphere among Venetian commercial photographers. Their work in Venice coincides with the advent of postcards.

<sup>354</sup> In their catalogue on John Singer Sargent, Patricia Hills and Linda Ayres introduce Sargent's paintings of Venice by stating that "Venice was one of the most photographed of nineteenth-century cities" (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1986), 39.

from the Bacino di San Marco (fig. 2.22).<sup>355</sup> A year before, in 1840, the last edition of Visentini's engravings of the city had been published, and Smith's collection of eighteenth-century *vedute* had long been sent to the British Royal Collection.<sup>356</sup> While Ellis' photographs were not published, that same year aquatints of Venice engraved from daguerreotypes were included in a guidebook entitled *Excursions daguerriennes* produced by Noël-Marie Lerebours for those doing the tour of Europe and for armchair tourists.<sup>357</sup>

During these early years, though, photography was often derided for lacking artistry by those hoping to preserve their craft as illustrators and engravers and declared to be a dangerous instrument by those uncomfortable with change. However, publications such as William Crookes' *The Photographic News*, which first appeared in England in 1859, attempted to explain and thus demystify the photographic process.<sup>358</sup> The weekly journal ran an article on the future of photography in its second issue which declared that "there can be no doubt that in all future time the photographic art, in its numerous varieties, and under its manifold forms, will rank among the grand discoveries which render illustrious the nineteenth century."<sup>359</sup> Even the *London Review*, which often published criticism of the new medium of photography, acquiesced in 1863 and declared that "special collections of stereoscopic photographs of any particular class of subjects or objects would present valuable as well as entertaining results, and introduced in social parties would give rise to much interesting conversation and mutual instruction."<sup>360</sup> Once photography was seen as a didactic tool it became accepted by Victorian critics.

Photographic souvenir art developed more rapidly and extensively in Venice than in any other destination on what was once the proverbial Grand Tour. Despite the regional rebellions that were part

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<sup>355</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 27.

<sup>356</sup> See the catalogue *A King's Purchase: George III and the Collection of Consul Smith* (London: Buckingham Palace, 1993).

<sup>357</sup> Zannier, "Venezia in cornice," in *Venezia...Instantaneo...Maurizio Galimberti* (Milan: Bugno Art Gallery, 2004), 2.

<sup>358</sup> Stephen Crookes, ed. "A Catechism of Photography" in *The Photographic News*, September 10, 1858.

<sup>359</sup> M.A. Belloc, "The Future of Photography" in *The Photographic News*, September 1858, 1.

<sup>360</sup> This excerpt from the *London Review* was cited in the September 18, 1863 edition of *The Photographic News*.

of the *Risorgimento*, Italy remained a popular tourist destination. An anonymous article published in Venice's *Gazzetta* in 1854, when photography was only fifteen years old, asserts that "the art of photography may not have originated in Venice, but certainly intensified in Venice."<sup>361</sup> Most photographers who produced souvenir images of Venice were either Venetians by birth or were Italians who chose Venice as their adopted home. Ponti, after studying photography in Paris, returned to Italy in 1852, when he was thirty two, to open his photographer's studio, on Venice's Riva degli Schiavoni and at 52 Piazza San Marco, and began selling photographs of the city to tourists.<sup>362</sup> Ponti was the first in the city to engage in art photography of paintings and architecture and to establish a tourist market for souvenir photographs.<sup>363</sup>

Naya, based in Venice, initially collaborated with Ponti, who had a monopoly on the photographic market, before opening his own popular store in the Piazza San Marco on August 31, 1868, thus competing with Ponti's store, one of which continued to be located in the Piazza.<sup>364</sup> Naya began training his lens not only on the city but on tourists as well. Filippi, who photographed Venice for the Naya studio, ran the studio beginning in 1870.<sup>365</sup> After Naya's death in 1882, his wife, Ida Lessiak and Filippi continued to organize photographic projects aimed at depicting tourists. Their correspondence indicates that the "figures were placed and the viewpoints determined in advance of photo-taking."<sup>366</sup> Filippi opened his own store in 1894 and, in 1905, moved the business to the Piazza San Marco's Piazzetta dei Leoncini.<sup>367</sup> The eclectic shop, which is the focus of the next chapter, sold photographs of Venice taken by Filippi and photographs of other Italian cities, including the work of

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<sup>361</sup> Cited in Zannier, *Venezia nella fotografia dell'Ottocento*, 16. The quoted portion of the newspaper article in Italian reads as follows: "L'arte fotografica non ebbe origine, ma incremento in Venezia."

<sup>362</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 201.

<sup>363</sup> Zannier, *Venezia nella fotografia dell'Ottocento*, 17.

<sup>364</sup> Zannier, *Venezia: Archivio Naya* (Venezia: Böhm, 1981), 41.

<sup>365</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 199.

<sup>366</sup> Zannier, *Venezia: Archivio Naya*, 28.

<sup>367</sup> Michelotti, *L'Attività dello studio fotografico di Tomaso Filippi a Venezia*, 46 and 81.

James Anderson, a British photographer active in Rome, as well as *Ricordo di Venezia* albums, photographs of German cities, stereoscopes, maps, genre scenes, and photos of still life.<sup>368</sup>

While foreign photographers continued to photograph Venice for celebrated publications that could be purchased in the tourists' home countries, the images produced by local Venetian photographers were quickly gaining cachet. The Naya Studio, specifically, is listed as a must-do shopping stop in Murray and Baedeker guidebooks for much of the latter half of the century.<sup>369</sup> Naya's photographs were celebrated by a French reporter as images that "sparkle with rare qualities; we do not know the processes used by this artist, but we must declare that we have never before seen such beautiful tones of black and such bright whites."<sup>370</sup> The rapturous praise suggests that, for foreigners, a photograph created by a local had more clout than one created by those who, like the tourists themselves, were experiencing the city from the position of an outsider. The prevailing sense on the part of tourists that local photographers were privy to the authentic Venice and could coax it to emerge onto the albumen and gelatin prints added to the success of Ponti, Naya, and Filippi's studios.

Commercial photographs of Venice functioned as a standardizing element in tourists' perceptions and memories of the city. In *Le temps retrouvé* (1927), Proust has his narrator both acknowledge and bemoan the fact that souvenir photographs of the city turn his memory into an exhibition of photographs.<sup>371</sup> Much earlier in the history of souvenir photography, the 1869 *Harper's* article on souvenirs also highlights, in this case positively, the effect of repetition on the viewer. The

<sup>368</sup> The list of items sold at Filippi's Piazzetta store can be found in box B 1-19 at the Archivio Filippi.

<sup>369</sup> The 1882 edition of Baedeker's *Northern Italy* includes a section on purchasing photographs of Venice and recommends Ponti and Naya's shops in Piazza San Marco (London: Baedeker, 1882), 231. In 1873, *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* informs readers that "the best views of Venice are photographs to be had at Munster's and other print sellers in the Piazza San Marco. [...] Those by Nayo (*sic*), which cost one and one and a half lire, are very good" (London: Murray, 1873), 376.

<sup>370</sup> Cited in Costantini, "Carlo Naya," 35. The original French reads as follows: the images "*brillent par des qualités rares; nous ne connaissons pas les procédés de cet artiste, mais nous déclarons que jamais n'avons vu d'aussi beaux noirs et des blancs aussi éclatants.*"

<sup>371</sup> In *Le temps retrouvé*, Marcel Proust writes "*j'essayais de tirer de ma mémoire d'autres 'instantanés' [...] mais rien que ce mot me la rendait ennuyeuse comme une exposition de photographie, et je me sentais pas plus de gout, plus de talent, pour decrire maintenant que j'avais vu autrefois.*" As Gualtieri notes, Proust became "dependent" on photographs even as he "realized the inadequacy of photography as a direct substitute for perception" ("Bored by Photographs: Proust in Venice," 33).

writer, considering the penchant for collecting souvenir photographs, asserts that “it is not the intrinsic value but the associations the thing awakens in the mind that afford the pleasure; associations are then multiplied by the frequency of use.”<sup>372</sup> In his work on memory, the philosopher Gaston Bachelard implies that the memories a mind invents, via images or other sources, are no less real than the actual event, a point echoed, as discussed in the previous chapter, by William Ivins’s work on print culture.<sup>373</sup> Moreover, the souvenir photographs, like the view paintings and engravings before them, were objects that had second lives, so to speak, once they were removed from their initial context. Photographs of Venice, bought by tourists to take home and show to friends and relatives created a pre-memory in those who had not yet visited the spaces depicted. Thus, the photographs, like the *vedute* of the previous century, functioned as early travel advertisements, as proto-travel posters, in their ability to evoke feelings of desire and anticipation in future neophyte travellers.

In September 1869, Stephen Thompson, studio photographer, book editor, and writer for the *Photographic News*, observed that six stores in the fashionable Piazza San Marco were “dedicated to selling photographs” and that Ponti and Naya’s were the most popular and of the highest quality.<sup>374</sup> Thompson also noted that, since competition drove down prices, the cost of Naya’s most widely sold photographs, mounted on simple white, durable cardboard for easy packing, was one lira and a half, and thus very economical.<sup>375</sup> In his three months in Venice, Thompson never saw the Ponti store without a large crowd inside of “people caught up in a vertiginous shopping for at least two or three dozen images of Venice.”<sup>376</sup> A reporter for the *British Journal of Photography* also stated that “few

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<sup>372</sup> Anonymous, “Reflections on the Nature of Souvenirs,” *Harper’s Magazine*, vol. 39, 1869, 250.

<sup>373</sup> Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, 163 and 180.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid. Stephen Thompson and his brother Thurston were commissioned by the British Museum in the 1850s and 1860s to photograph its holdings. For a biographical sketch, see *Encyclopedia of nineteenth-century photography*, vol.1, 1306.

<sup>375</sup> The anonymous writer of “Reflections on the Nature of Souvenirs” states that “large photographs can be conveniently bought unmounted. They can then be rolled, and a large number can be carried in a small space, and at home any good photographic artist can mount them at a trifling expense” (*Harper’s Magazine*, vol. 39, 1869, 250).

<sup>376</sup> Cited in Costantini, “Carlo Naya,” 37.



tourists leave Venice without a handful of Naya photographs as souvenirs.”<sup>377</sup> This same article, though, criticized Venetian photographs for being easily affordable and not innovative in their angles and style, a common criticism among those who were reluctant to embrace the new medium.

The repeated criticism that souvenir photography was not art infuriated Naya who initiated a legal process to have the artistic quality of his souvenir photography recognized. Venice was thus also the city that hosted the first legal debate on the validity of photography as art. The trial, which ended just before Naya died in 1882, was the first to acknowledge the rights of photographic artists regarding their reproducible images. What became known as “*la questione Naya*” resulted in the courts acknowledging that photography was not simply the result of a mechanical process but a “work of intelligence and art by the hand of man.”<sup>378</sup> Recognized as art in the nineteenth century, commercial souvenir photographs have been preserved in various archives, most notably in the Museo Nazionale Alinari della Fotografia in Florence and the Archivio Filippi in Venice.<sup>379</sup>

As this introduction has shown, Venice was an important centre for commercial photography aimed at tourists, with the photographs available for purchase borrowing conventions from the previous tradition of view painting, both in their framing of particular views and in their focus on the enduring aspects of Venice. The photographs also introduced new conventions, especially the presence of tourists in the souvenir images and an aesthetic focused on peripheral spaces that can be linked to the sensibilities evoked in popular Gothic and Romantic literature. While scholarly work on Venice as a centre of souvenir photography has devoted attention to the history of production, it has not situated the photographs as part of a wider tradition of souvenir imagery in Venice. In what follows, I will analyze these photographs with attention to how tourist taste shaped the souvenir

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<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>378</sup> Zannier, *Venezia: Archivio Naya*, 22.

<sup>379</sup> The Museo Nazionale Alinari in Florence holds Italy’s largest collection of photographic archives, specifically 900 000 vintage prints and 6 000 albums, as well as numerous collections, including that of Zannier which features photos by Ponti, Naya, and Primoli. In Venice, the Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione (IRE) preserve the Archivio Filippi, which includes 7 000 negatives, 20 000 photographs, and 3 800 postcards. The photographs are available online at [www.tomasofilippi.it](http://www.tomasofilippi.it), as are Giuseppe Primoli’s, which are housed in the Archivio Fotografo Primoli in Rome’s Palazzo Primoli. In the 1980s, Naya’s archive was part of the Archivio Osvlado Böhm in Venice, which has now been dispersed.

imagery, how particular spaces in the city were represented through different aesthetic approaches, and how the photographs participated in determining the tourist's experience of the city.

## 2.2 Photographed spaces in Venice

Photographs of Venice can be divided into two categories: central and peripheral spaces. The main tourist spaces of the city, specifically the Piazza San Marco, the Grand Canal and Rialto Bridge, and the Bridge of Sighs, seem to have prompted either photographs virtually devoid of figures, even though the technology was advanced enough by the 1850s to properly depict figures, or, later in the century, photographs of these central spaces filled with tourists and often devoid of locals.<sup>380</sup> The absence of locals in central spaces is particular to Venetian photographs, as is the split focus on central and peripheral spaces.<sup>381</sup>

When analyzing photographs of the Bridge of Sighs, a central space that Byron's long poem *Childe Harold* makes one of the most written about and reproduced Venetian sights, I will highlight the interstices between British poetry and Venetian souvenir photography. Since a bridge is an in-between space, my analysis of the souvenir photographs of the Bridge of Sighs will prompt a segue to liminal and peripheral spaces, such as the city's smaller canals and bridges that are at times photographed with a solitary figure in motion either on a bridge or in a gondola, a trope also

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<sup>380</sup> Julia Ballerini's work on photography, which places importance on the figure of Ishmael, a local, in a European's, Du Camp's, photographs of Egypt, has inspired this focus on how figures are depicted in souvenir photographs. See Julia Ballerini, "The in visibility of Hadji-Ishmael: Maxime Du Camp's 1850 photographs of Egypt" in *The Body Imaged: The Human Form and Visual Culture since the Renaissance*, eds. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 147-160.

<sup>381</sup> In photographs of Rome and Florence taken by the Alinari brothers, locals are depicted often in central spaces, such as the ancient Forum and the Piazza del Duomo. As well, Florence, Rome, and Milan, being larger, developing cities, were often depicted so as to emphasize the "development of modern Italy" and thus photographs focused on activities, organizations, institutions, and the modernization of public spaces (John Berger, Introduction to *Alinari: Photographers of Florence, 1852-1922*, ed. Filippo Zevi (Florence: Alinari, 1978), 8).

influenced by Romanticism and one that calls attention to the complex collaboration between the producers and consumers of these souvenir views.

### *2.2.1 Central spaces: Piazza San Marco, the Grand Canal, and the Rialto Bridge*

In this analysis of central spaces, I will suggest that photographs of the Piazza San Marco and Rialto Bridge, when devoid of figures, evoke a sense of timelessness that may betray rather timely political anxieties about the newly-formed Italy. In my analysis of the photographs of central spaces that include tourists, I will argue that the photographers engage in an ethnographic project, along with their commercial interest in selling pictures. Furthermore, the images of tourists either riding in gondolas or feeding pigeons, taken together with nineteenth-century travel writing, suggest that tourists were beginning to grasp the performative aspects of travel, which resulted in them being both engaged in and distanced from the tourist experience. The evocation of timelessness and the depiction of contemporary tourists are two contrasting but equally popular conventions in Venetian souvenir photography.

#### *2.2.1.1 Evoking timelessness: Photographs of central spaces without figures*

When depicting Venice's most iconic spaces, Venetian photographers presented the city as they, the locals, wanted foreigners to see it: as a city with a historical lineage and with all signs of poverty or decline excised. Broadly, this tendency is in keeping with Canaletto's approach a century before. Yet, the lack of figures in many of the photographs of central spaces suggests the ideal has shifted. In a Canaletto painting, figures of locals, along with boats, sails, dogs, and merchant stalls, function as visual cues that style the Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal as the centre of a still

bustling seaport. In contrast, local photographers a century later often cultivate the static, quiet quality of these same spaces.

The medium itself is initially responsible: when photography was in its infancy the necessary exposure time required a subject to pose for half an hour, thus eliminating the possibility of clear images of the multitudes in the square and along the Grand Canal.<sup>382</sup> However, once mid-century technological advancements reduced the exposure time needed to capture people in focus, the convention of depicting the Piazza San Marco as empty and the Grand Canal waters as solitary remained.<sup>383</sup> As is evident from Filippi's correspondence with his clients who ran souvenir shops in Venice, the images that needed to be restocked most often were those of the Piazza San Marco area and Grand Canal without figures.<sup>384</sup> The possible reasons for this representational strategy and its effects on tourist perception are the focus of this section of the chapter.

By the late nineteenth century, the Piazza San Marco, at least in photographs, loses its links to civic pride. In 1797, when the Republic fell, Venetians, as noted in the previous chapter, expressed their dissent by chanting "Viva San Marco" in the square, thus emphasizing that the physical space itself would for them always be aligned with Venice's patron saint and protector as well as with their republican identity.<sup>385</sup> The Piazza became a metonym for Venetian identity and was associated with the illustrious history of the Republic. The two caf  s in the square were also ideological spaces, divided on political grounds. During the first half of the nineteenth century, when the Veneto was

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<sup>382</sup> In *The Burden of Representation*, Tagg notes that early exposure times were "often more than half an hour" (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988), 41.

<sup>383</sup> Tagg provides the following: "by 1842, exposure times had been reduced to between thirty and forty seconds" (*The Burden of Representation*, 43).

<sup>384</sup> Filippi's clients who ran souvenir shops in Venice would write him often to request a fresh supply of photographs by providing a list of numbers that corresponded to the images they needed most, as Ada Aickelin did on March 12, 1897, for example. However, the titles or description of the images were not given in the letters. The numbers, though, correspond to the numbered images in Filippi's *campionario*, his catalogue, which makes it clear that the most requested photos, those most quickly depleted, were of central spaces without figures. The catalogue is a series of cardboards printed and at times pasted with thumb-sized images of Filippi's souvenir views. The titles of these are often included on the verso of the cardboard. The catalogue has been digitized along with the rest of Filippi's photographs and negatives at [www.tomasofilippi.it](http://www.tomasofilippi.it) and can be seen by entering 'Campionario di negozio' in the search terms. Filippi's commercial correspondence from 1897 has not been digitized and can be found, along with the catalogue, in box C21 of the Archivio Filippi.

<sup>385</sup> Calbo Crotta, *Memoria*, 380.

under Austrian rule, the clientele and musical choices of each café highlighted the political tensions in Venice. Austrian soldiers frequented the Caffè Quadri, founded in the 1770s, while Venetians would only be seen at the Florian. Because the Florian was founded earlier, in 1720, it was the coffeehouse associated with the former Republic and with support for the *Risorgimento*.<sup>386</sup> Clearly, the square was still a politically-charged space, yet the commercial souvenir photographs depict the Piazza San Marco, and by extension the city itself, as emptied of locals who would signal the particular historical moment.

Naya's 1870 photograph of the Piazza San Marco as a static space devoid of figures is characteristic of many contemporaneous photographs of the square (fig. 2.23). Taken from the vantage point of Caffè Florian, which would usually have tables laid out in the square alongside the Procuratie Nuove, the image offers a perspective that is accessible to anyone who walks into the Piazza from the southwest: the view is of the Torre dell' Orologio and the Basilica di San Marco, with a portion of the Piazzetta dei Leoncini visible between them and, at the right of the frame, a hint of the brickwork of the bell tower. The perspective is not tied to one specific viewer but can be shared by many, and thus the image is linked to a public construct of the city, as befits Venice's most public, social space. However, the photograph includes no figures, not even empty chairs outside Florian that could evoke the possibility of figures. Thus, despite its accessible perspective, it presents an almost impossible view. The tourist would likely never see the Piazza so empty. The photograph evokes stasis rather than motion, as though the image is already courting an ideal souvenir memory rather than lived tourist reality.

Canaletto's *Piazza San Marco looking south-east*, painted in 1740, also an angle view, makes for a worthwhile comparison, even if Naya's photograph is of the basilica and clock tower and Canaletto's painting is of the basilica and the ducal palace (fig. 1.3). In both images, the flag poles are

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<sup>386</sup> Noël Riley Fitch, *The Grand Literary Cafés of Europe* (London: New Holland, 2006), 141.

bare, without waving standards. As noted in the previous chapter, Canaletto's paintings, although filled with figures and details, are rather static, especially when compared to Guardi's. Naya's photograph, with no figures or movement, is even more so. Canaletto's paintings can be considered its antecedents, with the photograph as the fullest articulation of Canaletto's fixed scenes.

The fact that the photograph presents itself as a nighttime image is significant. In the shift from painting to photography, the ideal time of day has changed from afternoon to night, when the square would be evocatively empty. While Canaletto presents his Piazza San Marco in the afternoon, in sunlight and filled with figures in conversation or selling their wares, Naya's is a moonlit image. *Clair de lune* photographs, popular in the nineteenth century, were first made by Naya and Ponti.<sup>387</sup> These images reinforced tourist ideas of Venice, ideas formed in part by Radcliffe's description of Venice.<sup>388</sup> Radcliffe, as discussed earlier, has her central character, Emily, arrive in Venice in the evening, enchanted by what she considers the magical atmosphere of nighttime in the city. As Schaff notes in her analysis of the novel, the dream-like, unreal descriptions of nighttime Venice, "distance the narrative from reality."<sup>389</sup> The *clair de lune* photographs are also distanced from reality since those made before the 1880s were in fact taken in the early morning, before vendors and tourists cluttered the space, and then were altered to appear to be moonlit.<sup>390</sup> Nighttime photography only became possible in the 1880s, when a glass plate was invented that did not need a wet gelatin. Before the 1880s, moonlit images were created in the dark room through a double exposure of two aligned plates and indigo ink was used to give the prints a blue tone, as though Venice's water and architecture were

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<sup>387</sup> Zannier, Italo. *Venezia: Immagini del XIX secolo dagli Archivi Alinari* (Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 1985), non-numbered page.

<sup>388</sup> In 1876, the American journal *The Ladies' Repository* states that *Udolpho* is a "book now seldom read, with which Byron was charmed" (vol. 36, 559). Radcliffe's descriptions of Venice were copied so often during the nineteenth century that tourists may not have been aware that their Gothic conceptions of the city could be traced in part to her seminal novel.

<sup>389</sup> Schaff, "Venetian Views and Voices," 91.

<sup>390</sup> In *Wintering in the Riviera, with Notes of Travel in Italy and France*, William Miller, describing the beauty of a moonlit night in Venice during his travels in the late 1870s, writes that "one is familiar with photographs of the fair city, tinted with a deep blue in imitation of moonlight effect, a white spot being picked out for the moon herself, as of course the photographs are taken during the day, and I can hardly say that there is in these pictures much, if any, exaggeration" (London: Longmans, 1881, 376).

illuminated by the moon.<sup>391</sup> A relatively accessible view of Piazza San Marco or the Grand Canal, taken in the early morning when the intrepid tourist could have access to a quieter tourist space, becomes unreal, manipulated to evoke the quality of a moonlit night.

Viewing Naya's photograph in a shop in the crowded Piazza, a tourist might not know the image was altered but would certainly know that arranging to be in the square at midnight under the light of a full moon was beyond the usual tourist experience of the city. Ironically, while the *clair de lune* photograph is linked to time, to night specifically, the lack of any historically-specific figures or objects in the square also makes the image atemporal. The space appears to exist beyond time in a manner that caters to tourist impressions of the city, such as those cultivated by Radcliffe's novel, rather than to a sense of the Piazza as a vibrant space in civic life.

Naya's photograph of a single, prominent gondola in front of the Rialto Bridge also empties the city's bustling geographical centre of figures (fig. 2.6). The image departs from Canaletto's *Grand Canal: The Rialto Bridge from the South* (1727), which also focuses on the bridge but includes figures on the *riva* and a multitude of gondolas on the water and docked under the bridge and along the canal (fig. 2.24). In Canaletto's painting, although the figures give scale to the scene, they are also workers who fix ships and row gondolas. In Naya's photograph, the gondola is unmanned as it floats away from its mooring post, making the *ferro* on its prow clearly visible against the water. With its six metal teeth symbolic of the six *sestieri* of Venice and an arch that, according to gondoliers and Italian tradition, symbolizes either the doge's cap or the Rialto Bridge, the *ferro* encourages the viewer to linger on its symbolism.<sup>392</sup> While Canaletto's painting of the Rialto Bridge presents a scene of daily activity along the Grand Canal, Naya's photograph prompts us to see one object, the gondola, as a symbol of Venice.

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<sup>391</sup> Information provided by Marco Antonetto, collector of Italian photographs, 2008.

<sup>392</sup> Like many guidebooks, Baedeker's *Italy: Handbook for Travellers* mentions the *ferro* and gondoliers would have highlighted the symbolism (Leipsic: Baedeker, 1874), 197.

The *ferro* in Naya's photograph becomes a synecdoche for the gondola itself, for the Rialto Bridge, and for Venice. Unlike Canaletto's painting, which adds details to give a sense of Venetian life, Naya's photograph excises details, making the other moored gondolas as dark as possible. In this way, the image, like the *ferro*, acts as shorthand: the luminous Venice that is semaphored here is a silent, still, mysterious Venice. The image evokes a feeling or atmosphere more than a city.

Naya's photograph does signal some historical specificity since it includes a *felze*, a covered gondola cabin once used to protect passengers from the weather. Since the *felze* was no longer in general use by the latter nineteenth century, the photograph of the old-fashioned gondola again references the city's past. Paradoxically, the *felze*, which is historically specific, evokes the city's timeless quality: a nineteenth-century tourist could see the souvenir image of an old-fashioned gondola not as a staged scene for his or her benefit but as a quaint sign that Venice is changeless.<sup>393</sup>

Space is represented symbolically in souvenir images of Venice's key tourist sites: in the photographs of the Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal the sense of timelessness, while in keeping with many visitors' expectations of Venice, is a carefully framed version of the city in which signs of modernity are carefully left out of the frame in order to evoke an idealized past. The motivation may, in part, be psychological self-preservation on the part of the local photographers who, although without specific intent, created a traditional and popular image of stasis in the face of a century of sweeping social and political change. The images also functioned as a marketing strategy that both shaped and catered to tourist desire to elide centuries and see the contemporary city as existing in a perpetual past. With each new photograph of the city's central spaces emptied of figures, Ponti, Naya, and Filippi deliberately repeated the visual codes for depicting Venice that they had originated and that tourists had absorbed.

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<sup>393</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell, "Venetian Boats" in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 80, 1890, 541-559. See especially Pennell's summary of the decrees of the *Proveditori alle Pompe* on page 548.



*2.2.1.2 Depicting tourists: The performance of tourism in the Piazza and on the Grand Canal*

While photographs of central spaces without figures continued to be the most popular images of Venice sold to tourists, by the later 1880s photographers adopted another, parallel approach to the representation of Venice's key sites: tourists themselves begin to populate the spaces presented in the souvenir views.<sup>394</sup> These photographs are fruitful objects of analysis, offering intriguing evidence of how visitors engaged with travel images and conceived of themselves as tourists. The images can also be seen as an ethnographic project in reverse. The locals, the Venetian photographers, studied the foreigner. These foreigners were the Western European or North American tourists. These tourists in turn purchased the photographs of themselves, or of other tourists, enacting tourist rituals in Venice, often in and around the city's central spaces. Just as foreign travel writers have always dissected the habits of Venetians, local photographers now began to document the tourist, thus engaging in an unusual ethnographic project.

In many of these photographs, a doubling is evident: the local photographer chronicles and observes the foreign, which is to say the tourists, just as the subject of the images, the tourists themselves, chronicle and observe the foreign city. In Naya's 1880 photograph of the Grand Canal with tourists in gondolas facing the Palazzo Mocenigo (fig. 2.25), the viewer observes the women in gondola as they observe Venice. Tourists certainly purchased this photograph since it is part of Naya's commercial collection, yet the intended consumer, the tourist, is not the only implied viewer of the image. In fact, since the viewer of the image observes the tourists from the position of the

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<sup>394</sup> Although most nineteenth-century photographs of the Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal depict the spaces as either devoid of figures or populated almost exclusively with tourists, a few exceptions are evident: photographs of feast days or of the collapse of the bell tower do capture the locals. I do not focus on these images here, though, since they are reportage photos that were taken for municipal documentary purposes (See Costantini, "Carlo Naya," 36).

photographer's gaze, he or she symbolically stands in for the Venetian photographer himself and thus the image has an ethnographic quality, albeit in reverse.<sup>395</sup>

Naya's photograph of the two gondolas gliding tourists past the Palazzo Mocenigo in the evening light evokes a series of reflections, both literal and metaphorical. The water mirrors Venice's architecture, the *palazzo* in turn reflects the movement of the canal waters created by the gondola, and the twin gondolas and two gondoliers also create a mirroring effect. As well, the tourists, wearing their upper-class hats that, like the ubiquitous parasols, symbolized the nineteenth-century female traveller, are reflected in the other group of tourists in the second gondola which the photograph suggests are virtually identical in sartorial choices, mannerism, and positioning. In fact, at first glance, the photograph seems to depict only one gondola, despite the presence of the two gondoliers and two keels. The image also calls attention to the uniformity of tourists and, in a subtle ethnographic gesture, places them, floodlit, as the subject of spectacle, as a curiosity to be observed and studied as much as they observe and study their setting and the movements of their gondoliers.

Naya's photograph of tourists and for tourists presents them both as subjects and objects of display. While viewers of the photograph may first be drawn to the palace, the details of which consume most of the photograph, they quickly become intrigued with the women in the gondola, who are the subject of the photographer's gaze, and notice that one of the tourists in the gondola is gazing in the direction of the gondoliers, who are thus the subject of the tourist gaze. In this manner, the photographer's gaze and the tourist gaze compete until they begin to mirror each other: both are examples of active looking. The other examples of mirroring, specifically the mooring posts reflected

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<sup>395</sup> Local photographers were often commissioned to document Venetian tourism. For example, in 1887, a special commission toured the lagoon to establish the best viewpoints to include in a catalogue given as a gift to invited guests of an exhibit showcasing 25 photos of the island. Included in the collection were photographs of tourists bathing at the Lido, the lagoon island south of Venice which was developed into a beach playground for tourists and quickly became the nineteenth-century tourist's most frequented space after the Piazza San Marco. Filippi's photographs of the Lido were most likely also purchased by tourists. They were both souvenir images and part of an ethnographic project organized and published by the city of Venice to chronicle the newly emerging tourist culture. (Zannier, "Filippi, Tomaso?": "Assente" in *Venezia paesaggio ottocentesco: le vedute di Tomaso Filippi, fotografo* (Venezia: Archivio Filippi, 2002, 13-21).

by the palace's façade, the women's hats, the gondoliers, the gondola's keels, the symmetry of the Mocenigo windows and crests, and the prows of both gondolas which turn towards each other and seemingly blend into one, all reinforce the photograph's suggestion that Venice is a place of dualities and reflections. The observers, the tourists, can become the observed, reflected back to themselves in a commercial souvenir photograph.

The photograph's most incessant mirroring is, of course, the fact that it is a reproduced image seen in multiple copies in Naya's shops.<sup>396</sup> The photograph's ethnographic approach to the type that is the nineteenth-century tourist is not that of the dominant, classifying surveyor but rather has an air of sightseeing. Both Naya and the tourists he photographed could claim, as Théophile Gautier did after his six weeks in Venice, "I had worn out three pairs of eyeglasses, a pair of opera glasses, and lost a telescope. Never did anyone indulge in such an orgy of sightseeing."<sup>397</sup> While viewing Venice, tourists themselves became the subject of the spectacle.

This is especially the case when tourists presented themselves in the Piazza San Marco for the ubiquitous tourist-with-pigeon souvenir photograph. In Filippi's 1895 photograph of the Piazza San Marco looking towards the basilica and clock tower, which is similar to the framing of Naya's *clair de lune* photograph of the empty Piazza, tourists are photographed feeding pigeons in the centre of the square (fig. 2.26). Taken from a distance, the photograph captures a group of travellers that can stand in for any of the tourists sifting through the souvenir views in Filippi's shop and thus the image functions as a souvenir for all travellers.

Affordable handheld Kodak cameras, invented by George Eastman, first made an appearance in 1888 but, as is evident from the numerous photographs of tourists with pigeons in the Filippi archives, even after the introduction of a tourist camera most foreigners supplemented their own snapshots by relying on professionally-taken souvenirs to function as the visual record of what they

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<sup>396</sup> For the motif of mirroring in literature set in Venice, see Judith Seaboyer, "Second Death in Venice: Romanticism and the Compulsion to Repeat in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*," *Contemporary Literature* 38 (1997): 501.

<sup>397</sup> Théophile Gautier, *Journeys in Italy*, trans. Daniel Vermilye (Paris: Brentano, 1902).

wanted to remember as the gaiety and camaraderie of their travelling party.<sup>398</sup> Filippi was one of many local photographers who captured the tourist ritual of feeding the pigeons of San Marco. Between 1894 and 1900, he made hundreds of photographs of tourists with pigeons. Most are in black and white but a number are hand-coloured, an aesthetic that was especially popular at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.<sup>399</sup>

Significantly, Filippi's 1895 photograph features tourists but no locals. Venetians continue to be absent from most souvenir photographs of central spaces. There are some exceptions, such as genre scenes, for which locals were paid by the photographer to pose around a well holding baskets of flowers, for example, or in photographs taken for documentary purposes, such as the photographs of the collapse of the bell tower and of feast days and processions. At times, photographs taken for tourists happen to capture curious young Venetians in a corner of the frame, as in Filippi's 1894 photograph of a young tourist in an elaborate white hat observed by a group of local children (fig. 2.27). While the genre photographs that fall outside the scope of this project do focus on Venetian women, often with their characteristic fringed shawls, the photographs that are not genre scenes, if they do include locals, often capture men or children. Local women are conspicuously absent from the photographs of central spaces that are not genre images. The absence of local women in the photographs speaks to a long tradition of gendered spaces, one that perhaps tourism gradually unravelled since in early twentieth-century photographs we do see locals, men and women, and tourists in the Piazza and around the Rialto.

In contrast, it is female tourists, much more than male tourists, who figure in the commercial photographs taken of foreigners in Venice. In her work on the Grand Tour, Chard has argued that while travel was, for centuries, "a confirmation of a patrician masculinity," a shift occurs in the late

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<sup>398</sup> John Berger in *About Looking* cites 1888 as the year when "the first cheap popular camera was put on the market" (New York: Vintage, 1980, 52). Ritter notes that Eastman's mass-market Kodak cameras for popular use included enough film for 100 pictures and came with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest" (*Venice in Old Photographs*, 123).

<sup>399</sup> The technique and reception of hand-coloured images will be explored in more depth in the chapter on postcards.

eighteenth century in which travel, to Italy especially, becomes feminized.<sup>400</sup> In the history of Venice's souvenir imagery it is specifically in the late nineteenth century that female tourists, photographed with pigeons, with parasols, and in gondolas, feature more than men.

Filippi's 1895 photograph of tourists feeding pigeons is anomalous for this subgenre because it is formatted horizontally. Most photographs of this tourist ritual, much like those of the Bridge of Sighs, are vertical images. These vertical photographs are taken at relatively close range, in comparison to the photographs of central spaces devoid of figures, and thus mark a shift in the format of souvenir photographs. They may have been influenced by the 1837 *Fiore* guidebook which includes a vertical engraving of the Bridge of Sighs. The photographs of tourists with arms outstretched, laden down with pigeons, both those taken at a distance and those in which the tourists' faces can be seen, were commissioned directly by the tourists themselves, and subsequent copies of the same photographs may have been sold in tourist shops and in Filippi's and other photographers' own studios.<sup>401</sup>

The tourist's body is one of the visual conventions in the pigeon photographs since the pose is often the same: the tourist is seated or standing at the base of a decorative lamppost with arms acting as feeding posts for pigeons. The practice of paying a photographer to take one's picture in gondola or with pigeons, or purchasing photographs of others doing the same, was a more accessible version of having one's portrait painted or one's hands sculpted while 'doing the tour' of Europe. Tourist guidebooks of the period include the names and addresses of local photographers who could be hired to take souvenir photographs for tourists at popular sites. By posing for these photographs, the tourists

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<sup>400</sup> Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, 36-38.

<sup>401</sup> Filippi kept small black books in which he wrote in a hand that is hasty in comparison to the elegant penmanship of his other notebooks and correspondence, which suggests that he wrote in these smaller books while outside in Venice. The notebooks include details of lampposts, exposure times, placement of sunlight and shadows at certain times and in certain spots, and, quite often, the addresses of tourists. For example, in a notebook dated 1896 and archived as E21 in the Archivio Filippi's *Scattola E*, Filippi writes the addresses of a 'Mrs. Chayton, Piccadilly, West London' and a 'Dora Bethusy, Hamburg' as well as numerous other addresses of British, German, American, and Italian tourists. Unless Filippi was a prolific collector of pen pals, he was most likely recording the addresses while outside during a photo session with the tourists so that, if some could not collect the souvenir photographs of themselves while in Venice, Filippi would mail them the images.

positioned themselves in their guidebook, so to speak. They made of their physical selves a representation that was recommended in the guidebooks as part of the experience of travel.

In the photographs of pigeons and tourists, the goal is not to record the spatial layout and architecture of the Piazza San Marco for the tourist. The square is needed only as a backdrop, and only in fragments. In Filippi's compendium of tourist-with-pigeons photographs, only one provides a more substantial view of the architecture of the ducal palace and the waters of the Bacino, perhaps at the tourists' request (fig. 2.28). In most, the pigeons and the lamppost, and at times the clock tower and a hint of a gothic arch, are the only visual cues that say 'Venice,' and indeed the only ones necessary, it seems (figs. 2.29, 2.30, 2.31). Pigeons, like gondolas, were synonymous with Venice, as is evident in many of the tourists' letters home and in articles in magazines.<sup>402</sup> For example, in the 1869 *Harper's* article on souvenirs, the writer promotes the creation of tourist scrapbooks and notes that in one "a few feathers, dropped by the famous pigeons in the square of St. Mark's at Venice, had been ingeniously arranged in the similitude of a black gondola."<sup>403</sup> Unlike the photographs of tourists in gondolas, which often present the tourist in the larger context of the city and thus have the double function of recording the tourist and recording the topography, the photographs of tourists with pigeons rely on a pre-knowledge of Venice in order to function, when seen by others back home, as markers of Venice.

Posing for these photographs became a tourist ritual among the well-heeled, and both the posing and the purchasing of the tourist-with-pigeon and tourist-in-gondola photographs speak to a desire on the part of foreigners to see their own image, their own likeness, reflected in unfamiliar

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<sup>402</sup> The pigeons in Piazza San Marco are referenced in tourists' letters home to such an extent that not only being photographed with them but writing about them was part of tourist conventions. David L. Bartlett, an American tourist writing home in December 1883 from the Hotel Danieli, describes "the pigeons that flock in St. Mark's square," adding that "it is said that one of the Italian generals sent news of one of his victories to Venice by carrier pigeon and that the city council then passed laws that they should be fed at the city's expense at two o'clock every day. This is the story, but skeptical people say that a wealthy lady, very fond of pigeons, left in her will an amount of money, the interest of which was applied to this purpose." Bartlett published his *Letters from Europe* privately for friends and relatives in Baltimore in 1886. The entry is on page 132.

<sup>403</sup> Anonymous, "Reflections on the Nature of Souvenirs," *Harper's Magazine*, 250.

surroundings, thus possibly evoking a sense of the familiar as well as ownership of a foreign place. The images functioned as a badge of status: the consumers and the subjects of the images were part of a coterie group, but nevertheless a growing group, with the leisure, money, and privilege to spend time observing foreign cultures. The photographs of central spaces with tourists function as a source of desire both for future tourists seeking ostensibly accurate depictions of Venice and for current visitors seeking reflections of themselves as tourists. The photographs also belie the anxieties of travel and turn individuals into subjects, and into a type: the nineteenth-century tourist. Judith Adler's theory of travel as a "self-consciously performed secular art" implies that the traveller's experience of the real, both in the foreign country and in recollections back home, is a performative act.<sup>404</sup> This is certainly applicable when considering the photographs made for tourists of their rituals in Venice.

The tourists in these photographs are performing their role as conventional tourists, a role that guidebooks, by the early 1900s, already intimated was clichéd. Baedeker's 1903 edition of *Northern Italy* states, in a withering tone, that "those whose ambition leans in that direction may have themselves photographed with the pigeons clustering round them."<sup>405</sup> The tourists in the images included here are showing that they are good-naturedly participating in the cliché. Some may know they are succumbing to a type. In certain cases, the subjects seem less than enthusiastic about the onslaught of pigeons, as is evident in the expression on the faces of a couple photographed by Filippi at the base of a lamppost (fig. 2.31). In this photograph, the male tourist is not looking at the foreign through his camera, which rests in a leather case worn around his neck, but rather he is being looked at by the local photographer, a reversal of roles that may be contributing to his displeasure. Although Adler argues that there are different types of subjects, she maintains that travel is a constructed experience that leaves little room for individuality. The pervasiveness of the tourist-with-pigeon photographs are certainly evidence of this. However, the subject of the pigeon photographs,

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<sup>404</sup> Adler, "Travel as Performed Art," 1368.

<sup>405</sup> Baedeker, *Northern Italy*, 12<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Baedeker, 1903), 271.

the tourist, is both a collective subject and an individual. In certain photographs, such as the image of this less-than-pleased couple surrounded by pigeons, the individual emerges. As their expressions suggest, these two tourists are chafing against the stereotypical role their tourist culture has foisted on them.

Travel, travel writing, memories of travel, and photographs taken while travelling are all negotiations between actual experiences and prior tourist desires and expectations.<sup>406</sup> Commercial photographs of tourist sights, as Frow has argued, are “lived as real” by the tourist and thus are part of a collective perception.<sup>407</sup> Adler would add that tourists perform their role in maintaining this collective perception. The tourists photographed with pigeons are aware of the rituals, behaviour, and conventions involved in being a tourist. By the late nineteenth century, the tourist ritual of feeding the birds in Piazza San Marco was not complete until a photograph had been taken as evidence that the tourist had participated in this tourist custom.

In some cases, tourists consciously styled themselves as tourists: they highlighted that they were aware of the spectacle of tourism, of its theatrical qualities. Acknowledging the pervasive influence of Radcliffe’s Gothic novels, Byron writes to his sister that he is “going out this evening, in my cloak and gondola. There are two nice Mrs. Radcliffe words for you.”<sup>408</sup> In these lines, Byron is highlighting how ideas about Venice and the expectations and role of being a tourist in Venice had been influenced by popular literature. Similarly, in surviving non-commercial photographs, that is to say photographs taken of tourists by other tourists, the subjects seem to be aware that they are performing tourism. Giuseppe Primoli, a wealthy Roman nobleman who photographed for pleasure and exhibited throughout Europe, made a series of non-commercial photographs while in Venice on August 23, 1889. His subjects were the painters Jean-Louis Forain and Jeanne Bosc, whom he had

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<sup>406</sup> Adler, “Travel as Performed Art,” 1369.

<sup>407</sup> Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia,” 125.

<sup>408</sup> Cited in Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, 9.



met earlier that day at the Piazza San Marco's Caffé Florian.<sup>409</sup> The trio embarked on an afternoon project: Primoli photographed the couple posing theatrically, wistfully, and often humorously in gondola (fig. 2.32). In Forain and Bosc, Primoli found willing subjects to perform the necessary roles for his document of the activities, and the frivolities, of tourist life.

The imposition of conventions, such as those that govern the commercial photographs of tourists taken by Filippi, seem to open up a space for playfulness. After repeated viewing, the commercial photographs of tourists highlight the banality of tourist rituals. In Filippi's photographs of tourists feeding the birds, tourists are documented as types. Forain, Bosc, and Primoli, in their afternoon project, both reference the commercial photographs and also work beyond the boundaries of the images and texts that impose meaning so that the individual emerges from the tourist subject. Michel de Certeau has developed the notion of an "art of doing," which suggests that someone engaged in a common practice, such as the tourist ritual of taking a gondola ride, can develop practices that resist the conventions foisted onto the individual by cultural factors, such as the tourist industry in this case.<sup>410</sup> Along the same lines, Roger Chartier writes that "cultural consumption [...] is at the same time a form of production, which creates ways of using that cannot be limited to the intentions of those who produce."<sup>411</sup> If we take the tourist-with-pigeon and tourist-in-gondola photographs as examples of cultural consumption and forms of production, clearly the producers of these images, the Venetian photographers, could not control the various "ways of using" or "art[s] of doing" that came with the Kodak camera available to tourists as of 1888. Chartier asserts that cultural consumption need not be "passive or dependent and submissive" but instead "creative" as it "resists suggested and imposed models."<sup>412</sup> By the late 1880s, tourists were certainly able, if so inclined, to take their own photographs of themselves and their party with birds and in gondolas and, in the

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<sup>409</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 148. The *Archivio Primoli* is located in the Palazzo Primoli in Rome.

<sup>410</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1988).

<sup>411</sup> Roger Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France" in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Stephen L. Kaplan (New York: Mouton, 1984), 234.

<sup>412</sup> Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation," 234.

process, they could send up some of the conventions of the genre, thus asserting their roles as individual tourists.

What is especially significant, though, is that precisely at the moment when the personal-use camera became an available tool to record such “arts of doing,” many tourists, even if they did take these photographs themselves, also participated in the larger form of production and cultural consumption that was the professionally-taken photograph of them with the visual cues that read as ‘Venice.’ In contrast to Kodak’s “you press the button, we do the rest” slogan,<sup>413</sup> the professional photographs recalled the romance of a recent past, when the ritual of having a photograph taken while travelling involved a more elaborate production and engagement with a local artist.

In a tourist-with-pigeon photograph, even though the image is meant to repeat the visual conventions of myriad other similar images, the souvenir would be diminished if another photographer taking a similar photograph of another set of tourists was caught in the frame. Primoli, though, captured, at least once, the photographers’ process of making the tourist-with-pigeon images. In his photograph of the Piazza San Marco with tourists (fig. 2.33), a camera is visible, positioned on the right, and a woman is posing for a souvenir photograph of herself holding pigeons as local children look on. Primoli captures visually what others have described: Thompson, the photographic chronicler, noted that he never saw the Piazza without “a camera in an angle intended for a long shot.”<sup>414</sup> On a first viewing, Primoli seems to make the square itself and the façade of the basilica the central focus, in contrast to most vertical tourist-with-pigeon photographs. However, both the subject of the souvenir photograph and the photographer in the right corner are clearly visible. The men and young boys around the lamppost are observing the woman posing. Again, there is a doubling, or reflection, in which the subject of the photograph is also the subject of other gazes besides our own. While Primoli was ostensibly a member of the leisured and moneyed circle of travellers he

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<sup>413</sup> The Kodak slogan was introduced in 1888. For more on Kodak’s advertising of its cameras, see Elizabeth Brayer’s *George Eastman: A Biography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996).

<sup>414</sup> Cited in Costantini, “Carlo Naya,” 37.

photographed, his images have a certain irony, especially in their ability to capture the souvenir moment behind the scenes before the classic, or clichéd, travelling image is created. His images may not directly mock the tourists he photographs, but they certainly expose their rituals.

While European artists, travel writers, and photographers were engaging in ethnographic, and often colonial, projects in Egypt and other lands, Italian photographers were refocusing the lens, so to speak, on the alternate view: they documented the recent and now prevalent type that was the European and American tourist. Not surprisingly, foreign photographers were interested not in tourists but in documenting architecture, as in Hobbes's photographic work for Ruskin's guidebook of Venice.<sup>415</sup> Clearly, observing the tourists, displaying the results, and in Naya's and Filippi's case, selling these photographs to those they were studying, was the new trend among Italian photographers, and one which, whether deliberate or not, provides a welcome reversal in the history of ethnography.

### 2.2.2 *The Bridge of Sighs in souvenir photographs*

The Bridge of Sighs is included in this analysis as a link between the photographs of Venice's central spaces and those of its peripheral spaces. The bridge itself is in a central location, attached to the ducal palace and a stone's throw from the Piazza San Marco, but it is also liminal, existing, as bridges do, in an in-between space, in this case between the palace and the prisons. According to both nineteenth-century and current guidebooks, the bridge gained its name during the period of the Venetian Republic when prisoners taking their last look at the city from the bridge's windows would sigh at the beauty of Venice. The legend may have predated the name of the bridge, or was crafted to

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<sup>415</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 29.

fit the name, but, either way, it is Byron, in his poem *Childe Harold*, who gave the bridge its epithet in the early nineteenth century, a name that was then taken up by both tourists and Venetians themselves.

In 1875, Ponti, one of the first photographers to sell souvenir views of Venice to tourists, made a vertical photograph of the Bridge of Sighs featuring two tourists, one seated and one standing, on the Ponte della Paglia (fig. 2.34). The photograph is one of the first that focuses exclusively on the Bridge of Sighs and its vertical framing has at least three significant visual precedents that were part of the culture of tourism: in 1836, the English artist William Etty painted a vertical image of the bridge that depicts the popular tale of prisoners being secretly drowned at midnight (fig. 2.35); in 1837, the *Fiore di Venezia* guidebook also presents the Bridge of Sighs in a vertical image (fig. 2.11); and in 1870 Thompson published *Venice and the Poets*, a collection of Romantic poems on Venice complemented by his own photographs of the city, one of which is a vertical image of the Bridge of Sighs (fig. 2.36).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Bridge of Sighs was associated with the severity of the Venetian Republic and the pain and despair of those imprisoned in the infamous *pozzi* on the ground floor of the Palazzo Ducale's prison.<sup>416</sup> Etty painted the bridge after being intrigued by the Elizabethan chronicler Thomas Nashe's 1594 tales of Venice's beauty and corruption and by Joseph Turner's 1832 exhibition of Venetian paintings. Turner's paintings were themselves inspired by the section on Venice in *Childe Harold*.<sup>417</sup> Turner's painting of the Bridge of Sighs is a horizontal image that presents Venice, seen from the Bacino, as a hazy space in which the Riva degli Schiavoni is indistinct from the water and the bridge arches very high over a rather squat palace (fig. 2.37). Etty, by contrast, depicts the well-known bridge from the perspective of a viewer in gondola entering the Rio del Palazzo, thus highlighting the vertical height of the palace and prison's façades and the

<sup>416</sup> Thomas Okey, *Venice and its Story* (London: J.M. Dent, 1904), 115. See also Charles Klopp's *Sentences: The Memoirs and Letters of Italian Political Prisoners from Benvenuto Cellini to Aldo Moro* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999).

<sup>417</sup> Rosella Mamoli-Zorzi, "Intertextual Venice: Blood and Crime and Death Renewed in Two Contemporary Novels" in *Venetian Views, Venetian Blinds: English Fantasies of Venice* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 226. Mamoli-Zorzi writes that Etty's painting is "a visual text strictly linked to other visual texts which are in turn linked to literary texts" such as the writings of Byron, Radcliffe, and Shakespeare, among others, so that "the physical Venice could well disappear and literary Venices would still be created" (226).

narrowness of the canal over which the bridge is arched, with only one star offering a hint of the larger sky blocked out by the height of the walls. This feeling of claustrophobia enhances the drama of the scene occurring at the right: two figures, one wearing the red cap signalling that he is an immigrant oarsman from the Dalmatian coast, leave the doors of the prison with the body of a prisoner in a sack. The viewer would recognize this as a visual representation of the drownings rumoured to have been the method of choice for dispensing with those imprisoned.

Indeed, in the travel piece entitled *Fragments*, published in 1846, a tourist by the name of Whyte describes his first view of the Bridge of Sighs as “a day to behold these long pictured images of darkness and terror” and imagines the “unfathomable tiers of dungeons stretched beneath this dreadful water gallery” in contrast to “merry England.”<sup>418</sup> Whyte notes, though, that “it was not here, however, that the secret midnight drownings took place (as I had fancied), but in that widest, deepest portion of the Canal Orfano far out in the lagoon.”<sup>419</sup> Whyte had fancied such a possibility perhaps after seeing Etty’s painting, and his reference to the outer canal comes from a line in Samuel Rogers’ long poem *Italy*, published in 1828 and later included in Thompson’s *Venice and the Poets*, in which the speaker describes prison-boats carrying bodies “disburdening in the Canal Orfano/that drowning place where never net was thrown.”<sup>420</sup>

Clearly, the Bridge of Sighs was a space rich with literary and visual associations for the cultured tourist, associations that were naturalized to such an extent that, as in Whyte’s case, he might not even be aware of their source. Venetians, attuned to the Romantic and Gothic interests of foreign visitors, incorporated these anecdotes into their guided tours. In *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain mentions that during his tour of the Palazzo Ducale “in a little narrow corridor they showed us where many a prisoner, after lying in the dungeons until he was forgotten by all save his persecutors, was

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<sup>418</sup> Cited in an anonymous review of *Fragments*, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 254.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Samuel Rogers, “St. Mark’s Place” in *Italy, a poem* (London: Harvard, 1830), 62. The lines are cited on page 34 of Thompson’s *Venice and the Poets* (1870).

brought by masked executioners and, garroted or sewed up in a sack, passed through a little window to a boat, at dead of night, and taken to some remote spot and drowned.”<sup>421</sup>

In contrast to the macabre tales associated with the Bridge of Sighs that recur in British and American visual and literary texts, the 1837 engraving in the Italian *Fiore di Venezia* guidebook presents the area around the bridge as a social meeting spot for polite conversation. This image continues the tradition, discussed in the previous chapter, of tourists wanting their visual souvenirs to be pleasing. The mysterious aspects of the city are more often represented in the travel tales about the city rather than in its souvenir images. The engraving depicts a trio of well-dressed figures on the left, likely tourists, on the Ponte della Paglia, with the overhanging Bridge of Sighs featured prominently and the next bridge visible in the distance. This composition is one of the few vertical engravings in the *Fiore* guidebook and, along with Etty’s painting, seems to have prompted the many later vertical images of the bridge, such as Thompson’s in *Venice and the Poets* (1870).

Thompson’s photograph, though, does not include the Ponte della Paglia, and is instead taken from that bridge itself, from its *rio* edge, rather than the Grand Canal side. Thompson chooses a moment when no tourists in gondola or even moored gondolas are present. Unlike the *Fiore* engraving, which suggests the bridge is a backdrop for the conversation among the group of three mid-century tourists, Thompson’s photograph, like the many photographs of central spaces without tourists, takes care to present a timeless image, and one that is seemingly so isolated from the daily or even tourist life of the city that armchair tourists might assume that if they travelled to Venice they would have the view all to themselves.

Ponti’s photograph of the space, in contrast, does not idealize the tourist site but rather highlights the work of being a tourist: one tourist takes a rest while seated on the stone steps of the Ponte della Paglia while the other records observations in a notebook or perhaps reads from a

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<sup>421</sup> Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 164.

guidebook. As well, Ponti's photograph is taken from a different vantage point than the earlier straight views of the bridge. With the photographer standing to the left when facing the bridge, the long, narrow *rio* is not the focus but rather the architecture of both the bridge itself and its surroundings. The photograph is taken from a low angle, no doubt to accommodate the tourist who poses while seated. The standing tourist draws the viewer's eye up to the Bridge of Sighs. While neither figure looks at the bridge, the image conveys a scenario in which the tourists have asked to be photographed in front of the bridge because of its importance as a key sight on the tourist circuit. Perhaps at the tourists' request, Ponti's photograph also highlights the sculpture of Noah attached to the façade of the ducal palace, which Ruskin had written about a decade earlier in *Stones of Venice* and which, as a result, tourists were expected to locate, observe, and appreciate. Ponti's tourists are positioned on the Ponte della Paglia's lower stone steps, rather than at its landing, thus allowing for the sculpture of Noah entwined in grapevines to be fully and clearly visible.

*Stones of Venice* includes a photogravure of the sculpture and Ruskin writes that "the corner of the palace, rising above this bridge, [...] will always be called the Vine angle, because it is decorated by a sculpture of the Drunkenness of Noah. The angle opposite will be called the Fig-tree angle, because it is decorated by a sculpture of the Fall of Man."<sup>422</sup> The standing tourist in Ponti's photograph might very well be reading this exact passage, so popular was Ruskin's text among tourists. Few contemporaneous nineteenth-century guidebooks mention the sculpture, although they certainly flag the Bridge of Sighs as an essential sight.<sup>423</sup> Nevertheless, local photographers did focus on it. This may have been because of the importance tourists gave to the sculpture in light of Ruskin's text. However, Ruskin also focuses on the opposite sculpture, the Expulsion of Adam and Eve, yet photographs of the bridge do not often, if ever, include a detail of it. While the expulsion of Adam and Eve is an allegory for severity, which the tourists would consider appropriate given their knowledge

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<sup>422</sup> Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, vol.3, 283.

<sup>423</sup> Baedeker and Murray guidebooks do not focus on the sculptural reliefs.

of the horrors of the prisons, the biblical story of the drunkenness of Noah, in which Noah's naked body is covered by his sons, is often read as an allegory of compassion.<sup>424</sup> The Drunkenness of Noah was a popular theme in Renaissance art, with inebriation understood as a metaphor for a mystical experience.<sup>425</sup> Moreover, Noah, who seems to be vomiting into the canal, is also aligned with the bodily.<sup>426</sup> Ponti, in presenting his city in tourist souvenirs, focused on an allegorical sculpture that connotes compassion, transcendence, and the physical realities of life, and removed from the frame one that suggests severity and sin.<sup>427</sup>

Whether deliberately or not, photographs of the Bridge of Sighs downplayed the early nineteenth-century notions of the space as one filled with terror and dread at the Republic's severity and instead refocused the conversation on the architecture and topography of the bridge and its canal. Perhaps in part because of this approach, by the end of the century the ferrying of prisoners and the midnight drownings were no longer prominent references in travel literature on the Bridge of Sighs.

Unlike photographs of the Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal, few commercial photographs of the Bridge of Sighs include tourists. Ponti's is certainly an exception, as is a photograph by Filippi of two tourists on the bridge (fig.2.38). Filippi's image of the male and female tourists at the famed spot is also notable because it is one of only a handful of nineteenth-century photographs of the bridge that are horizontal. His forty or so other photographs of the Bridge of Sighs, largely in black-and-white with some hand-coloured images, are almost all vertical views, many taken relatively close up,

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<sup>424</sup> The subject matter of the sculptures, decided on in the fourteenth century, was meant to reflect the characteristics of the Venetian Republic. See John Paoletti and Gary Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: Laurence King, 2005), 147.

<sup>425</sup> Maria Ruvoldt, *Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 22-24. By virtue of the fact that drunkenness was a state of "mental and physical abstraction," it was seen by Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine, as "a metaphor and mechanism for transcendent experience" (24).

<sup>426</sup> Doody, *Tropic of Venice*, 294-295.

<sup>427</sup> Perhaps because of the pervasiveness of the local photographers' framing of their images of the Bridge of Sighs, Walter Sickert, in the early twentieth century, draws the Bridge of Sighs from an angle that allows the Noah sculpture, but not the Expulsion image, to be visible (See Wendy Baron's *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, New Haven: Yale UP, 2006).



like the photographs of tourists feeding pigeons.<sup>428</sup> Filippi's vertical photographs of the bridge are taken from one of two perspectives: either they offer a perspective that includes the Ponte della Paglia, which allows for a detailed view of the Drunkenness of Noah, the sculptural relief also featured prominently in Ponti's earlier photograph, or they are long views down the Rio del Palazzo.

Although most of the vertical photographs of the Bridge of Sighs do not include tourists, tourists in gondola are at times included in the long views taken from the Ponte della Paglia looking down to the *rio*, as in Filippi's mid-1890s photo, a colour version of which is also included in one of his popular *Ricordi di Venezia* souvenir albums (fig. 2.39a-b). The tourists in gondola in these vertical views are often women who hold umbrellas as their gondolier heads either in or out of the Rio del Palazzo over which the Bridge of Sighs is arched. While they are unmistakably tourists, they are not the *raison d'être* for the photograph and, especially in the colour versions of the image, they and their umbrellas blend into the walls of the ducal palace, which allows for tourism, and the customers' gondola circuit, to be referenced without removing the focus from what Ruskin admonished his readers not to overlook: the architecture of the Bridge of Sighs above.

Creating a souvenir view of Venice focused exclusively on a bridge was a new visual strategy. Ponti and Naya, both of whom catered almost exclusively to foreigners in their shops located in the touristy Riva degli Schiavoni and the Piazza San Marco, were perhaps aware of the tourist penchant for Romantic poetry, and especially for Byron's *Childe Harold*, in which the speaker, disillusioned by the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, seeks an escape from his melancholy and travels throughout Europe. Canto Four, which Thompson includes alongside his photograph of the Bridge of Sighs in *Venice and the Poets*, famously begins with the speaker stating:

I stood in Venice on the 'Bridge of Sighs'

A Palace and a prison on each hand

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<sup>428</sup> As mentioned above, Filippi's archive also includes many of Naya's photographs, and this point about the number of vertical images of the Bridge of Sighs, and their vertical composition and perspective, includes in the tally Naya's photographs.

I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
 As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand!  
 A Thousand years their cloudy wings expand  
 Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
 O'er the far times, when many a subject land  
 Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles  
 Where Venice sat in state, throned on her hundred isles!<sup>429</sup>

Byron invokes the centuries-old myth of Venice born from the sea and alludes to Radcliffe's description of Venice fashioned by the hand of an enchanter, as his speaker, Harold, imagines he sees the architecture of Venice rise from the waves. The 'myth of Venice' thus finds its way into British Romantic poetry. Here the power of suggestion arises as a theme: Byron implies that previous oral and written tropes have scripted Harold's impressions, much like photographs of Venice frame viewers' impressions of the city, prompting them on where to look and which mood to evoke. In the same canto, Byron's speaker, referring to Venice, declares "I loved her from my boyhood. [...] Shakespeare's art had stamp'd her image in me."<sup>430</sup> Drummond Bone, in his analysis of the canto, has implied that its theme is the power of the imagination, "of the mind 'repeopling' the barrenness of life" through Venice's cultural associations.<sup>431</sup>

Indeed, the power of the imagination is what the poem celebrates since if the speaker were in fact to stand on the Bridge of Sighs he would be looking outward towards the water rather than towards the Venice he describes. The poem's imaginative geography, as the speaker notes, is prompted by the Venice of literature. A poem about influence, Byron's *Childe Harold* has itself been the catalyst for literary and artistic impressions of Venice. Among others, Turner painted a series of

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<sup>429</sup> George Gordon Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in *The Works of Lord Byron*, vol. 7 (London: Murray, 1819), 91.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Drummond Bone, "Childe Harold IV, Don Juan, and Beppo" in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 153.

images of Venice in the 1840s, displaying *Venice, the Bridge of Sighs* with the first two lines of Byron's fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. Ruskin, in turn, acknowledged "My Venice, like Turner's, had been chiefly created for us by Byron."<sup>432</sup> As a reaction against the Venice that emerges in the British Romantic aesthetic, Filippo Marinetti in his 1910 *Discorso futurista* asserts that "the poets are poisoned with Venice fever" and, addressing Venetians, declares that "when we shouted 'let us kill moonlight' we were thinking of you, old Venice soaked through in Romanticism."<sup>433</sup>

Although it is difficult to pinpoint when Byron's coinage first became widely used, Etty's title for his 1836 painting and the *Fiore* guidebook of 1837 both reference the bridge as the 'Bridge of Sighs,' with the latter referring to the structure in Italian as the '*Ponte dei sospiri*.' Earlier, in 1832, a notice in *The Athenaeum* announcing the publication of an annotated edition of Byron's poetry tells readers that "this day is published, illustrated with two beautiful Views of the Bridge of Sighs, [...] the Poetry and Prose Works of Lord Byron."<sup>434</sup> Even earlier, an 1828 advertisement in *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres* for a series of pictures of Venice uses Byron's name for the bridge.<sup>435</sup> Published in 1818, *Childe Harold* had within a decade given rise to the habit of referring to the bridge as the Bridge of Sighs. By the end of the century, the Bridge of Sighs existed in tourist culture not only as a physical bridge linking the palace to the prisons but also as a synecdoche for what tourists were conditioned to see as Venice's melancholy, Romantic atmosphere.

Whether local folklore or Byronic invention, the legend of prisoners sighing as they gazed one last time at the beauty of Venice is, appropriately, about looking at the city, which is a trope that has remained consistent throughout the centuries. Yet, it is the bridge itself, and even more the idea of the bridge, not the view from it, that captivated tourists. In 1905, the American writer Booth Tarkington, in his novel *The Beautiful Lady*, has one character declare, after feeling melancholy, that "for us the

<sup>432</sup> Cited in Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired*, 17.

<sup>433</sup> Cited in Rosella Mameli-Zorzi, "Intertextual Venice," 226.

<sup>434</sup> Anonymous article, *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts: From January to December 1832* (London: Holmes, 1832), 712.

<sup>435</sup> *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, and Sciences for the Year 1828* (London: Moyes, 1828), 463.

whole of Venice has become one bridge of sighs and we sat in the shade of the piazza, not watching the pigeons, and listening very little to the music.”<sup>436</sup> Playing with associations the reader would make to Byron’s elegiac poem for the lost glory of Venice, Tarkington has his character reject the trappings of tourism, such as the pigeons and the orchestras in the Piazza San Marco, and instead see the city as the embodiment of one of its most pervasive symbols.

Photographs of the Bridge of Sighs functioned as authenticators of the Romantic idea of Venice. Karin Becker, in her work on photographic archives, has noted that when “ways of seeing become institutionalized” photographs become “authenticated” and enter “the ideological domain.”<sup>437</sup> Becker thus implies that the process of authentication does the work of presenting ideas and images as natural. The images of the Bridge of Sighs authenticate a past and are “a certificate of presence,” in Roland Barthes’ terms.<sup>438</sup> Yet, they are also involved in the human process of authentication, as Becker would suggest. The photographs act as a visual reminder of what has not changed, such as the architecture, the tracery on the windows of the bridge, the relief of Noah, the narrowness of the canal, the route taken during a gondola tour of the area, and the tradition of being photographed in front of the bridge. They also evoke what has changed, such as the fashion, the shape of the gondolas, and the gondolier’s sartorial choices. At the same time, the images engage in a process of authentication in that they promote the idea that the Bridge of Sighs has always been special and thus a gondola ride passing underneath the bridge must be taken. The photographs function as visual prompts for the tourist’s movements around and under the well-known bridge.

While there is no specific evidence that photographers such as Ponti and Naya were inspired by Byron’s poetry, Thompson’s *Venice and the Poets* overtly links the photographs of Venice with the writings of Romantic poets. Published in 1870, the book features ten of Thompson’s photographs of

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<sup>436</sup> Booth Tarkington, *The Beautiful Lady* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004), 30.

<sup>437</sup> Becker, “Picturing Our Past: An Archive Constructs a National Culture,” 16-17.

<sup>438</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 87.

Venice alongside poems by Romantic and Victorian poets, including Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Rogers, and Browning. Recommended as a Christmas gift in an 1870 volume of the *Westminster Review*, *Venice and the Poets*, published by Provost and Company in London, was described by the anonymous reviewer as a successful marriage of image and text: “Lovers of Venice, which is as much to say everybody, will regard with pleasure the volume in which Messrs. Provost have collected most of the best things that English poets have written about the enchanted, ideal city, and accompanied the collection with views of the choicest sights thereof.”<sup>439</sup> Following the frontispiece featuring the Grand Canal and Church of Santa Maria della Salute, Thompson’s first photograph is of the Bridge of Sighs, which accompanies the relevant excerpt from Byron’s *Childe Harold* epic.

Imagery of the Bridge of Sighs serves as evidence of the fact that the Romantics, as tourists to Venice, participated in popularizing particular Venetian spaces, spaces that were then photographed by locals and foreigners to meet tourist demand. Only after Byron gave the covered exterior passageway from the palace to the prisons a name and recorded or invented its corresponding legend did the ‘Bridge of Sighs’ become an oft-depicted space and tourist attraction. Before Byron romanticized this architectural detail, the Ponte dei pugni, the Bridge of the Fists, was the most popular bridge for tourist visits (fig. 2.40). Located in the *sestiere* of Dorsoduro, away from the city centre, the bridge has two pairs of footprints carved in the stone on either end where two fist fighters, or groups of fighters, would take their place. The fights were banned in 1705 because, among other factors, they were increasingly violent, but the bridge remained a popular tourist attraction and was depicted in art until the mid nineteenth-century when the Romantic melancholy of the Bridge of Sighs supplanted it.<sup>440</sup>

The many photographs of the Bridge of Sighs attest to the influence of the British Romantics on both Venetian and foreign perceptions of the city. Furthermore, the photographs of the bridge have

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<sup>439</sup> Anonymous review, *The Westminster Review*, vol. 93, 1870, 339.

<sup>440</sup> Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), 53-54, 74 and 145.

participated in shaping the bridge's symbolic value for tourists by downplaying macabre tales of terror and highlighting aesthetics, tourism, and a more general sense of melancholy. Virtually erasing the Ponte dei pugni from most tourist itineraries, photographs of the Bridge of Sighs emphasize the power of poetry and photography to shape and, in this case, displace the spaces of tourism. A once-popular peripheral bridge, the Bridge of the Fists, makes way, in tourist literature, tourist itineraries, and souvenir images, for the more central Bridge of Sighs. However, as the next section of this chapter highlights, in most cases photographs tended to bring attention to, rather than downplay, the generally overlooked peripheral spaces of the city.

### 2.2.3 *Peripheral spaces: Minor canals and bridges*

By the late nineteenth century, local photographers moved beyond the symbolic centre of Venice, the triumvirate of the Piazza San Marco, Rialto Bridge, and Grand Canal, and became interested in capturing the periphery.<sup>441</sup> While images of Venice's Piazza and Grand Canal were part of a long tradition of depicting central spaces for tourists, Venetian photographs of peripheral spaces mark an innovative shift in the history of visual representations of their city. My focus here is on photographs of Venice's minor canals and bridges, thus excluding the Rialto Bridge, which is the geographic centre of Venice, and the Grand Canal. Before the development of photography, few view paintings and engravings depicted anything other than central public spaces or the *campi* often-frequented by tourists interested in notable churches. Thus, the photographic projects of the nineteenth century mark the beginning of an impulse to capture the aesthetics of the periphery.

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<sup>441</sup> Filippi's archive can be searched online according to type of image, such as '*Canali e rii*,' which results in over 300 photos of canals, often duplicates, organized according to *sestiere* and, within that sub-heading, organized according to canal name. The first twenty of these are dated circa 1860 and come from Naya's archive, which Filippi preserved and included as part of his catalogue. Besides these early images, most other photographs of peripheral canals are Filippi's and date from 1894 to 1914.

The term ‘periphery,’ as used here, refers to areas of Venice that are between the central tourist spots. These are often presented in the souvenir photographs with few visual markers that would allow the tourist to situate the view in relation to more well-known sights. Captions identifying the narrow canals were not always added to the border of the photograph, but when they were included these reinforced the fact that the small canals and bridges were off the well-worn tourist circuit. As well, while central spaces were most often photographed horizontally, with the exception of the Bridge of Sighs, these peripheral spaces were frequently taken vertically, a representational strategy that works to reinforce the narrowness of the canal and allude to the feeling of movement, and specifically of movement through a space that the tourist might never return to, seeing as the narrow canals are away from the tourist fray.<sup>442</sup>

Unlike the photographs of gondolas near the Rialto Bridge or of an empty Piazza San Marco, which offer a seemingly static scene in which time has stopped, these photographs of peripheral spaces suggest temporal movement. In a photograph of the Canal del Lovo published by local editor Ferdinando Ongania in his souvenir book entitled *Calle e canali a Venezia* in the 1890s, the vantage point is that of a viewer positioned on a bridge above the narrow canal, with the gondolier in the vertical image heading in the direction of the viewer (fig. 2.41).<sup>443</sup> The temporal is highlighted: the gondolier will soon pass under the bridge, much as he has passed under the bridge that is now in the distance behind him. This image encourages the viewer to imagine his or her own physical presence in the rather dynamic scene, and even perhaps to search out this picturesque space. However, situating oneself proves rather elusive. The photograph provides some context since the bell tower of Saint Mark crowns the scene and the canal can be found on a map, but the tourist who purchases the image

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<sup>442</sup> Of the photographs of canals in the Archivio Filippi, which also includes Naya’s archive, more than half are vertical images.

<sup>443</sup> Ferdinando Ongania was a publisher of note in Venice and director at Hermann F. Munster, one of the most popular bookstores in Venice, located at 72-73 Piazza San Marco. Employing the technique of heliogravure, which allowed for photographs to be reproduced mechanically, Ongania published souvenir books with large-format images, such as *Calle e canali a Venezia*, which was a collection of photos taken by the Studio Naya and by Filippi (Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 200).

would still be hard-pressed to find the exact bridge on which the photographer stood. Although the canal's name is given, the topography of Venice makes situating the point at which the photograph was taken along the canal difficult. Moreover, the narrow, vertical view, which includes sky and water, eliminates a wider context, besides the bell tower, and thus there are fewer visual cues to help locate the site.

In Filippi's archive, the peripheral canals often repeat: many of the photos are either black-and-white, hand-coloured, or *clair de lune* images of a handful of locations. Most often, the Rio dei Greci (fig. 2.42), the Rio dei Materdomini (fig. 2.43), and the Rio delle Erbe o Van Axel (fig. 2.44) were the canals chosen to highlight Venice's labyrinthine quality.<sup>444</sup> All three spaces were photographed vertically, with Filippi or one of his assistants taking the photograph from a bridge. In photographs of central spaces, such as those of the Piazza San Marco, the same space is depicted from different angles. In contrast, in these images of peripheral canals a number of different canals are often seen from the same angle. While each view includes a caption and an architectural detail, such as the leaning bell tower of the Greci church, a side view of the Palazzo Pesaro, and the façade of the less well-known Palazzo Van Axel, the photographs may nevertheless have been seen as interchangeable by tourists shopping for views. Indeed, in their published letters and journals, tourists rarely name the canals on which their gondola travelled; novels set in Venice describe the general experience of gliding on canals but do not focus on particular corners; and guidebooks of the period, detailed in their coverage of museums, churches, and the palaces of the Grand Canal, omit the names and visual elements of the canals taken to get from one site to another. Venetian photographers, in providing souvenir views of the spaces between tourist sites, were preserving for tourists both the memory and the details of a gondola ride.

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<sup>444</sup> The information provided alongside the digitized images in the '*Canali e rii*' section of the Archivio Filippi lists the name of the canal in each photograph.



Early guidebooks, such as Albrizzi's *Forestiere illuminato* (1740) and *Il fiore di Venezia* (1837), focus on peripheral spaces, such as the lagoon islands, but do not mention peripheral canals within Venice. One might assume that the later guidebooks do focus on peripheral canals, hence the corresponding photographs, but most do not. Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, published in its 12<sup>th</sup> edition in 1873, states that a short visit of six days must be organized in "topographical order."<sup>445</sup> While the tourist would be ferried into the minor canals while on route on day three from the San Moisè church to the Accademia and on to the Salute church, the transitional canals are not mentioned in the guidebook as part of the experience of visiting Venice.<sup>446</sup> Similarly, in keeping with the tone and message of most guidebooks of the period, Baedeker's 1882 edition of *Northern Italy* tells the dutiful tourist that "every leisure hour should be devoted to San Marco and its environs" and that "the traveller's movements must of course be regulated in accordance with the objects he has in view" and these "principal objects of interest should be visited in a definite order, such as that suggested below."<sup>447</sup> However, by 1891, Murray's revised *Handbook for Travellers of Northern Italy* adds a suggestion to its week-long itinerary: the editors encourage tourists to take a gondola ride on moonlit evenings with no particular itinerary or direction in mind.<sup>448</sup>

The nineteenth-century guidebook gondola route, although not necessarily the actual gondola route taken by tourists, was quite proscribed: the 1891 Murray guidebook and, most significantly, the images of minor canals and bridges available for purchase in souvenir shops are an antidote to that pre-determined route. The Murray guidebook's suggestion of a meandering gondola ride is contemporaneous with Filippi's souvenir photographs of peripheral canals. Both the photographs and

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<sup>445</sup> Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed., 429.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Baedeker's *Northern Italy* (London: Baedeker, 1882), xiii and 233. The copy that is referenced was owned by a Caroline Jenness and is preserved at McGill's Rare Books Library. The gondola routes suggested by various nineteenth-century guidebooks, and the commercial souvenir albums that often correspond to these circuits, will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.

<sup>448</sup> Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Murray, 1891), 273.

the guidebook are addressing and cultivating a growing interest in parts of Venice that lie between the well-known squares, galleries, and churches.

While the photographs of the Grand Canal highlight the products of human ingenuity, such as the Rialto Bridge and prominently-featured, decorative gondolas, the photographs of peripheral spaces, reinforcing Venice as seen through British eyes, seem to imply that the labyrinthine atmosphere of Venice dominates the people exploring and inhabiting it. The gondoliers in the photographs of minor canals function as markers of transience: their faces are often obscured, and they are presented as chameleons that blend into the background. In the Canal del Lovo photograph of a transition from one curve of the canal to another, which seems to have been staged, given the curious children peeking out from a top right window, Venice crowds the gondolier, who is dwarfed by his surroundings. In the photographs of the Materdomini and Greci canals, the gondoliers are also secondary, photographed from behind in these cases, and in both these and in the photograph of the Delle Erbe canal, the gondolas, canoe-like in their simplicity, are not the focus of the image but are subservient to the scene as a whole.

Created in the decades following the birth of Italy as a nation, these photographs of minor canals provide the tourist with images of locals even as they depict Venice as an evocative ruin. Theorizing on ruins, Geoffrey Ward has suggested that “the taste of ruins [...] is contemporary with the emergence of republicanism” and is “an indirect reaction to political upheaval.”<sup>449</sup> He argues that ruins “unite in a vivid way the power of the old and the newly interesting condition of fragmentation.”<sup>450</sup> The photographs of minor canals in various states of decay suggest that local photographers understood the appeal of ruins, an appeal described in numerous Romantic poems, as emphasized above. These particular kinds of images emerge after a period of political upheaval and, working with Ward’s thoughts on ruins, the photographic focus on decay can be understood as

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<sup>449</sup> Geoffrey Ward, “Byron’s Artistry in Deep and Layered Space,” in *Byron and the Limits of Fiction*, ed. Bernard G. Beatty and Vincent Newey (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1988), 194. Tanner also cites Ward in *Venice Desired*.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

signaling a moment of transition. Photographs of Venice's peripheral canals also focus on the city's residents. Unlike the Piazza San Marco photographs, which either pose a local child with tourists or occasionally capture a non-posed group of children at the edge of the frame, the photographs of the periphery deliberately include locals. Although we do not see gondoliers' faces in detail, they are not simply accidents that appear in the frame. The residents of Venice figure in these canal images as a necessary element: they not only give scale to the scene but also highlight the poverty of Venice, the daily reality of the 'evocative ruin.'

The photographs of gondolas plying the waters of peripheral canals are a visual complement to what some tourists seemed to desire most: a silent gondola ride. The American writer Katherine Sherwood Bonner in her published travel letters writes of two gondola rides taken with her companions in the 1870s. The first was manned by a gondolier "bursting with information and determined we should profit from it: [...] He moored his boat by Byron's Venice home and indulged in guttural ecstasies. He talked as learnedly as a guidebook about this place and that until we wished that lightning might strike or a flood drown him."<sup>451</sup> In contrast, in the evening Sherwood and her party "secured a gondolier as mute as the dumb servitor who rowed the bark of sweet Elaine, and for three magic hours we floated through wonderland. Now indeed we saw the Venice of our dreams: [...] we glided [...] through dark alley-ways, silent as dreamless sleep [...]. It was a time to waken the sleeping romance in the quietest nature, to give it birth in the most prosaic soul, to find the true Lethe."<sup>452</sup> As the references to Arthurian legend and Greek mythology emphasize, Bonner sees Venice through a literary lens and focuses less on local life since this would interfere with her dream-like conception of Venice.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Katherine Sherwood Bonner, *A Sherwood Bonner Sampler: What a Bright, Educated, Lively, Snappy Young Woman Can Say*, ed. Anne Razey Gowdy (Knoxville: U of Tennessee Press, 2000), 136.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Unlike Bonner, Twain celebrates the skill and knowledge of the Venetian gondolier. In *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain devotes a chapter to the gondola, noting that "I study the gondolier's marvellous skill more than I do the sculptured palaces we glide among." However, Twain acknowledges the tourist fascination with the silent, stylish gondolier: "When

The emergence of vertical photographs of narrow canals suggests that the city's photographers were seizing the opportunity to give tourists a visual complement to what these tourists were already creating for themselves: Venice as a palimpsest of their own tastes and sensibilities. In *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain highlights and often mocks the sensibilities of his fellow Anglo-American tourists. Deliberately providing the obligatory description of a gondola ride, Twain gently spoofs the foreigner for overwrought descriptions of Venice's visual decadence. He writes that "sometimes we go flying down the great canals at such a gait that we can get only the merest glimpses into front doors, and again, in obscure alleys in the suburbs, we put on the solemnity suited to the silence, the mildew, the stagnant waters, the clinging weeds, the deserted houses, and the general lifelessness of the place, and move to the spirit of grave meditation."<sup>454</sup> Clearly, the tourist trope of Venice's decay was, already by 1869, a motif worthy of being lampooned. In Wilde's Decadent novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), the eponymous character reads Théophile Gautier's poetry on Venice from *Emaux et Camées* (1852) in which the city is evoked through fragments in the lines "*devant une façade rose/ Sur le marbre d'un escalier*" and finds that "the whole of Venice was in those lines."<sup>455</sup> Images and words, Wilde's novel implies, can contain the physical space, the beloved city. The narrator, giving us Dorian's thoughts, declares that "Venice, like Oxford, had kept the background for romance, and, to the true romantic, background was everything."<sup>456</sup> Frustrating Victorian morality, Wilde implies style is substance: an evocative setting is as important as the object of one's affection, with atmosphere accentuating desire. English and French Decadent writers of the 1890s had an affinity for the aesthetic of fragments and decay evoked by ideas of Venice. As the Italian writer Giorgio Bassani describes it, "Venice was the city of the dead par excellence for the writers of the early and late Romanticism, and

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his long canoe and his fine figure, towering from its high perch on the stern, are cut against the evening sky, they make a picture that is very novel and striking to the foreign eye" (167).

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>455</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Toronto: Broadview, 2001), 195. The lines, deliberately left in the original without translation by Wilde, read in English as "in front of a rose façade/ on a marble staircase."

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

even more so for the Decadent movement of the second-half of the nineteenth century.”<sup>457</sup> Those living the century’s last days envisioned themselves in a transitional period, motivated in part by the *fin-de-siècle* anxiety spreading through Europe. As a city that was, like the century itself, past its prime, Venice held particular appeal.

The beauty of decadence, a fixture of nineteenth-century poetry and travel literature set in Venice, is evoked in photographs of the city’s peripheral spaces. These peripheral images were not as popular as those of central spaces, but they were produced in quite substantial numbers by the mid 1890s, at a time when *fin-de-siècle* London and Paris, especially, were consumed with notions of the ephemeral.<sup>458</sup> Indeed, when comparing eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century souvenir views of Venice, a shift from the centre to the periphery is evident. Canaletto too, at times, painted the periphery, as in his *Stonemason’s Yard* (1729), but, unlike his Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal paintings, this view was not one he recreated from different angles.<sup>459</sup> Eighteenth-century tourists instead asked for paintings of the San Marco area, the Rialto, and the Grand Canal. Clearly, in the following century, an additional souvenir space emerged. Certainly, photographers still photographed the Piazza and the Grand Canal with the Rialto, but the smaller waterways, streets, and squares became evocative spaces, invested with meaning; they were seen to capture, even more than the Piazza and Grand Canal, the picturesque quality of Venice.

Along with minor canals, bridges were also featured in souvenir photographs of Venice’s peripheral spaces. These photographs were not taken from the perspective of a tourist in gondola but rather from another bridge or from the boardwalks, the *fondamente*, thus evoking, once again, the perspective of a local, the photographer, rather than that of a tourist who would have typically

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<sup>457</sup> Cited in *Venice: Poetry of Place*, 94.

<sup>458</sup> Filippi’s correspondence with the shopkeepers for whom he supplied souvenir photographs includes lists of images that needed to be restocked most often. One can deduce that photographs of minor canals, which are not included in the lists, sold out less frequently. These letters are preserved at the Archivio Filippi in Venice in a folder marked ‘Corrispondenze Clienti 1896-1899.’

<sup>459</sup> Levey, *Paintings in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 55.

experienced these spaces that were in between tourist sites by staying in gondola. Filippi's 1890s photograph of the canal and bridge of Santa Giustina in the Cannaregio *sestiere* (fig. 2.21) offers the tourist a souvenir image of a corner of Venice not often frequented by tourists.<sup>460</sup> Indeed, no tourists are pictured here, but no locals are present either.<sup>461</sup> Instead, the focus is on silence and solitude: the photograph offers a dreamlike Venice, even as it presents an actual physical space. Tourists may have travelled the San Giustina canal, in between visiting the church of San Francesco della Vigna and the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, both noted in guidebooks, but the photograph has no caption, thus dislocating it from its location and evoking the *fin-de-siècle* fragmentary and decaying Venice rather than a space of daily life.

The layout of souvenir photographs of bridges also created a cult of bridges, so to speak. A commercial photograph made by a certain F. Pasta features a bridge, presented as the focus of the image with little additional context or caption. Annotations provided by the Archivio Filippi situate the photograph: like Filippi's, it was taken in Cannaregio, the least-touristed *sestiere* (fig. 2.45). The way the image is presented on paper, with an artistic signature and a large white border around the photograph, highlights the bridge as a prominent and powerful motif, an idea certainly at play in guidebooks and tourist writing as well.<sup>462</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, includes a lyrical poem on Venice in *Ecce Homo* (1888) which begins with the line "On the bridge I stood/Mellow was the night/Music came from far/Drops of gold outpoured/On the shimmering waves," and ends with the question "Had I a listener there?"<sup>463</sup> The bridge in these lines, and in the photographs, is a conduit for a move towards interiority: the transition from solid footing offered by the city's walkways gives way

<sup>460</sup> The Archivio Filippi team has determined the photograph is of the Santa Giustina canal and bridge.

<sup>461</sup> In Filippi's photograph of the bridges of the Rio della Canonica, in the Castello *sestiere*, locals are included in the left corner of the frame, but their faces are obscured.

<sup>462</sup> In *The Beauties of Venice and her History: A Guide to the City and Neighbouring Islands*, published in 1878 and sold to tourists at 68 Piazza San Marco, a shop owned by a certain Elena Brizeghel Draghi, Carlo Moretti, who writes the guide for an English audience, states that the city is "flushed with the opal lights of romance and poetry" and references Shakespeare and Byron before devoting a portion of his introduction to the minor bridges linking various canals (xix), whereas a century earlier Albrizzi's *Forestiery illuminato* mentions only one bridge, the Ponte di Rialto (195).

<sup>463</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* (London: Dover, 2004), 46.

to the state of being suspended above water. The tourist, both aware of and removed from his own physical presence, lingers in an ambiguous space, one made more so by the listener Nietzsche describes as the reflection of one's body in the canal below.

The sociologist Georg Simmel, in his essay entitled "Venice" (1922), describes the philosophical implications of visiting a city of fleeting views and liminal spaces: "The city belongs to neither land nor water – rather each appears like the protean garment, with the other concealed behind it, tempting as the true body. [...] Florence is [...] a city which gives the wonderful, unambiguous security of a home. Venice, however, has the ambiguous beauty of an adventure, which floats, rootless amidst life, like a torn-off blossom in the sea."<sup>464</sup> Simmel's perceptions are characteristic of many non-Venetian writers' and philosophers' impressions of the city. Byron concludes the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* with the image of an ephemeral Venice that seems to be dissolving and bridging day and night and past and present.<sup>465</sup> The speaker states that "the rich sunset to the rising star magical variety diffuse/ And now they change [...] Parting day/ Dies like a dolphin, whom each pang imbues/ With a new colour as it gasps away/ The last still loveliest, till – 'tis gone and all is gray." Simmel's essay and Byron's canto express what the photographs of peripheral spaces depict: constant desire. Capturing movement through stillness, photographs of minor canals and bridges elicit interest in tourists who desire to uncover 'the true body' of Venice, to use Simmel's phrase. If this were ever fulfilled, desire would cease. Thus, the photographs recreate and, through the repetition of mass production, create, a constant desire for a Venice that is as elusive as Byron's Venetian sunset or Simmel's tossed blossom on the sea.

Although Filippi's archive includes photographs of bridges without figures, Primoli, in 1889, photographed a bridge with a solitary figure captured midway through her crossing (fig. 2.46). This image evokes the notion of a solitary wanderer, depicted most famously in Caspar David Friedrich's

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<sup>464</sup> Cited in Tanner, *Venice Desired*, 367-368.

<sup>465</sup> Tanner, *Venice Desired*, 36.

painting *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818), which fascinated British, French, and German tourists captivated by Romantic literature and art. In Primoli's untitled photograph, the transient human figure crossing a centuries-old bridge creates a tension between the fleeting details of the particular moment and the permanence of the bridge. Primoli suggests movement through the necessarily static medium of photography. While the effect is achieved, the impossibility of truly completing the task is in keeping with the Romantic tendency to overreach, failure being a sign of the complexity of the artistic pursuit.

For tourists, Venetian bridges forged a physical and psychological link between what had and had not yet been visited; thus, the bridge is a symbol both of the memory of particular spaces and the anticipation of future memories. De Certeau's notion of an "in between" space and an "established place" is useful here.<sup>466</sup> De Certeau states that, through bridges, the "in between" is often transformed into an "established place."<sup>467</sup> In the nineteenth century, photographers were transforming the indeterminate space of bridges and minor canals into an "established place," an iconic city space, which is, ultimately, an imagined space.

Yet, the perspective is still singular and in fact tied specifically to the photographer's body, to his frame of vision. Unlike photographs of central spaces in which the perspective is collective and accessible to all, the vantage point in these photographs of minor canals and bridges is elusive. Even though the narrow canal is a public space, the perspective is that of a solitary figure or group of figures rather than a shared, public construct of the city. The photographs of bridges and minor canals are not taken from the perspective of a tourist in gondola but either from another bridge or from a window above the canal. This can be understood as the vantage point of one who has walked beyond the central spaces of Venice. However, most guidebooks and travel literature of the period highlight

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<sup>466</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 127.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.



that the periphery is to be explored in gondola rather than on foot.<sup>468</sup> The vantage point in these photographs is thus not that of the tourist, who travels below in gondola, but that of the local observer, the photographer. Furthermore, the photographs of peripheral spaces are those of unnamed bridges or of unmarked points along a named canal, and thus tourists could not necessarily recreate the vantage point once they were outside the photographer's shop in the way that they could for central spaces. Unlike the many other photographs produced by locals for tourists, the photographs of Venice's peripheral spaces often resisted being mapped in the tourists' mind, despite the possible inclusion of a caption to indicate the *rio* or *calle*. The vertical framing also offered fewer clues to situate the particular spot through distinguishable topographical markers. Moreover, tourists who entered the shop after asking their gondolier for a meandering ride through minor canals would be hard-pressed to discern, even with the help of captions, which photographs were those of the particular canals on which they had been.

When travelling abroad, tourists often write of climbing for a view that places them in a position of superiority over the foreign land.<sup>469</sup> In his work on travel writing, Gregory refers to nineteenth-century British travel narratives of Egypt as "imaginative geographies" that invited travellers to "command Egypt as a series of scenes set up for their own edification and entertainment."<sup>470</sup> Gregory valorizes the imagination as a space that is as real as any other, and in so

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<sup>468</sup> In Moretti's guidebook *The Beauties of Venice and Her History* (1878), the reader is told that "there is no part of Venice to which the stranger cannot walk if he chooses" but the emphasis is placed on the gondola as the best way to see Venice (Venice: Draghi, 1878), xx. Baedeker's *Northern Italy* (1882) encourages the tourist to walk through the Merceria, filled with shops, to Piazza San Marco (232) and to walk from San Zaccaria to the Giardini via the busy Riva degli Schiavoni (262), but all other itineraries involve the gondola, with tourists disembarking only to visit churches or galleries. In *The Beauties of Venice*, for example, which is one of the nineteenth-century guidebooks that does focus on 'walks,' Moretti writes that "we shall return and, leaving the gondola, we shall go on foot" (85) but only a few short steps to a church or to the Accademia.

<sup>469</sup> In *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*, Giuliana Bruno quotes the travel letters of the New York socialite Sarah Rogers Haight, published in 1840, in which Haight writes that before she "ventured into the dark and mysterious labyrinths" of Istanbul "we thought it best to take our usual precaution, that of ascending some tower to observe well how the land lies [...] I would recommend all young and persevering travellers to adopt this practice" (New York: Verso, 2007, 83). Haight's travel writing, *Letters from the Old World by a Lady of New York*, 1840, is in the anthology *Telling Travels: Selected Writings by Nineteenth-Century Women Abroad*, edited by Mary Suzanne Schriber (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1995, 57).

<sup>470</sup> Gregory, "Scripting Egypt," 147.

doing follows Bachelard's ideas on memory.<sup>471</sup> Gregory locates this idealized space not just in the mind but also on the page. It can also be located in photographs that situated tourists as voyeurs, with the 'body' that is observed being the peripheral Venice. Peripheral photographs of Venice provided a view that offered a superior position above a picturesque minor canal. However, since the vantage point was not one most tourists would experience, the photographs were a reminder that it was the photographer, and not the tourist, who had mastery over the city's topography.

Local photographers who produced souvenir images of Venice evoked an unchanging Venice in photographs of central spaces, a contrasting focus on the contemporary tourist, and an awareness of the Romantic tendencies of the tourist population, tendencies also prevalent in the still young nation of Italy itself which had looked especially to Byron's poetry and persona for inspiration on its road to independence. The photographs, like the *vedute* and engravings before them, highlighted and organized the physical spaces of tourism, promoting certain spaces over others. The pictorial conventions that photographers borrowed and those they invented influenced tourists' movements in the city, their modes of looking, and their perceptions of the city as well as their own tourist identity.

### 2.3 Conclusion

Commercial souvenir photographs produced by Venetians for tourists affected tourist perception of the city and were themselves affected by both eighteenth-century souvenir views and nineteenth-century tourists' penchant for Romanticism. As Byron's *Childe Harold* highlights, visitors were aware that their perception was being shaped by visual and literary representations of Venice. They may have been less aware that their literary and aesthetic sensibilities also participated in shaping the very images they purchased. The photographs of Venice preserved some of the visual

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<sup>471</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 158.

conventions and the emphasis on timelessness established in earlier souvenir views, most notably in their presentation of the city's central tourist spaces. They also responded to both an Italian and tourist fascination with British Romanticism, especially its emphasis on transience and the subjectivity of the viewer. New pictorial conventions accordingly emerged, such as souvenir views that focused on minor bridges and canals and the Bridge of Sighs. Instead of prompting a feeling of mastery, the photographs of the periphery functioned as the opposite of maps and were generally not included in the souvenir albums that tourists purchased and that they often compiled themselves by choosing from the photographs on display. These albums, prepared at the local photographer's shop, are the focus of the next chapter in this study of souvenir views of Venice.

## Chapter Three

### Commercial Souvenir Albums in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

#### 3.1 Introduction

Along with photographs sold individually, photographs bound as commercial souvenir albums sold briskly in Venice.<sup>472</sup> These albums, often titled *Ricordo di Venezia*, encouraged the practice of considering reproduced images as representative of a tourist route, and they were also part of the bookseller culture in the San Marco *sestiere*. In Venice, the albums were first prepared for tourists by local photographers beginning in the 1860s, with tourists given the opportunity to select the images for the album. The images used in the commercial souvenir albums were the same images sold as single photographs in the photographers' shops in Venice. The albums are bookended by images of the Piazza San Marco area, with the images in between beginning with the interior of the basilica or the inner courtyard of the ducal palace before the albums move outward, presenting other major sites.<sup>473</sup> While Venice's lesser-known canals and bridges were popular as single photographs, they generally do not enter the circuit of sites presented in the commercial souvenir albums. Despite the opportunity to personalize, many extant albums from this period of commercial souvenir albums feature very similar views and sequences. While tourists sought out the albums as a more personalized commercial souvenir, in choosing their images they nevertheless made themselves almost identical in tastes, sensibilities, and sites of interest to their fellow tourists.

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<sup>472</sup> Filippi's commercial records suggest the albums were as popular as the single photographs.

<sup>473</sup> These points were gleaned from studying numerous examples of existing albums in shops in Venice, in archives, and digitized via online booksellers, such as Portsmouth Bookshop, Harteveld Rare Books, and French, American, and Italian Amazon websites.

By the early twentieth century, while these personalized albums were still available, most were mass-produced by the publisher Attilo Scrocchi, based in Milan, using photographs from the Filippi archive. The photographs in these later albums are often retouched through a photomechanical process to create a painterly effect, which suggests that tourists wanted these mass-produced albums to look more like the work of an individual artist. A sense of personalization was thus part of the appeal in both types of albums.

Commercial souvenir albums matter in the history of souvenir views of Venice for a number of reasons. Selecting images to be bound into a souvenir album was no longer an experience exclusive to elite travellers. In the 1880s, middle-class incomes increased and travel became more affordable, especially once Thomas Cook established his organized tours of Europe.<sup>474</sup> In 1899, 941,078 passengers crossed the English Channel, and by 1911 the number increased to 1.5 million.<sup>475</sup> Tourists were spending fewer days visiting each city and, due to increased demand for tourist services, they were touring more economically, as opposed to the lengthier and more luxurious stays of the past. As relatively affordable, initially personalized, and quickly produced items, the commercial albums spoke to the growing focus on catering to middle-class tourists.

The fact that the albums presented a sequence of views also gives them an important function: they did the work of cicerones, guiding the viewer through a particular tourist circuit. Like the eighteenth-century book of prints of Visentini's engravings, these albums were visual guidebooks that suggested particular paths for moving through the city. These paths, as in the Visentini sequence, imply temporal movements in gondola. Indeed, the souvenir albums often reinforce the gondola circuits outlined in popular guidebooks. In addition, the albums, like the view paintings of the

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<sup>474</sup> In "Travels with Baedeker: The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain," Jan Palmowski notes that from the 1880s "cross-travel channel was barely more expensive than vacationing in England" (in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002, 117-118).

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

eighteenth century, include figures of Venetians that suggest how tourists should conceive of the local population.

The albums, more than the single photographs, also prompted a closer interaction with the photographer's shop. This is particularly the case for the albums consisting of images selected by the tourists and bound by the photographer. In the eighteenth century, view paintings encouraged visitors to interact at Smith's palace on the Grand Canal. The albums promoted an even greater interaction not only with other foreigners and expatriates but also with the local photographers who were preparing the albums for the tourist. In light of their process of production, these nineteenth-century albums served as lodestones, pulling tourists to the social life of the photographer's souvenir shop.

Throughout this project, I focus on sites that become, at various historical moments, spaces of tourism that are linked to the consumption of souvenir images. This collaboration between consumer and producer of the album was part of the dynamic atmosphere in the Piazza San Marco shops, as the shops themselves became key tourist spaces.

The penchant for seeing photographs of Venice as evocative of a tourist's circuit through the city's canals was certainly part of tourist culture. A compelling example is a poem written by the surgeon Thomas W. Parsons and published in March 1889 in the London-based literary journal *The Critic*.<sup>476</sup> The journal's editors write that Parsons received by post a souvenir photograph of Venice's Piazza San Marco from his friend, the American poet James Russell Lowell. The poem provides insight into how nineteenth-century tourists engaged with and perceived souvenir photographs once home from their travels. In dedicating the following lines of poetry to his friend, Parsons does not simply write of the Piazza pictured in the photograph but describes the image itself as a catalyst that prompts him to feel as though he is experiencing the immediacy of his gondola ride once again:

Poet and friend! If any gift could bring  
A joy like that of listening while you sing

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<sup>476</sup> Thomas W. Parsons, Untitled poem on Venice, *The Critic*, vol. 11, March 1889 (London: The Critic Company), 105.

‘Twere such as this- memorial of the days  
Thanks for thy boon! I look and I am there  
The soaring belfry guides me to the square [...]  
‘Tis Venice! Venice! And with joy I put  
In Adria’s waves, incredulous my foot  
I smell the seaweed, and again I hear  
The click of oars [...]  
Now in a gondola to dream and float  
Pull the slight cord and draw the silk aside, and read the city’s history as we glide  
For strangely here, where all is strange, indeed  
Not he who runs but he who swims may read [...]  
Proud houses once! [...] They writ their names in water and all gone  
My voyage is ended, all the round is past  
See! The twin columns and the bannered mast [...]  
Amid enchantments disenchanted most [...]  
Sure, in Damascus, any reasoning Turk  
Would count your photograph a sorcerer’s work  
Strange power! That thus to actual presence brings  
The shades of distant or departed things [...]  
But we receive this marvel with the rest  
Nothing is new or wondrous in the west.

Positioning himself as an echo of earlier voices, Parsons alludes to the Gothic and Romantic tropes that associate Venice with timelessness and ephemerality. The square, bell tower, and banners are as he left them; the once-grand *palazzi* are decaying. The poem’s description of the disorienting effects of a gondola ride, in which the word “strange” is used twice, recall Radcliffe’s haunting descriptions of Venice. Moreover, the trope of death and decay, so often associated with Venice, emerges in Parsons’ poem as he evokes lines that Keats penned for his own tombstone: “Here lies one

whose name was writ in water.”<sup>477</sup> Parsons, assuming a literate readership, alters this only slightly to refer to the palaces he saw by gondola, buildings imagined as sentient beings aware of their impermanence.

Having toured Venice years before, Parsons now tours the photograph he receives of Venice, long after his visit. His poem emphasizes that the photograph connects him to an actual past moment. In describing the photograph of the Piazza as bringing “to actual presence” the city he once visited, Parsons plays with ideas that photographs can conjure for the viewer the person or place being represented and are thus magical.<sup>478</sup> For Parsons, the photograph provides continuity and vitality. He uses qualia and synesthesia, yoking together visual, tactile, and olfactory imagery to describe the passage from the Piazza to the Grand Canal and back again. He not only sees the Venice he once visited, but also dips a foot in the water, smells seaweed, and hears the sound of the gondolier’s oars. The poem’s central conceit is that the speaker can only return to the sensory immediacy of his own past experience because of the photograph. Both the photograph and the Piazza it records are the origin and terminus of that circuit. By providing tourists with the opportunity to purchase a collection of such potentially evocative views, in an order that often began and ended with images of the Piazza San Marco, photographers made a product of the tourist’s penchant for retracing in memory the gondola circuit through visual cues.

After tracing the history of commercial souvenir albums in Venice, this chapter is organized by focusing on specific spaces, specifically the parlour back home; the sites visited while touring Venice in gondola; and the photographer’s shop. I begin with the space of the parlour since it was where commercial souvenir albums were displayed by tourists upon returning home. Through

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<sup>477</sup> John Keats, *The Poetical Writings and Other Works of John Keats*, vol. 4., ed. Harry Buxton Forman (London: Reeves and Turner, 1883), 212.

<sup>478</sup> For more on photography being seen or described as magical in the nineteenth century, see Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 107.



repeated viewing, the circuit of images in the album supplanted the memory of one's actual gondola ride and also created mimetic desire in future tourists.<sup>479</sup>

The sites tourists experienced while in Venice during a gondola tour often correspond to the sequence of views presented in the commercial souvenir albums. In this section of the chapter, I use one particular album as a case study since it is similar in format and style to numerous other commercial albums of Venice from this period. I look closely at the representation and definition of figures, and I consider the circuit implied in the album. Since it is similar to the circuit suggested in Baedeker and Murray travel guides, the commercial souvenir album can be understood as a visual complement to the period's guidebooks.

The space of the photographer's shop is central to my argument about why the commercial souvenir albums matter. Choosing and purchasing photographs in the shops prompted tourists to make a complete Venice for themselves in album form out of a series of fragments, or single images. These images vary slightly from one album to the next but inevitably feature quintessential elements of the city, specifically the architecture of the Piazza San Marco, the topography of the Grand Canal, and the gondola itself. Purchasers invariably chose to construct albums that included metonymic details and scenes that symbolized the whole. In the most tangible way yet in the history of souvenir imagery of Venice, tourists who were engaged in the album process were involved in not only the consumption but also in the production of souvenir memorabilia.

### *3.2 History and development of commercial souvenir albums*

The history of commercial souvenir albums has not yet been written. Family albums, in contrast, which often have a wealth of associated archival details and context, have been the subject of

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<sup>479</sup> René Girard develops the notion of mimetic desire in, among others, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (1961) and in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (London: Continuum, 1978 and 2003), 283.

a number of scholarly articles and books.<sup>480</sup> Nevertheless, information about the publishers and material properties of commercial souvenir albums has been gathered, largely by antiquarians and bibliophiles. This study is the first to provide a survey of the albums' material production, reception, and provenance from the 1860s until their decline in the 1950s.<sup>481</sup>

Commercial souvenir albums produced in Venice and elsewhere in Italy were all titled "*Ricordo*," a word that has three meanings: it refers to a souvenir, to a record, and to a memory.<sup>482</sup> Tourists encountered this evocative term throughout their travels in Italy. It was engraved on album covers, on fans, and, as Mary Elizabeth Sherwood recalls in her memoirs, on souvenir rings.<sup>483</sup> When the Victorian poet Robert Browning poignantly writes of his affinity for the country "Open my heart and you will see/ Graved inside of it, Italy," a tourist reading those lines would be hard pressed not to recall, as a counterpoint, the many engraved reminders to remember Italy through objects.<sup>484</sup>

When used as the title for an album of photographs, the word '*ricordo*' takes on all of its potential meanings. *Ricordo di Venezia* implies that the album is a tangible souvenir of someone's travels but also a record of Venice at a particular historical moment. Such objects were often considered to be the trace of an authentic experience.<sup>485</sup> Most importantly, the album records and memorializes how tourists were encouraged to see themselves playing the role of tourist. As a '*ricordo*,' the album indeed functioned as souvenir object, cultural record, and memory aid.

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<sup>480</sup> Along with Levine and Jensen's *Around the World*, see Elizabeth E. Siegel's "'Miss Domestic' and 'Miss Enterprise': Or, How to Keep a Photograph Album" in *The Scrapbook in American Life*, edited by Susan Tucker et al. (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2006), 251-267, and the fourth chapter of Nancy Micklewright's *A Victorian Traveller in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 139-180.

<sup>481</sup> Pinpointing when conventions in souvenir albums began and others ebbed is difficult since the albums do not include much information on their production, and any handwritten names and dates can be those of the original tourist or of the inheritors of the keepsake. The back covers of many albums do feature one publishing clue: the publisher Scrocchi's insignia but often with no date of publication.

<sup>482</sup> Tourists purchasing gifts for friends in England, in contrast, were met with the words 'Present from' on a multitude of items. 'Present' does not have the same associations with memory and record-keeping as '*ricordo*.' On the inscription 'Present from,' see Thad Logan's *The Victorian Parlour: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 186.

<sup>483</sup> Sherwood, *Here and There and Everywhere*, 41.

<sup>484</sup> Robert Browning, "De Gustibus" in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, volume 3 (London: Smith, 1879), 144.

<sup>485</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, 135.

*Ricordi di Venezia* were first sold by Ponti in Venice in the 1860s and included twenty views taken by Ponti and his team of photographers with captions in Italian, French, German, or English.<sup>486</sup> After Naya purchased the Ponti archives in the 1870s, the albums were published under his name.<sup>487</sup> Photographer Paolo Salviati's shop in the Piazza San Marco produced a *Ricordo* in 1875 consisting of between twenty and twenty-four albumen prints that could be chosen by the customer, with the option of captions in the customer's mother tongue.<sup>488</sup> In another example, at Harvard's Houghton Library, the title page is lithographed and the album features fifteen albumen silver prints set in decorated mounts with handwriting in French providing the caption on the back of each photograph.<sup>489</sup> As far as can be determined from existing albums, those produced in the 1860s and 1870s were composed of actual photographs mounted, as in the Houghton album, on gilt-covered decorative boards with handwritten captions on the verso. By the 1890s, the images in some albums were still albumen or gelatin prints pasted onto paper and thus most likely hand-selected by the tourist, but other albums, like those published by Scrocchi, for example, featured halftones, images printed through a process of dots onto paper that were copies of photographs that had been extensively retouched and were either produced in a sepia tone or mechanically coloured.<sup>490</sup>

Albums featuring images of Venice were not sold exclusively in Venice but could be found in other Italian cities of art and culture, and photographers in Venice also sold albums of other cities. Two major book projects with high quality views can also be considered commercial souvenir albums.

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<sup>486</sup> Links, *Venice for Pleasure* (London: Pallas Athene, 2008), 260. Links states that the 1860s is the earliest accepted date for the emergence of the *Ricordi* photograph albums, with Ponti being the first in Venice to produce them.

<sup>487</sup> Kristin L. Spangenberg, *Photographic Treasures of the Cincinnati Art Museum* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum, 1989), 55. For more on Naya's albums of the 1870s, which continued to include twenty photographs, see Beaumont Newhall's *History of Photography* (Cologne: Taschen, 2000), 151.

<sup>488</sup> On Salviati, see the Veneto's guide to its nineteenth-century photography studios, "*Guida ai Fondi fotografici storici del Veneto*," available online, and the city's *Album di Venezia* (albumdivenezia.it), a project by the *Comune di Venezia* to make available photographic archives. Salviati, who was known for his portraits and for his skill at hand-colouring the photographic plate, was part of a group of photographers, all of whom had shops in the Piazza, who were sued by Naya for selling his photographs without the copyright (Zannier, *Archivio Naya*, 22).

<sup>489</sup> Anne Anninger and Julie Mellby, *Salts of Silver, Toned with Gold: The Harrison D. Horblit Collection of Early Photography at Harvard University* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1999), 51.

<sup>490</sup> For more on the halftone, a term coined by printer and inventor Frederick Ives in the 1880s, see Gerry Beegan's *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 12-14 and 72-73.

Naya's *Isole della laguna di Venezia* was produced in 1887 for the *Esposizione Nazionale Artistiche*, the forerunners of the Biennale.<sup>491</sup> Ongania's two volumes of heliogravures, which are prints made from copper plates on which photographs were etched, were published in the 1890s and entitled *Calle e canali a Venezia*, with photographs of streets and canals, and *Calle, canali, e isole della laguna*, featuring the streets and canals of the lagoon islands.<sup>492</sup> Catering to a variety of tastes and budgets, photographers and shop owners sold high-end books with a limited print run, mid-range souvenir albums with between twenty and thirty photographs, and smaller books in a folded format, known as *fisarmoniche*, the Italian for accordions. An example of the early accordion-style souvenir books is the Morgan Library's *Ricordo di Roma* from 1890 which, as the museum notes, consists of "folding pictorial plates" in sepia with a cover of red boards.<sup>493</sup>

Tourists were also making their own family albums of Kodak photographs upon returning home from their travels. In their work on these albums, Barbara Levine and Kirsten Jensen write that Kodak ads "taught amateur photographers to see experiences and memories nostalgically and transformed the perception of how individuals could organize, present, and even remember their lives and significant events through snapshots."<sup>494</sup> The commercial albums purchased while travelling were nevertheless very popular souvenirs, which suggests that they were the authoritative complement to the tourist's own photographs.

Tourist participation in selecting souvenir views was not a novel situation. In the eighteenth century, Pasquali and Smith's book of prints based on Visentini's engravings offered a set of pre-determined views; however, for centuries foreigners were able to choose engravings and prints that

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<sup>491</sup> On Naya's book, see Michelotti, *L'Attività dello studio fotografico di Tomaso Filippi*, 45 and 121,

<sup>492</sup> For more on Ongania's book, see Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 201.

<sup>493</sup> The call number of the Morgan Library's *Ricordo di Roma* (1890) is 151741.

<sup>494</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 25.

they would then have bound for themselves either at the shop or once home.<sup>495</sup> What is indeed novel, though, is that a much larger group of tourists, an emerging middle class, as opposed to only an elite group, could be involved in choosing the images that formed their locally-produced souvenirs. Photographers' shops offered patrons a version of the centuries-old experience of choosing one's souvenir images, albeit a more limited experience of tourist as editor. To curate one's own collection of souvenir views was no longer the purview of the elite.

This collaboration between producers and purchasers of souvenir albums declines in the early twentieth century. From the early decades of the twentieth century, commercial souvenir albums were not only produced by local photographers but increasingly by outside, mass-market publishers. These ready-made albums featured less expensive decorative touches, although some from the period still evoked the nostalgia of the handcrafted aesthetic of the nineteenth-century albums with gilt lettering, embossed covers, and pages fastened with ribbon. The albums' stages of production also changed: instead of tourists choosing photographs that would be affixed to paper and bound at the photographer's shop, publishers, such as Attilo Scrocchi based in Milan, were offering both large and small book formats, with a variety of cover images, a folded map, and 64 views.<sup>496</sup> By the 1950s, inexpensive accordion booklets with captions in many languages replaced the previous generations of commercial albums.

The *Ricordo di Venezia* now housed in the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec was published by Scrocchi, most likely in the 1890s or the early twentieth century, and includes twenty numbered images from retouched and coloured photographs from the Filippi archives reproduced on paper via the halftone lithographic process. The lithographic process was considered to stand the test of time more than photography. While one might think that photographs were seen as permanent

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<sup>495</sup> For more on the collecting and binding of tourist-related prints in the Renaissance, see *The Virtual Tourist in Renaissance Rome: Printing and Collecting the Speculum romanae magnificentiae*, ed. Rebecca Zorach (Chicago: The Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>496</sup> The albums are often sold on eBay, with sellers providing photographs of the cover, the pages, and information about publishers, if available.

documents, a reviewer of Thompson's *Venice and the Poets* (1869), for example, highlights what seems to have been a common concern: the potentially ephemeral quality of the photograph when compared to engravings. The reviewer does acknowledge that "photography is a method of illustration far cheaper than engraving and far better than bad engraving," but he also notes that "there is something to us not quite pleasant in the look of photographs of landscape or architecture applied to book illustration. This depends in part, perhaps, on the notion of evanescence that attaches to them, to the prospect one cannot help entertaining, rightly or wrongly, of one's grandchildren opening a book so illustrated and finding nothing but a brown blur where there had once been a picture."<sup>497</sup>

This concern prompts a reconsideration of how the photographs were seen by tourists in the 1860s and 1870s. While they certainly functioned as records, *ricordi* of a particular moment or trip, they were also seen as souvenirs that had a shelf life, as opposed to the permanence of engravings or the solidity of other memorabilia. However, with the emergence in the 1890s of photomechanical reproductions that allowed for souvenir images to be printed on paper, the souvenir album could be considered a more permanent keepsake rather than an ephemeral collection of images.

As middle-class tourists descended on Italy, the affordable accordion-style *Ricordi* became increasingly popular: single-sheet folded versions were produced in high numbers from the 1910s to the 1950s.<sup>498</sup> Attesting to the influx of tourists and the inability to cater to each tourist's preferences, the twentieth-century accordion *Ricordi* included under each image a caption providing the name or location of the site in five languages: Italian, English, French, German, and Spanish. Purchased already bound into a set of pre-determined images, the accordion booklets displaced the tourist and the original photographer of the image from the decisions associated with the albums' views and assemblage.

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<sup>497</sup> Anonymous review of Stephen Thompson's *Venice and the Poets*, *The Westminster Review*, vol. 93 (London: Trübner, 1870), 339.

<sup>498</sup> This information was culled from conversations with antiquarians and rare book collectors in Venice and it is corroborated by the accordion-style albums, with publication dates, available for purchase online and in rare book shops.

The second half of the nineteenth century was indeed the period in which a dynamic exchange took place between souvenir images of Venice, their viewers, and their producers. The commercial souvenir albums produced in this period attest to a time of transition in the tourist-seller relationship. In part, the albums were a continuation of the centuries-old tradition of tourists choosing the prints and engravings they would bind for posterity. However, given their numbers and oft-repeated images, the albums were also the precursors of mass-produced souvenir books.

### 3.3 *The space of the parlour: Memory, mimetic desire, and display*

Upon returning home, tourists displayed commercial albums as souvenirs in the parlour, the room in the house associated with status and the public presentation of oneself. This most public of domestic spaces also contained family albums as well as single photographs purchased while travelling. Souvenir images of the foreign were displayed as signs of a family's cosmopolitan sophistication.<sup>499</sup> These images of travel linked the domestic world of the home to the larger world outside.<sup>500</sup> Various albums, such as autograph albums, family albums, albums of watercolours, and the commercial albums of European cities, comprised the décor of the nineteenth-century parlour.<sup>501</sup>

Pre-bound albums and single photographs were displayed differently. Commercial photographs purchased as singles were often presented in revolving wooden stands in the drawing room or parlour for the benefit of guests, with the display changing as new images were sent by post or brought home.<sup>502</sup> If the tourist was a diligent chronicler, loose photographs were pasted into scrapbooks or albums in various creative ways, a practice recommended by nineteenth-century

<sup>499</sup> Eva-Marie Kroller, *Canadian Travellers in Europe, 1851-1900* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>500</sup> As Logan writes in *The Victorian Parlour*, these souvenirs allowed "middle-class men and women to experience a sense of mastery over the world while they variously acknowledged its vastness and its intricacy" (181).

<sup>501</sup> Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photograph Albums* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001), 24.

<sup>502</sup> Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Household Book*, ed. Kay Fairfax (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007), 18-19 and 57-58.

magazines.<sup>503</sup> With the emergence of the Kodak camera in the late 1880s, commercial souvenir photographs purchased as singles were often incorporated into family photo albums along with handwritten comments and captions.<sup>504</sup>

The commercial souvenir albums, in contrast, were purchased to be handled as relatively resilient books. Both the simpler commercial albums and the more luxurious ones, such as the three-volume *Picturesque Europe*, published by Appleton in the 1870s,<sup>505</sup> were presented for viewing on parlour tables.<sup>506</sup> The images the commercial albums preserved were not annotated with additional handwritten observations nor were they meant to be pasted in another order into other books or spun in rotation in the display case with other photographs.<sup>507</sup> Instead, as their material properties suggest, they were designed for repetitive perusal of the images in their original sequence.

Comparing the sequence of images in the typical Venetian album to that of albums of other Italian cities is informative since it highlights how both time and memory work quite differently in the Venetian albums. Parlours included commercial souvenir albums of numerous cities. Levine and Jensen state that the albums “sequenced the photographs of sites and monuments so as to replicate a typical tourist’s experience of them,” but they do not suggest that the experience evoked in Venetian albums is temporally different from that in albums of other cities.<sup>508</sup> The albums of Assisi and Pompeii often feature many more interior images, specifically of frescoes and artifacts, than the Venetian albums, which typically include only one interior view of the nave of the Basilica di San Marco.<sup>509</sup> Unlike the Venetian albums, which feature one panorama at most, the albums of Assisi include numerous panoramas, often views tourists might not have climbed to see themselves, as well

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<sup>503</sup> See the previous chapter on scrapbooking practices.

<sup>504</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 25.

<sup>505</sup> Kroller, *Canadian Travellers in Europe*, 5.

<sup>506</sup> Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 183.

<sup>507</sup> Of all the albums I have seen in libraries and in antiquarian shops in Venice and at online auctions none include handwritten annotations. Often, the only handwriting is of a name or a dedication on one of the first pages, unlike family albums of the period which incorporated handwritten captions next to the photographs.

<sup>508</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 22.

<sup>509</sup> Again, this observation is gleaned from comparing numerous *Ricordi*.



as popular illustrations of Saint Francis. Most significantly, these albums of other cities present a more proscribed circuit of images. In the Pompeii albums, the images follow the path outlined by the Pompeii authorities for visitor access to the ruins.<sup>510</sup> Eric Downing, in his analysis of the nineteenth-century tourist experience at Pompeii, writes that tourists tended to “encounter the classical world only through the mediation of their Baedeker guidebooks, approaching each item in their Italian travels only as a confirmation, or reproduction, of its simulacric description.”<sup>511</sup> Wilhelm Jensen’s Gothic novel *Gradiva* (1903), which Downing quotes, highlights the systematic way tourists were brought through the ruins. The novel follows Hanold, a German archeologist visiting Pompeii. In the novel, “before and behind [Hanold] wandered the population of two hotels in little troops commanded by official guides” with the tourists “armed with red Baedekers.”<sup>512</sup> Jensen’s military diction presents the tourists as inexperienced soldiers kept in line by their generals, the guides. The relationship between tourists visiting Pompeii and commercial souvenir albums of the archeological site could be seen in the same way. The Pompeii image circuit, in contrast to its Venetian counterpart, does not attempt to create the illusion of fluid, spontaneous movement. Indeed, its fixed order is emphasized by the numbered fold-out maps of Pompeii often included in the albums.

In the case of *ricordi* of Rome, Milan, and Florence, the geography of these cities and the suggested itineraries in nineteenth-century guidebooks did not permit or encourage tourists to see all the main exterior sights during a single day’s tour. The albums of these cities do not purport to trace a day’s travelling circuit but are rather a compendium of a week’s or a month’s worth of memorable sights. Baedeker’s *Central Italy and Rome*, for example, suggests that “in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the matchless attractions of Rome the traveller should devote a whole winter to exploring them and, even when time is limited, he should make a stay of 10-14 days at least, if he is

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<sup>510</sup> Eric Downing, *After Images: Photography, Archeology, and Psychoanalysis, and the Tradition of Bildung* (Detroit: Wayne UP, 2006), 127.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Cited in Downing, *After Images*, 127, and published in English in 1918 by Moffatt, Yard, and Co., with a translation by Helen M. Downey.

desirous of forming an approximate idea of the charms of the place.”<sup>513</sup> This same guidebook offers advice on orientation and a preliminary drive, which was considered essential before tackling Rome’s numerous sites.<sup>514</sup> Baedeker’s *Northern Italy* (1886) presents similar extended itineraries when in Milan and Florence, the latter introduced with the caveat that “a stay of 4-6 days will not suffice for more than a hasty glimpse of the sights of Florence.”<sup>515</sup>

Time works differently in the Venetian souvenir albums. The very geography of Venice, which encouraged gondola-based travel, allows the albums to be seen as the memory of a day’s gondola ride, as emphasized, for example, by the sequence of views from the Scrocchi album. In her 1872 travel memoir, *Bits of Travel*, the writer Helen Hunt Jackson emphasizes that her days in Venice were structured by the movements of her gondola, with these gondola rides occurring after time spent looking at photographs of Venice in the city’s shops. She records that “a Wednesday went for looking over photographs in the morning” followed by a tour in gondola, which prompts her to tell her reader, “you know, without my taking the time to say it, that simply to go from one place to another, in this wonderful sea-city, is a delight in itself.”<sup>516</sup> As for “where we should go,” Hunt Jackson declares, “I feel as if the gondola knew, and would go of itself.”<sup>517</sup> The views presented in the Scrocchi album can all be accessed by gondola in the space of a day, and indeed guidebooks highlighted that hiring a gondola for a full day, and making the most of the hire, was more economical than hiring a gondola by the hour.<sup>518</sup> Guidebooks also acknowledged that while a week in Venice allowed for a more detailed study of its art and architecture, “a glance at the most remarkable objects may be obtained in one day,” but this is only possible if “engaging a gondola.”<sup>519</sup> Furthermore, since the albums often traced gondola circuits, they not only recreated views but encouraged viewers to remember the absent

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<sup>513</sup> Baedeker’s *Central Italy and Rome* (Leipsic: Baedeker, 1879), 120-121.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Baedeker’s *Northern Italy* (Leipsic: Baedeker, 1886), 121-138, and 380.

<sup>516</sup> Helen Hunt Jackson, *Bits of Travel* (Boston: Osgood, 1872), 210-211.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> This is stated in various editions of *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, particularly in the opening informational section, under the heading ‘Gondolas.’

<sup>519</sup> *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Murray, 1897), 274.

views, often peripheral ones, as the spaces in between one page and the next, or one site and the next. These are the in-between spaces, the “simply go[ing] from one place to another,” that Hunt Jackson values as “a delight in itself.”<sup>520</sup> In the commercial souvenir album, each turn of a page, before the viewer is brought to another site, can be understood as another leg of the gondola tour.

At the same time, the albums can be seen as replacing, to a certain extent, the work of imagination and memory. Unlike Parsons who had on hand one photograph of Venice, sent to him years after his own travels, later nineteenth-century tourists perusing the albums in their parlours could avail themselves of a series of spurs for their tourist recollections. Even if they did not recreate the purchaser’s own specific itinerary, photographs in a series, collected and bound in a particular, determined order, may have become over time as they were reviewed and as memory waned the tourist’s souvenir of his or her own movements and itinerary in Venice. As Parsons’ poem attests, single images were also capable of evoking a Venetian trajectory, but the single image necessarily involved a more extensive act of memory on the part of the viewer recalling the gondola path.

As well, the commercial albums could more forcibly become a pre-memory for future travellers viewing the albums in the parlours of others. These souvenir albums, in contrast to the more personal family albums, did not need to be viewed with an accompanying narrative supplied by the traveller. Future travellers could view the sequence without having their vicarious experience of the city mediated by the specific tales of others. Souvenir images both in single and serial form had the ability to forge a mimetic desire for and connection to a place for those yet to visit and also remove a sense of discovery. It is the latter effect that Henry James found particularly pervasive as a sign of modern travel. In *The Aspern Papers*, serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* from March to May of 1887, James’ narrator maintains that “when Americans went abroad in 1820 there was something romantic, almost heroic in it, as compared with the perpetual ferryings of the present hour, the hour at which

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<sup>520</sup> Hunt Jackson, *Bits of Travel*, 211.

photography and other conveniences have annihilated surprise.”<sup>521</sup> The ostensibly official sequence in the commercial albums “annihilated surprise” more than the views in the family album, since it presented a comprehensive tour of the city’s sites. These official albums, functioning as guidebooks, encouraged viewers to structure their visits in a similar fashion.

Most studies of the travel imagery displayed in the parlour have seen family albums and commercial albums as functioning similarly as markers of status and do not differentiate between albums of different cities. Instead, I have argued here that the topography and physical experience of touring each city had an effect on the sequence and pace presented in the commercial albums. The experience of being in gondola and the combination of major sights and a sense of spontaneity that came with that mode of transportation are a hallmark of the Venetian albums. Moreover, in contrast to family albums and single commercial photographs inserted into family albums, the commercial albums were official books, the visual equivalent of guidebooks, and thus more persuasive in predetermining and standardizing ways of seeing Venice and of being a tourist in Venice.

### *3.4 Serial images: Ricordo di Venezia albums as a visual guidebook*

Visitors enact their roles as tourists by following prescribed paths around a city.<sup>522</sup> The tourist itineraries implied in commercial albums and those outlined in guidebooks participated in scripting behaviour and legitimizing what was of cultural and social importance.<sup>523</sup> In the following analysis of the Scrocchi souvenir album, I consider how the depiction of figures and the sequence of Venetian images enabled tourists to conceive of themselves as part of an imagined collective of fellow

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<sup>521</sup> James, *The Turn of the Screw, The Aspern Papers, and Two Stories* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003), 51. For more on James’ critique of the modern experience of travel, see Graham Smith’s “*Light that dances in the mind*”: *Photography and memory in the writings of E.M. Forster and his Contemporaries* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

<sup>522</sup> In *On Representation*, Marin argues that the repetitive structure of parades and processions legitimates social, political, and religious institutions, with participants enacting predetermined roles (47).

<sup>523</sup> On guidebooks influencing tourist movements and behaviour, see Jill Steward’s “Performing Abroad: British Tourists in Italy and their Practices, 1840-1914” in *Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance, and Place*, eds. D. Medina Lasansky and Brian McLaren (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 53-72.

travellers.<sup>524</sup> As well, in showing how the souvenir albums and the guidebooks both promote certain tourist trajectories over others, I give both text and image equal weight rather than, as is often the case in studies of both, consider the image as merely a supplement to the text.<sup>525</sup> Souvenir albums are not simply visual appendices of the popular guidebooks but books that, like the guidebooks, encouraged tourists to conceptualize themselves and their tourist culture as erudite, leisured, and observant. As well, since the albums featured central tourist sites more than peripheral canals and bridges they also offered the viewer a sense of mastery over the geography and cultural landmarks of Venice and their own tourist experience.

### 3.4.1 *Figures of tourists and locals*

The twenty images in the Scrocchi album are part of the compendium of photographs that Filippi sold to tourists.<sup>526</sup> The album most likely dates from the early twentieth century when publishers made photomechanical reproductions of the original photographs but with significant changes, such as added colour and blurred faces. In certain images, such as that of two gondolas below the Bridge of Sighs, the original photograph has been coloured, but since the faces are not discernible in the original the retouching has not resulted in a significant change in the depiction of tourists and locals (fig. 2.39 a-b). However, in many other cases, the faces of the figures in these images as well as a host of other details related to the figures are quite different from those in the original photographs. The images have undergone a significant transformation from their original state as albumen and gelatin prints, and thus the album is particularly noteworthy as a case study of the

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<sup>524</sup> For the notion of an imagined collective, see Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1994), 1.

<sup>525</sup> For example, in *Around the World*, Levine and Jensen argue that, unlike personal family albums, commercial “souvenir photographs provide only visual complements to the narrative guidebooks” (25).

<sup>526</sup> While the album does not acknowledge Filippi as the original photographer, the images are his. I have checked them against the photographs in the Archivio Filippi.

extent to which the photographs taken by local photographers were often altered in commercial souvenir albums produced by others.

The treatment of figures in the Scrocchi *Ricordo* calls attention to how the medium participates in the creation of meaning. The oddly painted faces in this album replaced what were once the clearer features of tourists and locals in the original photographs. This desired effect was created through the process of retouching that was an essential aspect of photomechanical image production. Photographs had always been retouched for greater effect, but many late nineteenth-century images that were reproduced through a photomechanical process often required even more extensive hand-retouching. As Gerry Beegan suggests in his study, the term “semi-mechanical reproduction” is perhaps most accurate for the images produced from the 1880s until well into the twentieth century since the mechanical had to be combined with “hand technologies of re-touching and re-engraving to produce culturally acceptable and commercially successful images.”<sup>527</sup> Usually, the goal was to produce sharp, clear, detailed images that would be in keeping with the style and effect of wood engravings.<sup>528</sup>

However, in the case of the Scrocchi album, and others like it, the hand retouching was employed to produce the opposite effect, a deliberately blurry aesthetic that hints at the more painterly style that Filippi and others also used to hand colour and retouch their own images as early as the 1880s. Significantly, though, while these photographers altered their images, they did not replace the details of a face with a rough illustration of a face. The Scrocchi album’s hand-retouching caters to a preference for images that do not appear mass produced.<sup>529</sup> In her analysis of Ruskin’s daguerreotype

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<sup>527</sup> Beegan, *Mass Image*, 177. Beegan refers to the photomechanical images as hybrid images and outlines the four stages of retouching: the original negative was retouched; then a print was made and “worked up,” a process that would include painting and removing and adding content; thirdly, the halftone block was etched and certain parts were “fine etched to improve clarity and detail”; lastly, the surface of the block was “engraved up” by hand.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> For a discussion of the painterly aesthetic as a reaction against mass-produced photographs, see Sontag, *On Photography*, 7. For the same aesthetic in printmaking, and Gautier’s assertion that etchings in the 1860s were a reaction against the “mechanical ghost” of photography, see the exhibition catalogue *The Painterly Print: Monotypes from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980).

of the Palazzo Bernardo, Burns writes that the “fuzzy foreground” and “the scratches and flecks” heighten the “sense of seeing the past through the veil of history.”<sup>530</sup> She notes that these details symbolize, for her late twentieth-century sensibility, “the past.”<sup>531</sup> The sensibilities of nineteenth-century Venetian photographers were also historically constructed, as highlighted in the previous chapter. In their photographs of central spaces they copied aspects of Ruskin’s aesthetic, specifically the absence of people, and they borrowed from the eighteenth-century view painters in their organization of space. The decision in the Scrocchi album to sketch and blur rather than delineate faces also draws on the contemporary popularity of watercolour painting.

Since women were encouraged to take up watercolour painting as a genteel pastime and the medium was often associated with female pursuits,<sup>532</sup> the watercolour quality of the *Ricordo* album may have appealed to female travellers. However, in photography magazines of the period, the issue of gender is absent in articles about souvenir photographs and commercial albums, suggesting that the buying of photographs and albums while travelling was not a predominantly female pastime. In contrast, scrapbooking and the creation of family albums were aligned with female pursuits. As Elizabeth Siegel emphasizes, family albums and scrapbooks were “elements of feminine visual culture, their assemblers participating in a kind of domestic craft production” with the albums “serving as sites of creative self-expression.”<sup>533</sup> Women were photographed in ladies’ magazines holding family albums and these albums displayed in the parlour were, as Siegel writes, “the perfect genteel accompaniment to a lady’s table.”<sup>534</sup> Once again, it is important to differentiate between the practice of compiling family albums and the commercial albums. The handwritten names in the many commercial souvenir albums available in antiquarian shops are those of both men and women. Any

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<sup>530</sup> Burns, “Topographies of Tourism,” 31.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Jordana Pomeroy, “‘We Got Upon Our Elephant and Went Out After Subjects’: Capturing the World in Watercolour” in *Intrepid Women: Victorian Artists Travel*, ed. Jordana Pomeroy (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 48. For more on watercolour painting and drawing as pastimes gendered feminine, see Julia Thomas’ *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image* (Athens: Ohio UP, 2004), 74.

<sup>533</sup> Siegel, “‘Miss Domestic’ and ‘Miss Enterprise’, Or How to Keep a Photograph Album,” 253 and 266.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., 254.

claims about the commercial albums being gendered feminine and associated with female practices of collecting would reinforce conventional notions of gender roles and interests, assumptions that tourists, when taken individually, could easily disprove. The *Ricordo*'s impressionistic quality can be associated with watercolours, and indeed Venetian photographers often gave their photographs a watercolour quality, but this is related less to a gendering of souvenir imagery than to the tendency, especially prevalent as tourism was becoming more commercialized, to make souvenirs produced in large numbers seem handcrafted. The goal was to give the purchaser a sense that the souvenir was a product of the city being visited rather than a product of the tourist industry.

The reworked faces of local Venetians provide a salient example of how commercial souvenir albums constructed meaning for tourists. The faces of the Venetians that appear in the original photographs are often darkened for the album and, in two cases, they are painted over quite roughly, looking almost grotesque or cartoonish. It is in the two images that can be referred to as genre scenes that roughly painted faces replace the original photographed faces. In the first, entitled *Ponte di Rialto*, a mother and child are walking alongside the Grand Canal, with the Rialto Bridge behind them (fig. 2.7). In the second image, entitled *Monumento a Colleoni*, another mother and child are in front of Verrocchio's equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni with two other figures, to the left and right, a woman with a ragged shawl holding a fan and a barefoot worker holding his wares (fig. 3.1). In light of the captions, it is clear that the tourist sites, namely the bridge and the monument, are meant to be the focus, rather than the genre scene of Venetian poverty playing out below. Indeed, the souvenir album's goal is to highlight the architecture of Venice rather than the daily life of the city's inhabitants.

Nevertheless, in both the Rialto and Colleoni images, the treatment of Venetians as props in a genre scene is taken even further than in earlier genre photographs in which residents of the city, paid to pose, are styled and photographed for tourists. In the Naya Studio photograph entitled *Around the*



*Well at San Giobbe*, five Venetians are carefully posed: the man, draped in a cape, holds a flower in his mouth and the women are dressed in fine clothes and adorned with jewellery (fig. 3.2). While the action of fetching water suggests the Venetians photographed are the island's equivalent of *contadini*, villagers or peasants, their clothing is anything but ordinary. The image is selling a romantic idea of the working class to tourists who have enjoyed descriptions such as James's in which he writes of the "pictorial impressions" of "young girls with faces of a delicate shape and a susceptible expression, with splendid heads of hair [...], faded yellow shawls that hang like old Greek draperies, and little wooden shoes that click as they go up and down the steps of convex bridges."<sup>535</sup> Filippi and Naya produced photographs in which the ethnicity of the city's inhabitants is made to coincide with popular notions among foreign travellers.<sup>536</sup> In Naya's and Filippi's genre photographs, Venetians are posed to play the roles of the happy poor, but they are each still distinct since the photographs do not blur and replace features so that they appear more rugged and weathered.

With unification in the 1860s, many of Venice's upper-class families entered into a state of genteel poverty and, despite expectations that poverty would be alleviated, the daily lives of the poor only improved marginally by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>537</sup> This socio-economic situation is mentioned quite often in British and American travel writing of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Tourists question the prevalent notion that those who were poor were destined to be so because they were morally inferior, and they give their readers specific descriptions of the individual faces of poverty. Hunt Jackson, for example, provides a moving description of offering sweets to

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<sup>535</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 31. James's description was first published in *Century Magazine* in November 1882 and then reprinted in *Portraits and Places* in 1883.

<sup>536</sup> The concept of performing ethnicity to cater to tourist taste is found in Ruth B. Phillips' "Nuns, ladies, and 'Queen of the Hurons': Souvenir art and the negotiation of North American identities" in *Local/Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 174.

<sup>537</sup> In *Venice: Pure City*, Peter Ackroyd notes that at the beginning of the nineteenth century "it was estimated that a third of the [Venetian] population depended on charity" (New York: Random House, 2009), 319. While Ackroyd maintains that the situation improved by the 1860s, Martin Garrett, in *Venice: A Cultural and Literary Companion*, states that in the 1860s "poverty was widespread," with destitute Venetians rioting in protest after the introduction of a tax on flour in 1868 (Brooklyn: Interlink, 2005), 45. Garrett adds that the construction of the Stazione Marittima, the port at the west of the city, eased unemployment but the port's "economic benefit began to be felt only in the 1890s" (45).

impoverished children on Venice's island of Torcello: "They crowded around us and begged, more by their hollow eyes, than by their words. I sat down in a great rough stone chair [Attila's chair] and gave all the children bonbons. One little girl, six or seven years old, grasped hers firm in her little hand and never opened it. [...] After I asked her a dozen times why she did not eat it, she whispered [...] that she kept it for her little brother. Didn't I turn my pocket wrong side out and find one more for that little angel? And do you think I believe in original depravity?"<sup>538</sup> Less enlightened tourists commented on the charming *dolce vita* of the poor and prided themselves on the social programs in England in contrast to the perceived lack of compassion for the poor on the Continent. Others critiqued what they perceived as the laziness of the poor and the overly-charitable organizations in Italy. For example, an article by a Julia Robertson entitled "Women's Work in Venice," published by the American Sunday School Union in 1892, begins by noting, seemingly with empathy, that "in no city in Italy, except perhaps Naples, is the poverty greater than in bright, happy-looking Venice." However, Robertson then asserts that "it is a fact that the bulk of them are quite contented to live in poverty rather than exert themselves."<sup>539</sup>

In contrast to these voices of disdain, the Filippi archive contains a series of photographs of the poorer segments of the city's population engaged in small-scale commerce. Filippi sought to capture the city's less affluent residents as they engaged in their social, economic, and cultural life. His 1895 photograph of a vegetable merchant with her customer does not romanticize the working classes (fig. 3.3). Similarly, Filippi's photograph of a street festival (fig.3.4) captures a side street in Venice decorated for the occasion and focuses on restaurant owners' preparations for an outdoor meal. The images can be understood as social documentary photographs, in the tradition of George Bretz and Jacob Riis, although without the emphasis on injustice and the need for social reform. However, since

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<sup>538</sup> Hunt Jackson, *Bits of Travel*, 208-209.

<sup>539</sup> Julia Robertson, "Women's Work in Venice" in *Philadelphia Sunday School Times*, vol. 33, 1892.

they were intended for tourists, the photographs can still be seen as evoking the picturesque quality of daily life in Venice that was referenced uncritically in travel writing of the period.

The *Ricordo* album, in contrast, is not as ambiguous in its presentation of Venetians: it reduces them to caricatured figures. They are included to signify a quaint notion of poverty and they are quite literally caricatured in that their facial features have been replaced with rough illustrations of faces. The album reinforces what was commonplace in travel writing of the period: to conceive of the poor as interchangeable characters in the theatre that was Venice. In a travel piece on the city in the journal *Once a Week*, for example, the anonymous writer advises future travellers that “it is also well worthwhile to observe the groups of *poverini* (beggars). [...] It is one of the scenes in Goldoni’s plays enacted day after day.”<sup>540</sup> In *Italian Hours*, James considers that the poor are kept poor, and Venice is kept picturesque, for tourists.<sup>541</sup> He writes that “the misery of Venice stands there for all the world to see; it is part of the spectacle.”<sup>542</sup> The *Ricordo* album, as a guidebook for tourists on how to see and be in Venice, supports his claims. The souvenir images present a clear message on how to construct meaning about and understand the poor: they are interchangeable and decorative, their impoverished state functioning as a romantic feature of the Venetian scene.

The album also renders tourists interchangeable. They, too, are given blurry faces, so that they obligingly serve as stand-ins for the actual tourists purchasing the album.<sup>543</sup> In all the images in the album in which tourists are facing forward or in profile, their faces are either whitened or shadowed so that their features are indistinguishable. This is especially evident in the first and fourth images. The first, entitled *Façade of San Marco and Pigeons*, features a female tourist bending down in the center of the image to feed pigeons and next to her a male and female tourist walking together as

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<sup>540</sup> Anonymous, “Venice,” *Once a Week*, April 3, 1869, (London: Bradbury, 1869), 256.

<sup>541</sup> For more on James’ approach to the poor in his travel writing, see Joseph P. Cosco, *Imagining Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American Perceptions, 1880-1910* (Albany: State University of New York, 2003), 95. Cosco emphasizes that “James is aware of and sometimes critiques his aestheticizing and patronizing attitude” (96).

<sup>542</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 9.

<sup>543</sup> In *Around the World*, Levine and Jensen put forth the idea that all tourists in commercial photographs, regardless of the photographs’ stylistic elements, “function as stand-ins” (22).

pigeons scatter (fig. 2.4). In the other image, tourists with whitewashed faces are peering into a well in the ducal palace courtyard (fig. 3.5).

These two images are examples of how photomechanical reproduction of an original photograph enabled those doing the work of retouching to choose versions of an image that included more hallmarks of the typical tourist, such as mustaches, bowler hats, and umbrellas. The first image in the album is one of two photographs taken by Filippi of the same tourists feeding pigeons. Its complement was sold as a single black-and-white souvenir photograph (fig. 3.6) and both were sold as single brightly-coloured photographs (fig. 3.7).<sup>544</sup> In the photograph not included in the album, the male tourist at the center is reaching in his pigeon feed bag while in the *Ricordo* image he is feeding the pigeons. The child walking beside the couple is also much more evident in the photograph not chosen for the album. The figures around those feeding pigeons also change: in the *Ricordo* image, the man holding packages in the left corner is no longer in the frame. A trio of tourists now walks behind the gathering of pigeons, and a man with an umbrella, in the background at the left, is passing in front of the basilica. Besides the central group of tourists, the only other figure in both photographed moments is the photographer in the background who has set up his camera to face the basilica. In choosing between what are, ostensibly, two very similar images, the Scrocchi publishing company opted for the image that included more tourists, more parasols, and more hats. Those doing the retouching could play up these elements through colour. Furthermore, the image selected for the album has at its centre an impoverished resident of the city instead of the well-dressed one holding parcels in the other photograph. With images like these, the album subtly constructs a particular meaning for tourists, encouraging them to see Venice, and the Piazza San Marco especially, as their playground, populated with fellow tourists and elements of regional character.

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<sup>544</sup> Both these photographs are included in the Archivio Filippi's online database.

While the faces of the tourists in the *Ricordo* album are indistinct, the clothing, gestures, and rituals are specific. In this way, the images evoke all upper-middle-class tourists. The motif of tourists strolling together and feeding pigeons is not purely decorative. These figures are engaging in a tourist ritual that renders them, despite or perhaps because of their featureless faces, essential to the souvenir image. The album is made so that tourists purchasing it as a souvenir can project their own similar experience onto the photographed scene. Furthermore, the pictured tourists are a guide: they act as cicerones who instruct both those visiting Venice and those viewing the keepsake before their own travels on how to engage with Venice's tourist spaces.

Emulating the figures in the album, visitors could make themselves souvenir tourists, memorializing through their movements and behaviours in Venice the hallmarks of tourism in the city. When viewing the album upon their return, they could then see themselves in the commercial souvenir album. The implied authority of the commercial album also recasts the city's residents so that those viewing the images could conveniently forget the reality of poverty and remember the poor instead as curiosities that added to the quaintness of the scene.

### 3.4.2 *The souvenir album's circuit*

The Scrocchi album used for this case study is similar, in format and style, to other albums that date to the early twentieth century. Like many others of the period, it features an insignia indicating that it was printed by the publisher Scrocchi. The album is a prime example of a typical sequence. In between the opening and closing images of the Piazza are, in the following order, images of the Rialto Bridge, the Salute church, the palaces of the Grand Canal, the island of San Giorgio, the Bridge of Sighs, and images of *campi* with significant monuments, in this case Verrocchio's

equestrian statue of Venetian captain Bartolomeo Colleoni. Upon returning to the Piazza San Marco, the album features as its closing image a panoramic view from the bell tower.<sup>545</sup>

The gondola circuits recommended in guidebooks are the organizing principle for the compilation. The 1897 edition of *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, for example, advises “engaging a gondola” so that the “most remarkable objects” may be seen “in one day.”<sup>546</sup> Earlier, in the 1870s, numerous editions of the Murray guidebooks provided a plan for visiting Venice in only six days with “objects of interest arranged in topographical order.”<sup>547</sup> The list begins with the Piazza San Marco area and the Palazzo Ducale, and then follows with the Grand Canal, various palaces, the Rialto, the Frari and San Zaccaria churches, the Arsenale, the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, the Salute, and the island of San Giorgio, with side trips to the Lido, Torcello, and Murano.<sup>548</sup> Each day's itinerary necessitates the hiring of a gondolier. By the early twentieth century, guidebooks such as *Bruckmann's Illustrated Guide* of 1902 advised tourists on “how to see Venice in three or four days,” a reduced time frame that reflected the growing middle-class market for more affordable, and thus shorter, trips abroad.<sup>549</sup> The tour recommended in the Bruckmann guide begins in the San Marco area, then suggests “a sail on the Grand Canal,” a view of the Rialto bridge, stops at the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and the Scuola di San Marco, with the later afternoon spent at the island of San Michele for a visit to the cemetery followed by a tour of the island of Murano.<sup>550</sup> Even though tourism was becoming more accessible, and tourists were spending less time in each city they visited, the emphasis in the Venice itineraries remained focused on the relatively expensive gondola-based nature of a daily private tour rather than a more economical, but more time consuming, visit on foot.

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<sup>545</sup> The precise order of these images varies slightly from one album to the next, with the panorama switching places with the opening images of the Piazza San Marco in some existing albums; the Salute images coming before those of the Rialto; additional images of the Canova and Titian monuments included in some albums; a detour to the Lido; and, at times, more images of the palaces on the Grand Canal.

<sup>546</sup> Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 1897, 274.

<sup>547</sup> See the 1873 and 1891 editions of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, esp. pg. 273 of the 1891 edition.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

<sup>549</sup> *Bruckmann's Illustrated Guides: Venice* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1902), vi.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

Although the tourists in the Scrocchi album seem leisured, if they were following the circuits outlined in popular guidebooks for seeing the most in the least amount of time they were subscribing to a carefully-planned and rather hectic schedule. The commercial souvenir album imposes a rigid schedule but, by introducing the tourist figures, gives it the appearance of leisure. Given the sightseeing itineraries suggested in guidebooks, which favoured many sights seen quickly in a day rather than a few sights seen slowly, the albums are a *ricordo* that may very well record one day rather than many days of sightseeing. Adler, in her work on the performance of tourism, suggests that narratives and images play with the ambiguity between literal geography and metaphorical space so that the tourist can “internalize a relationship to that place” through symbolic representations.<sup>551</sup> The tourist needs to do so since “the real place, once glimpsed and experienced, must be relinquished.”<sup>552</sup> What the tourists internalize via the commercial souvenir albums is a circuit, a movement through the city, so that it is their relationship to the place, rather than simply a sequence of landmarks that comes to the fore. Commercial souvenir images preserve the ephemeral, in this case a sense of time and movement, through a sequence of images. The albums can be understood not only as a visual compendium of top sites but also as a souvenir of the pace and temporal movement of one gondola ride.

The cover image of the Scrocchi album encourages viewers from the onset to see the images inside as representative of a tour in gondola. The album’s cover features a photomechanical image, retouched to give a watercolour effect, of a gondolier rowing an empty gondola steps away from the Piazzetta, on the Bacino di San Marco, with the gondola headed towards the Grand Canal (fig. 3.8). The image prompts the viewer to imagine stepping into the gondola and begin what was considered an essential aspect of any visit to Venice. The second half of the album reintroduces the gondolier, now on the Grand Canal, with a female tourist seated in the gondola (fig. 2.18). The gondolier’s stance,

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<sup>551</sup> Adler, “Travel as Performed Art,” 1376.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

sailor bib, and the gondola itself are similar to those depicted on the cover image. The album, though, does not aim for uniformity or consistency. What follows are two other images of gondolas, in these cases with canopies protecting a group of tourists in the fourteenth image and a single figure in the fifteenth image in the album. The idea that emerges is that viewers of the album, having opened the book and embarked on the tour in their imaginary gondola, encounter these various other gondolas and passengers. While the figures vary, the images are presented as one continuous sightseeing circuit in gondola, with the viewers brought back in the final pages to the Bacino di San Marco, which is where their tour began.

Tourists often wrote of the difficulty of committing all they had seen to memory, and yet, in their published memoirs from this period, they often recorded their trajectory along Venice's waterways in detail. Sherwood, for example, writes in her memoirs that in Venice there is much "to claim your attention" and only a few sights can "remain on one's memory, that poor curtain over which these brilliant images pass so quickly."<sup>553</sup> Despite the passage of many years and her own claims about the vicissitudes of memory, Sherwood's description of her visit, written as a second-person narrative, begins with the San Marco area, then continues with a gondola ride on the Grand Canal for a view of the Santa Maria della Salute Church and the Rialto Bridge, after which the reader who is being addressed is made to alight at a number of other churches, especially the Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and its square featuring the Colleoni statue, before returning to the Piazza San Marco. Sherwood's account of her time in Venice follows, with only slight variations, the path many guidebooks and souvenir albums, including the Scrocchi *Ricordo*, traced for travellers, and these may have been the 'fillips to her memory,' to use a Jamesian phrase.<sup>554</sup>

Since they are a bound collection of views originally sold as single images and presenting Venetian sites in a sequence that evokes a gondola tour, the commercial souvenir albums have as their

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<sup>553</sup> Sherwood, *Here, There, and Everywhere*, 41.

<sup>554</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 7.



precursor the book of prints Pasquali and Smith published based on Visentini's engravings of Canaletto's paintings. In keeping with the eighteenth-century book of prints, the Scrocchi album, like many of the *Ricordi di Venezia*, presents only major sites with the conspicuous absence of the many peripheral images sold in photographers' shops that served to recall the narrow paths on water and on land taken to get from one tourist site to the next. Functioning as visual guidebooks, the albums participated in reinforcing the main tourist paths as the definitive Venetian routes.

The commercial albums featuring well-known views of Venice and a rather rigid sightseeing itinerary were produced at the same time as guidebooks, travel writing, and photographers' shops were promoting the Romantic ideal of wandering the city's lesser-known spaces and exploring its minor canals. James, as referenced earlier, encourages visitors "not to lose the useful faculty of getting lost."<sup>555</sup> In the same vein, early twentieth-century guidebooks often omitted a detailed daily itinerary and instead listed a selection of must-see attractions, highlighting, with unintentional irony, the importance of discovering the Venice beyond the guidebook. Reacting against the popular Cook tours of Europe, the journalist Frederick Lewis Collins begins one of his travel pieces by declaring "I love to stand in Saint Mark's Square and laugh at Thomas Cook. For here, at last, is a city he cannot show me. He can tell me that Venice was founded in something-or-other and that it had so many dukes, who were worth so many ducats. [...] He can show me the Cathedral and the Campanile, and the pigeons in the Square, but he cannot show me Venice."<sup>556</sup> The desire to release oneself from the grip of the guidebook is also expressed, at times, as a message in earlier nineteenth-century travel writing. For instance, in the April 1869 piece in the journal *Once a Week*, the writer reminds readers that "to see Venice as she is, the traveller should wander about it alone by himself, should roam at liberty through

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<sup>555</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>556</sup> Frederick Lewis Collins, *Travel Charts and Travel Chats* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1926), 119. Collins echoes E.M. Forster who in *A Room with a View* (1923) gently mocks his central character, Lucy, for her devotion to her Baedeker guidebook. Miss Bartlett chides Lucy, declaring "I hope we shall soon emancipate you from Baedeker. He does but touch the surface of things" (New York: Vintage, 1989, 18). When visiting the Santa Croce church in Florence without her guidebook, Lucy initially "walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date. There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr. Ruskin" (22-23).

the streets, should regard the markets and gatherings of the townspeople, [...] should mark the ever changing effects of light and shade and colour at every turn, [...] in short look at the people and the town and not eternally at his guide and guidebook.”<sup>557</sup> Both Collins’ statement and this anonymous writer’s suggestion resist the proscribed tourist experience that traditional guidebooks and the commercial albums attempted to impose.

Possibly as a response to tourist desire for less rigid itineraries, the commercial albums did offer variations in the sequence of views. This is a change from the eighteenth-century books of prints examined in Chapter One. Pasquali and Smith produced many editions featuring the same images in the same order. The later commercial souvenir albums, by contrast, offered variations in the choice and order of images. In this manner, they evoke the sense of spontaneity promoted in the period’s travel writing. In contrast to the eighteenth-century book of prints, which charts a specific path, the many souvenir albums sold in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when taken together, are variations on a common theme, allowing for an itinerary that wavers. The most important sites in Venice, the albums suggest, can be seen in an orderly fashion or with more impulsiveness, depending on the proclivities of the traveller.

Both guidebooks and travel writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries romanticized the peripheral spaces in Venice and suggested exploring without a predetermined path. A comparison of the commercial albums to the itineraries prevalent in the guidebooks suggests that the sequences of images presented in the albums correspond to the gondola routes recommended in guidebooks, with the albums focusing on the key sites along these routes and also implicitly evoking the increasingly popular peripheral spaces in Venice. The viewer could fill in the spaces from one page to the next of the album, or one site to the next, with his or her memory of the minor canals and bridges taken to arrive at the next site. Since the albums also presented variations from the standard

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<sup>557</sup> Anonymous, “Venice,” *Once A Week*, 257.

circuit, with photographs of different squares and monuments included depending on the interests of the purchaser, they are evidence of a marketing strategy that brought together the tourist's two contrasting motivations while in gondola: to participate in the standard Venetian itinerary and to deviate from this predetermined path. When they were personalized for each individual tourist at the photographer's shop and even when they were mass-produced with standard images and some variations, the commercial albums present the authority and safety of a comprehensive tour as well as the flexibility and adventure of departing from the expected rituals of sightseeing.

### 3.5 "*El mondo, mezzo xe da vender, e mezzo da comprar*": San Marco's shops and tourist culture

With the development of mass-market tourism in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the souvenir shops emerged as essential stops in the tourist itinerary. To residents of Venice, it often seemed as though in their city half the world was doing the selling, and the other half the buying, as the proverb quoted above suggests.<sup>558</sup> As the addresses given in guidebooks indicate, often such shops were adjacent to bookstores that promoted the study of Italian art, language, and music. Both types of shops functioned as places to gather and associate. The merchants and photographers selling books, cards, and views in the Piazza San Marco curried favour with tourists and cultivated the authenticity and immediacy of their souvenirs by highlighting their shop's proximity to the iconic features of the square. For example, the Libreria Cartoleria affixed its bookplate to books tourists purchased, as on the back cover of a 1902 edition of *Bruckmann's Guides to Venice*. The bookplate indicates that this bookstore and stationery shop was owned by Giovanni Zanetti and located "*sotto l'Orologio*," under the clock tower in the Piazza San Marco. Since Venetian customs, language, and mannerisms were foreign to most tourists, the shops provided visitors with a space to meet fellow travellers in an

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<sup>558</sup> The Venetian proverb translates to "half the world is doing the selling, the other half the buying" and can be found in Cristoforo Pasqualigo's 1882 anthology *Raccolta di Proverbi Veneti* (Treviso: Arnaldo, 1882) and in G.A. Cibotto's *Proverbi del Veneto* (Milan: Martello, 1977).

atmosphere reminiscent of the middle-class parlours and their display of travel imagery. The Piazza San Marco shops were also where both photographers and tourists played an active role in the production of commercial souvenir albums.

### 3.5.1 *The commercial activities of the Piazza's booksellers and photographers*

Guidebooks admonished tourists not to miss the Piazza San Marco shops, with their essential and eclectic collection of merchandise and their personable owners. In the 1850s, Ponti established his shop at number 52 in the square, and Antonio Pierini followed suit in 1859 with his shop at the base of the bell tower, described in *The Practical, General Continental Guide* (1868) as “a Special Depot” for views of Venice and other countries.”<sup>559</sup> Beginning in 1871, the photographer Ongania's antiquarian shop, which sold books of photographs of Venice, was located in the Napoleonic wing of the square. Photographers' shops were plentiful: joining Ponti's was Naya's at 75, and 77-78-79 in the square, and, later, Filippi's at 61 Procuratie Nuove and then at Piazzetta dei Leoncini,<sup>560</sup> as well as Salviati's near the basilica, the Fratelli Gajo store under the Procuratie Vecchie, and the Genova family's two shops, one below the Procuratie Vecchie and the other under the Procuratie Nuove.<sup>561</sup> Hermann F. Münster's circulating library, bookstore, and souvenir shop, often cited in mid to late nineteenth-century guidebooks, was located at 72-73 in the Piazza, near the Caffè Florian.<sup>562</sup>

Tourists interacted with those engaged in the souvenir business to a significant degree. The *Practical Guide* cited above refers to Münster's as “an English circulating library and a General Depot

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<sup>559</sup> The addresses of the shops can be found in Ritter's *Venice in Old Photographs*, 201. The quotation is taken from *The Practical General Continental Guide: To See All That Ought to Be Seen in the Shortest Period and at the Least Expense* by an anonymous writer referred to as the Englishman Abroad (London: Simpkin, 1868), 201.

<sup>560</sup> Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 200.

<sup>561</sup> *Bruckmann's Illustrated Guides: Venice*, 1902, 4. The copy of the Bruckmann guide in the McGill Rare Books Collection includes a blue bookplate on its back cover with the name of the shop in Piazza San Marco in which it was purchased: “*Libreria Cartoleria Giovanni Zanetti, San Marco sotto l'Orologio, Venezia.*” Zanetti's shop, as noted earlier, was one of many stores in the square selling books and views.

<sup>562</sup> *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 1873, 376.

for all Views of Venice, coloured and uncoloured, photographic and printed.”<sup>563</sup> In the twelfth edition of the venerable *Murray Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, published in 1873, tourists are told that Münster “speaks English and keeps a circulating library of French, German, and Italian books.”<sup>564</sup> The guidebook suggests that whether tourists stay three weeks or three days in Venice, they would do well to visit “Münster’s and other print sellers in the Piazza San Marco” to purchase photographs, maps, and guidebooks.<sup>565</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, Filippi’s notebooks contain the home addresses of foreign visitors, which suggests that merchants and photographers established a degree of association beyond a simple commercial exchange. For decades, H.F. Münster himself was a fixture in the tourist experience of Venice and its Piazza. In the 1853 edition of Murray’s guidebook, space is reserved for noting that “Herman Münster is a very obliging man.”<sup>566</sup> Shopkeepers, especially those with stores in the Piazza San Marco, are presented in the guidebooks as having taken on the civic responsibility to offer tourists an enriching social and cultural experience in a commercial space.

The stores fostered a tourist culture: visitors to Venice could meet, form associations, keep up with news from home, and cultivate their knowledge of Italian and the arts. Ostensibly a commercial space, Münster’s was organized as a space of culture, art, and education. In an 1873 guidebook entitled *Venice: Her Art Treasures and Historical Associations*, by the German writer Adalbert Müller, we are told that Münster’s Library “receiv[es] applications for teachers in languages, music, etc.”<sup>567</sup> The Murray guidebook published the same year informs tourists that “a Reading Room, recently opened at Münster’s Library” provides “periodicals [and] newspapers, American, European, London” with a daily subscription costing the tourist one franc, a weekly three francs, and a month’s

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<sup>563</sup> Anonymous, *The Practical General Continental Guide*, 201.

<sup>564</sup> *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 376.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Murray, 1852), 299.

<sup>567</sup> Adalbert Muller, *Venice: Her Art Treasures and Historical Associations* (London: Augustus John Cuthbert Hare, 1884, 1973), 1.

subscription five francs.<sup>568</sup> Appropriately termed “depots” of tourist culture by the guidebooks of the period, the shops functioned as social spaces where tourists mingled and shared tips while also purchasing souvenir photographs, albums, and books through which their social lives as tourists were represented for them.<sup>569</sup>

Rather than highlighting the difference between the foreign city and the tourist, the shops welcomed visitors with images and albums they had already seen in the parlours of friends and family back home.<sup>570</sup> What might seem to be a standardizing aesthetic, with the parlours of home and foreign shops looking quite similar, is also what, paradoxically, made the shops distinctive. In June 1888, an exhibit in London replicated aspects of the shops, evoking nostalgia in even the most cynical tourists. In a review of the exhibit, a writer for *The American* highlights that “Italy in miniature has been introduced into the heart of London. The stalls and stands have a friendly suggestion of the Piazza in Venice. It is like meeting an old friend to come face to face with Naya’s photographs, especially when you discover that he has made but few new ones since you last looked in his shop window.”<sup>571</sup> While critiquing the Venetian photographer’s repetition of his most popular images, the anonymous reviewer also personifies souvenir images, highlighting their ability, precisely because of the consistency of the shop’s display practices, to take on the quality of the familiar rather than the foreign.

From archival records and descriptions in guidebooks, one can glean that the shops sought out a varied clientele, from artists studying Venetian art and architecture, to collectors, to more casual tourists interested in purchasing a token of their visit. Filippi’s French business card attests to the shop’s polyvalence. After his name and address, the following is listed: “Large collection of black and white, coloured, and *clair de lune* Photographs, with and without cardboard backing, in all Sizes. For

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<sup>568</sup> Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy*, 376.

<sup>569</sup> As referenced above, *The Practical, General Continental Guide* describes the shops as “special depots” (201).

<sup>570</sup> Buzard points out that tourists were on a “quest for alterity and authenticity” so that what seemed familiar, such as “shops, eating establishments, [...] dockyards, [...] railway stations,” was not “peculiar” enough to be worth mentioning or recording except in the practical sections of guidebooks. See Buzard’s “A Continent of Pictures,” 30-31.

<sup>571</sup> Anonymous review, *The American: A National Journal*, ed. Robert Ellis Thompson, vol. 15-16, June 1888, 153.

Artists: Art reproductions, and copies of Great Master drawings, and of architecture, ornamentation, and sculpture. Specialties: Portraits in Gondola taken directly on the Grand Canal and with pigeons in the Piazza San Marco. Albums, Guidebooks, and Watercolours.”<sup>572</sup> In his Italian business card, which includes a photograph of the entrance and display window of his shop located near the Piazza’s clock tower, Filippi lists what the shop offers, including Murano glass and cameos: “*Fotografie, acquarelli, acqueforti, specialità veneziane, cammei, vetri di Murano*” (fig. 3.9).

Existing records of the inventory and merchandise found in Filippi’s shop in San Marco suggest that the shop’s display practices echoed the decorating trends of British and North American tourists, a significant clientele group, rather than the décor of upper-middle-class Venetian homes.<sup>573</sup> His 1906 inventory chronicles that the entrance of his shop featured a Viennese seat, a wooden table, paintings, three-panelled mirrors, a display table, and a compass.<sup>574</sup> For tourists interested in bric-a-brac, there were items such as miniatures of Saint Theodore, gilded lions, and gondolas.<sup>575</sup> With the compass serving as apt travel imagery, the entrance of the shop welcomed tourists ‘back home’ to a parlour setting, complete with sofa and table, and guided them, as it were, to discover the photographs, albums, and maps they had seen in the homes of friends and family.

The photographers’ shops, with their eclectic displays and merchandise that aimed to please with no deliberate intention to shape taste or create a tourist culture, are a significant example of the rather amorphous way in which tourist culture is constructed. The shops were antidotes to Kodak’s

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<sup>572</sup> Filippi’s French business card reads as follows: “*Grande collection de Photographie noires, colorées et au clair de lune avec et sans carton, dans toutes les Grandeurs. Pour Artistes: Reproductions des tableaux, et facsimile des dessins des grands Maitres, details d’architectures et ornements, sculptures. Spécialités: Portraits en Gondole pris directement sur le Grand Canal; et avec pigeon pris sur la Place Saint Marc. Albums, Guides, Acquarelles.*” Cited in Giuliana Marcolini, “Dietro le immagini, la voce delle carte” in *Venezia paesaggio ottocentesco: le vedute di Tomaso Filippi, fotografo* (Venice: IRE, 2002), 37.

<sup>573</sup> For a study of Victorian décor, see Charlotte Gere’s *Nineteenth-Century Decoration: The Art of the Interior* (New York: Abrams, 1989), and for examples of a Venetian *piano nobile* see John Singer Sargent’s oil paintings *Venetian Interior* (c. 1882) and *An Interior in Venice* (1899). For details on décor and practices of displaying art in nineteenth-century Venice, see Linda Borean and Anna Cera Sones’ “Drawings of the Installation of a Nineteenth-Century Picture Gallery: A Study of the Display of Art in Venice” in *The Getty Research Journal* 2 (2010): 169-176.

<sup>574</sup> Filippi’s inventory of February 15, 1906 is located in box B1-19 at the Archivio Filippi.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

slogan from the 1880s, “you shoot, we do the rest.” Kodak enabled tourists to avoid commercial souvenir photographs altogether and mail Kodak their own film to be processed.<sup>576</sup> Filippi also offered a development service for tourists taking their own pictures, as advertised on one of his business cards.<sup>577</sup> In their study of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century family albums, Levine and Jensen maintain that “purchased souvenir albums were tolerable only as long as technology prevented travellers from further personalizing their [family] albums.”<sup>578</sup> However, given the popularity of the shops and their photographs, and the fact that nineteenth-century commercial souvenir albums did allow for personalizing, the authoritative pictorial souvenir of the visited city for the tourist was still the one made by a local and purchased *in situ* by the tourist in Venice’s most well-known tourist space, the Piazza San Marco. The shops harked back to, or were the evolution of, the eighteenth-century culture of print selling. By continuing to cultivate a relatively personal relationship with a client, they were preserving a past time in the face of technological advancements in photography that would eventually cut out the local photographer’s shop from tourist itineraries.

### 3.5.2 *Tourists as editors of Venetian souvenir views*

In each chapter of this project, I highlight how the consumers of souvenir images of Venice participate either implicitly or explicitly in the production of the souvenir images produced for them by Venetians. In the photographer’s shop, tourists could select the photographs for their album from Filippi’s vast collection. Indeed, the Filippi archive includes index cards with thumbnail images pasted onto cardboard backing, which may have used to help tourists with their selection, as well descriptions in note form of albums prepared for tourists.

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<sup>576</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 22.

<sup>577</sup> The fact that Filippi offered a service for tourists who wanted their film developed while on tour is also cited in Michelotti’s Master’s thesis on the photographer.

<sup>578</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 22.



Carlo Bertelli in *Pioneers of Photography* (1988) and Richard Paré and Catherine Evans Inbusch, in a catalogue published by the Canadian Center for Architecture (1982), have also argued that tourists often selected the views for the commercial albums they purchased from photographers.<sup>579</sup> Paré and Inbusch write that “judging from the variety of prints found in extant examples, the purchaser must have selected [...] photographs to be bound within an inexpensive embossed cover.”<sup>580</sup> Unlike family albums, which emerged in the 1880s and “contain, paradoxically, unique photographs of tourists doing the same thing,”<sup>581</sup> the commercial souvenir albums brought the presentation and rituals of tourism to the fore, both through the figures in the images, as I have emphasized earlier in this chapter, and in the choices made by tourists as editors of the views.

The commercial albums, despite being in some cases a collection of views hand-selected by the tourist, do not aim for uniqueness or personal narratives. In purchasing these albums, tourists secured the authoritative complement to the personal but nevertheless common narratives offered by their family albums. They sought a document of the sites and the tourist behaviours within those sites, both of which are part of what Levine and Jensen describe as “an established collective cultural consciousness” that the family albums attempt to replace with an illusion of the personal.<sup>582</sup> This “established collective consciousness,” though, is not pre-existing but constantly in the process of being created and recreated. Thus, when tourists chose commercial souvenir albums that replicated the albums of others, they were not passively succumbing to an established understanding of Venice but were instead exhibiting their agency in assembling, through repetition and mimetic desire, the collective cultural aesthetic as they collaborated with local photographers in the representation of the city.

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<sup>579</sup> Carlo Bertelli, *Pioneers of Photography, 1846-1900: The Robert Lebeck Collection* (Milan: Idea, 1988), 93.

<sup>580</sup> Richard Paré and Catherine Evans Inbusch, *Photography and Architecture, 1839-1939* (Montreal: Canadian Center for Architecture, 1982), 235.

<sup>581</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 25.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

Images of Venice's Piazza San Marco and Grand Canal travelled through different media. Tourists purchasing the albums were seeing reproduced views of Venice in various forms. They may have been familiar with Visentini's collection of engravings, and British and American visitors were certainly familiar with Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, which was the quintessential illustrated guidebook on Venetian architecture.<sup>583</sup> Ruskin's illustrations, based on daguerreotypes, give the viewer an experience that is "partial, fragmentary, and discontinuous," as Burns describes it in her analysis of the images.<sup>584</sup> The viewer "is always pressed up against the picture surface."<sup>585</sup> In contrast, both the Visentini engravings and the photographs in the commercial souvenir albums place the viewer at a distance from the scene, styling the purchaser as an observer who is removed from the fray. The images in Ruskin's book focus on details of architecture often without a larger visual context, while the images in the commercial souvenir albums have as their goal the presentation of wider views to evoke the topography of the lagoon city. The images produced by Venetians and chosen by tourists for their albums are an antidote to the fragments of Venice displayed in *Stones of Venice*.

In contrast to the fragmentary nature of memory and the at times alienating experience of travel, the commercial albums offered tourists the chance to take various pieces, that is to say single images, and construct a comprehensive representation of the city. Especially in the late nineteenth century, when tourists edited their own souvenirs by selecting the photographs for the albums they purchased, the process of choosing the images encouraged them to represent their travel experience, however fragmentary, discontinuous, and alienating, as a rational whole over which they had a substantial degree of control.

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<sup>583</sup> The last edition of Visentini's engravings was published by Battaggio in 1840 for Italians and foreigners (see the publishing history in the introduction to Visentini's *Le Prospettive di Venezia*, non-numbered page). Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* is mentioned in numerous late nineteenth-century guidebooks, in James' travel writing, and in various novels, including Harriet Parr's *Katherine's Trial*, written in 1873 under the pseudonym Holme Lee. The eponymous Katherine and her companion Rous walk under the arcades in the Piazza to escape the sun and, fulfilling a tourist duty at least in part, "at Münster's library they went in to buy note-paper and to ask for *The Stones of Venice*. They got the first and second volumes, but the third never, so long as they stayed in the city" (219).

<sup>584</sup> Burns, "Topographies of Tourism," 40.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Commercial souvenir albums have received little scholarly attention yet they offer important information concerning late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century tourist practices. These collections of images assemble specific ideas and meanings about tourists, locals, and the visited city. Parsons' poem, which opened this chapter, attests to the fact that the gondola circuit was an essential aspect of one's memory of visiting Venice, a memory often prompted by the proliferation of souvenir photographs. Commercial souvenir albums traced a day's gondola tour and systematized the practice of considering photographs as an unfolding visual representation of the circuit. The *Ricordi*, as the connotations of their title suggest, were a tangible souvenir, a record of a cultural practice, and a spur for memory of time spent in Venice. More specifically, figures of tourists and locals in the albums also constructed meaning for tourists by encouraging them to see the Venetian poor as interchangeable, romantic, and decorative, and themselves as fully experiencing the city when partaking in conventional tourist practices. Tourists also chafed against the strictures of the typical sightseeing itineraries, and the variations in the albums can be understood as a response to this.

The numerous shops selling photographs of Venice, as well as the neighbouring libraries and reading rooms in and around the Piazza San Marco, promoted social interactions between local merchants and tourists that became part of the experience of travel. Since tourists initially chose the photographs to be bound together in albums, these affordable souvenirs allowed the growing number of middle-class tourists to have a hand in determining the material culture sold to them. This tangible participation is developed further in the twentieth century, as explored in the next chapter, with the popularity of postcards.

## Chapter Four

### Twentieth-Century Souvenirs: Postcards of the City

#### 4.1 Introduction

In June 1915, an Italian tourist visiting Venice sent a postcard home to Ferrara of the Grand Canal (fig. 4.1). It shows a perspective towards the Rialto that Ponti, Naya, and Filippi photographed many times and sold as souvenir images to tourists.<sup>586</sup> The anonymous publisher of the postcard, though, transformed the photographic image so that it appears to be painted, much like the images in the *Ricordo* album studied in the previous chapter. Like many other early twentieth-century postcards of Venice, the postcard uses as its source material black and white photographs that have been brightly coloured by hand or machine.<sup>587</sup> The sender has written on both the recto and verso. He uses the lighter blue of the image's sky to complete the message begun on the other side of the postcard in which he writes that although the Piazza San Marco and Palazzo Ducale may be "the first flowers of art," he prefers the simple cupola of his hometown. He also engages with the image of boats on the water as though he is heading off in one of them for a tour, writing "Via!" in the top left corner of the postcard. Over the canal water he writes that he is heading to the Lido to swim, which is a recurring message in early twentieth-century postcards sent from Venice. The postcard, one example plucked from many, speaks to the fact that tourists engaged, often creatively, with the images on the postcards they sent. They made these souvenirs their own through their messages, and used the postcard to maintain a connection with their social network when abroad.

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<sup>586</sup> This photograph is in the Archivio Filippi.

<sup>587</sup> Since no archive of souvenir postcards of Venice exists, this point is based on my study of the many existing postcards available for view at antiquarian shops in Venice and online, and a comparison of those images with the photographs in the Archivio Filippi.

Beginning in the mid-1890s, purchasing and sending postcards became an essential part of the tourist experience to such an extent that between 1890 and 1918, a period historicized as the ‘golden age’ of the postcard,<sup>588</sup> many millions were sent every year, with England setting a record in 1908 when 860 million postcards passed through its postal system.<sup>589</sup> The British journalist George Sims, highlighting the ubiquity of the postcard as a souvenir, lamented during his travels that “everybody on the [train] platform has a pencil in one hand and a postcard in the other. In the train it is the same thing. Your fellow travellers never speak. They have little piles of picture postcards on the seat beside them, and they write continuously.”<sup>590</sup> For Sims, postcards mediated the experience of travel to such a degree that what was at stake was none other than the present moment, specifically the experience of travel itself and the pleasure of communicating in person with those one encountered. Postcard writers were participating in the rituals of being a tourist, dutifully visiting, writing, and photographing, and thus taking part in the conscientious tourist activities that Sontag has described as “the friendly imitation of work.”<sup>591</sup> She argues that tourists give themselves the duty of taking pictures because they cannot separate themselves completely from the daily responsibilities and tasks of home. Even more than snapping pictures, the writing of postcards is a commitment of time and energy when on holiday.

As I will argue, postcard writing was not simply mimetic, and neither were postcard images the derivative souvenirs they were often criticized as being. Postcards often used photographs as their source material, but since these images were stylized to appear impressionistic, they are removed from the realm of the ostensibly accurate or documentary. Similarly, postcard writers may have worked from the sentiments of others in their commonplace observations, but they were nevertheless stepping away from the authoritative voice of the guidebook and inserting themselves into the commercial souvenir, as is evident in the example above. Both the formal qualities of the postcard image and the

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<sup>588</sup> John Fraser, “Propaganda on the Picture Postcard,” *Oxford Art Journal* (1980): 39.

<sup>589</sup> Saloni Mathur, “Collecting Colonial Postcards of India” in *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London: Routledge, 1999), 99.

<sup>590</sup> Cited in Long, “W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist,” 77.

<sup>591</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 10.

message on the postcard's verso attest to the emphasis on impressions rather than authority, with the sender's written impressions mediated by the postcard image.

Recent scholarship on postcards has illuminated ways in which travel postcards were linked to the increasing democratization of travel and to trends in scrapbooking and memory-keeping in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What has not yet been addressed is the longer visual history of the views, such as their links to earlier souvenir photographs and paintings. Since the postcards took their images from the photographic archives, the central and peripheral spaces featured in the photographs continued to be the spaces depicted in the postcards, with no additional Venetian spaces emerging and with a fairly even distribution of central and peripheral images. Another aspect of the postcard ritual has also been overlooked: the fact that postcards became popular at the same time as portable cameras became more readily available and affordable.<sup>592</sup> Postcards were purchased in outstanding numbers even though many tourists wrote letters home and had Kodak cameras of their own. They were also purchasing commercial photographs as single images or in albums. Along with their letters, tourists often mailed their own family photos home since Filippi and other photographers offered development services. Once home, they could have their Kodak negatives turned into postcards, as ads in *Popular Mechanics* magazines of the period emphasize.<sup>593</sup> Commercial postcards purchased while travelling were nevertheless extremely popular. They offered something as a souvenir image that these other images did not. Postcards could be mailed back home immediately, complete with a brief message, banal or witty, depending on the tourist's inclination. More than ever before, tourists, through their handwritten notes, had a hand in constructing the souvenirs that would be disseminated.

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<sup>592</sup> Levine and Jensen, *Around the World*, 25.

<sup>593</sup> See Michelotti, "L'attività dello studio fotografico di Tomaso Filippi a Venezia," for the information on Filippi's services, and for the advertisements offering to turn personal photographs into postcards, see any monthly issue of *Popular Mechanics Magazine* between 1913 and 1917.

Even more than the commercial souvenir albums, postcards functioned as a souvenir format that courted tourist participation in the construction of an authoritative souvenir. With their images taken from the archives of prominent photographers, postcards spoke to the tourists' continued appreciation of the authority of a local photographer. Once the postal system allowed written text on postcards in addition to the recipient's address, tourists embraced their own authority as purveyors of the scene, sending along with the postcard image of Venice at first only the briefest lines of commentary, in a bar of space below the image, and by 1902, with the postal system caving to public pressure, a message on half the verso of the image.<sup>594</sup> Evidence of a joint participation between producer and consumer of the souvenir image is made manifest when a tourist's handwritten text accompanies the commercial postcard.

Postcards of Venice have not been studied in depth before, and this chapter marks the first critical analysis of their visual conventions within the broader context of the souvenir imagery that preceded them.<sup>595</sup> After a survey of the history of postcards and the state of the scholarship, I engage in a close reading of the recto side of a number of representative Venetian postcards, focusing on colour, especially the prevalence of brightly-coloured postcards since they craft a somewhat artificial reality while nevertheless evoking the atmosphere of Venice. I also devote attention to the inclusion of figures and the accoutrements associated with travel, noting which visual elements recur and function not only as shorthand for the city as a tourist space but also for the Venetian postcard form.

The purchasing and mailing of postcards affected tourists' movements in the city. Tourists continued to visit the photographers' shops for single photographs, albums, film development services, and postcards, but corner stores were also selling postcards. Thus, tourists lingered at the tobacconists, for example, as they chose images, a practice of everyday tourist life that added to their

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<sup>594</sup> For more on this, see the section in this chapter on the history and development of postcards.

<sup>595</sup> As noted in the Introduction, Davis and Marvin discuss postcards in *Venice, The Tourist Maze*. A study of the postcards' visual conventions is necessarily limited by the fact that, unlike well-archived single photographs but much like commercial souvenir albums, no official, archived collections of Venetian postcards exist.

interactions with the city's residents.<sup>596</sup> The post office, as well, became a space devoted more than ever before to the tourist. Postcard writing itself may have prompted the tourist to take a moment of quiet away from the bustle of tourism to write the accompanying message, but the purchasing and mailing of the souvenirs was a social experience. Although tourists tend to omit descriptions of prosaic visits to post offices in their chronicles, the sheer number of postcards mailed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attests to the fact that the post office was an important tourist space. Tourists could purchase postcards, write and mail postcards home, and collect those sent to them *poste restante*. Following my analysis of the visual conventions of Venetian postcards, I consider the post office in Venice as a tourist space that connoted speed and modernity while also echoing the quaint atmosphere of the photographers' shops discussed in the previous chapter.

In writing postcards, tourists annotated the image that would be disseminated. The very format of the souvenir they were mailing solicited their commentary on both the image being sent and their experience of Venice. The final section of this chapter places emphasis on considering both the recto and verso of the postcard, of studying both image and message. While scholars working on postcards often argue that the tourist's handwritten commentary can be written off as a series of platitudes hardly affected by the city being observed,<sup>597</sup> it is precisely these conventional messages, like their visual counterparts on the postcard's recto, that are worth considering as part of the rituals of travel. I argue that the text portion of the postcard is often as much a representation of the specific city as the quintessential image on its other side.

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<sup>596</sup> Sims, writing in *The Referee* (1900), records that in Germany "postcards were on sale in cigar shops, libraries, chemists, and fruit stalls, or arranged in stands on restaurant tables, in railway stations" (cited in Long, "W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist," 77).

<sup>597</sup> See, for example, Paolo Parmeggiani, "Integrating Multiple Research Methods: A Visual Sociology Approach to Venice" in *Tourism and Visual Culture: Volume Two, Methods and Cases*, eds. Peter Burns et al. (Oxfordshire: CABI, 2010).



Postcards exist, as Jacques Derrida has observed, as dichotomies: they are both mass-produced and personal, blurring the line between the public and private.<sup>598</sup> Postcards call attention to the tension between the public and the private not only because the private message circulates publically but also in the sense of a tension between social and pictorial conventions and the expression of individual thoughts. The postcard image imposes a view on the sender, who in turn engages in both established and unique ways with the image. In the example that opens this chapter, the writer includes the popular motif of referencing water and the Lido but fancifully incorporates these words by writing them on the image itself. The postcard courts both conventional and irreverent interactions with the generic view it presents.

#### 4.1.1 *History and development of postcards*

On August 3, 1902, the *New York Times* ran the headline “Inventor of the Postcard dies,” followed by the obituary of Emanuel Hermann, Chancellor of the Austrian Ministry of Commerce and one of the key figures involved in devising and producing the postcard in 1869.<sup>599</sup> Hermann’s death made headlines since by the early twentieth century the popularity of postcards was at its height. When they were first introduced, postcards were printed without images, allowing for senders to affix their own images, an early form of the collaborative nature of the medium.<sup>600</sup> By the 1880s, picture postcards were mass produced in Germany, with the cards initially becoming popular throughout Europe, North America, and Japan as inexpensive souvenirs commemorating the International Expositions.<sup>601</sup> Buying, selling, and collecting postcards unrelated to the International Expositions developed in earnest in Britain and Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, spurred on by low

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<sup>598</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987).

<sup>599</sup> “Inventor of the Postcard Dies,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1902, 24.

<sup>600</sup> David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), 174.

<sup>601</sup> Fraser, “Propaganda on the Picture Postcard,” 39.

postage rates.<sup>602</sup> Beginning in 1899, the British government relinquished its monopoly over its national postcard market, thus allowing private companies to print postcards in England. On the continent most postcards sold in various tourist cities were printed in Germany until 1914 when, due to the onset of war, German publishers lost their monopoly on the European postcard business.<sup>603</sup> During the First World War, postcards were soldiers' medium of choice when communicating with family and friends since, unlike letters that had to be opened and read, postcards with their benign messages legible to all arrived at their destination in a timely manner despite increased censorship.<sup>604</sup> Although the ritual of writing and sending postcards continued to be an essential part of the tourist experience during the first half of the twentieth century, postage increased after World War I and publishing companies, keen to maintain the same high profits as during the war, increased their prices, thus postcard sales from the 1920s to mid-century, while still high, decreased relative to their numbers at the turn of the century and during the wartime period.<sup>605</sup>

The format of picture postcards evolved during the first decades of their production. Initially, postcards had no divided back. The side without the image only had room for the recipient's address, with, at times, a white border or a blank space on the image side for a brief message. The address side, considered more important than the image during this period, was termed the recto, or front of the card.<sup>606</sup> In 1902, a divided back was introduced, allowing the sender to add a longer message to the recipient. This change, as Naomi Schor notes, altered "the hierarchy of the two sides."<sup>607</sup> Once postcards with divided backs were circulated, the image side was given more importance and considered the recto, or front, of the double-sided postcard.<sup>608</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Naomi Schor, "'Cartes Postales': Representing Paris 1900," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 225.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Fraser, "Propaganda on the Picture Postcard," 42.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid. Steiber, in her study of early twentieth-century postcards of Amsterdam, sees postcards as the "precursor to the as yet less widespread telephone ("Postcards and the Invention of Old Amsterdam Around 1900," 25) and, extrapolating from this, one could argue that the post saw a relative drop in postcard mailings once tourists could phone home.

<sup>606</sup> Schor, "Cartes Postales," 212.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid., 213.

As for publishers, printing dates, and printing processes, the postcards as artifacts carry few traces of who produced them, and no archives exist with information on the provenance of these ephemeral souvenirs. Much of the information in this chapter has been gleaned from my own collection of vintage postcards. Italian postcards often include ‘Made in Italy’ on their verso but no printing date, thus they can only be dated if they were mailed, if the date was included by the sender, or if the date of the post office’s hand cancelled stamp is legible. Postcards taken directly from photographs indicate that they are from a “*vera fotografia*,” known to deltiologists as real photo postcards.<sup>609</sup> The rest, while often based on photographs, are mechanically coloured. In the case of the Venetian postcards, the colouring presents the city as hazy and dreamlike, an aesthetic that was popular in many early twentieth-century postcards of city views but one that seems to be accentuated in the postcards of the lagoon city.

Most postcards of Venice do not include the name of the company that produced them, although some have trademarks consisting of printed, stylized initials in a small circle at the bottom of the card, most likely the insignia of the publisher. One particular insignia is, in some instances, followed by the name “A Scrocchi” written in a cursive font along the dividing line between the message and address sections. Scrocchi also published commercial souvenir albums, one of which I considered in depth in Chapter Three. The postcards made by Scrocchi and others do not have a distinctive style specific to each company and thus they attest to the prolific and varied output of the postcard firms.

Although the total number of postcards sent during the peak of the postcard’s popularity has not been recorded, annual statistics for Germany, France, and England are available, as are noteworthy statistics for New York City. A few of these will suffice to evoke the popularity of postcards as a new form of communication at the turn of the century: in 1890, when postcards of

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<sup>609</sup> It was in the mid twentieth century that the term deltiology was coined to refer to the collecting of postcards, with the word entering the Oxford English Dictionary in the 1960s.

genre scenes and various cities were first introduced in Germany, three million postcards were mailed in the country that year; by 1900, 786 million postcards were processed by the German post office, an average of 15 postcards per capita.<sup>610</sup> France produced eight million postcards in 1899, 60 million in 1902, and 123 million in 1910.<sup>611</sup> In New York City, on Christmas Day 1907, the *New York Times* ran a headline announcing that “10 000 000 Post Cards will have been handled by close of today, a thing unprecedented in the city’s postal history.”<sup>612</sup> And, as noted above, England set a record in 1908 by processing 860 million postcards.<sup>613</sup>

Postcards were collected and prominently displayed by recipients in postcard albums and revolving postcard racks. The interest in collecting postcards during the period cannot be overestimated. Postcards certainly represented the fantasy of travel, attested to the tourist’s presence in the foreign city or at the iconic landmark, and may have been purchased as an expression of the colonial desire to ‘possess’ the foreign cities, but tourists also sent travel postcards to family and friends so that the recipients would be able to add to their expanding collections. Although the culture of collecting was valued for centuries, postcard collections were often criticized. An 1899 article, in a rather tongue-in-cheek tone, declares that “young ladies who have [...] wearied of collecting Christmas cards have been known to fill albums with missives of this kind [i.e. postcards] received from friends abroad.”<sup>614</sup> At the turn of the century, postcard albums were not thought to be serious collections but rather barometers of popularity since it was not the quality of the postcards but the number of cards that seemed to be valued by the album keeper.

Despite the fact that the writing and collecting of postcards was often considered a female pastime, postcards were purchased and sent by a large swath of the population, regardless of class and

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<sup>610</sup> The 1890 statistic comes from Fraser, “Propaganda on the Picture Postcard,” 39. The 1900 statistic from Mathur “Collecting Colonial Postcards of India,” 99.

<sup>611</sup> Mathur, “Collecting Colonial Postcards of India,” 99

<sup>612</sup> “10 000 000 Post Cards,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1907, New York Times online database.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid. To contextualize this final number, in the 1901 census, Great Britain and Ireland’s population was 41, 609, 091, and in 1911 it was 45, 370, 530. See *Whitaker’s Almanack* (London: J. Whitaker, 1911), 456.

<sup>614</sup> Cited in Schor, “Cartes Postales,” 211.

gender. John Fraser and Schor differ in their claims on who was doing the writing and collecting of these ubiquitous souvenirs. Fraser surmises that “the greatest users of postcards were lower middle-class and working-class people,”<sup>615</sup> while Schor states that “cross-class collection” took place.<sup>616</sup> Schor focuses on postcard habits as a feminine pastime, while Fraser, given his interest in the postcards soldiers wrote from the trenches, stresses that postcards were not as limited to the female sphere as might be presumed. Indeed, besides the wartime evidence, which may be taken as exceptional rather than the norm, letters and literature of the period serve as evidence of the widespread appeal of the postcard.<sup>617</sup> The eponymous gentleman in George Gissing’s 1905 novel *Will Warburton* waits for his friend’s postcard “for nearly a month [...] when there arrived an Italian postcard, stamped Venice” with the line “We have been tempted as far as this.”<sup>618</sup> In his *Letters of an Idle Man* (1911), the writer Hermann Jackson Warner, linking postcards to the habits of great statesmen, declares “postcards are a tribulation, but they come in very handy at times, and besides you must remember that Gladstone wrote postcards.”<sup>619</sup> It is also worth noting that the revolving postcard racks seen today at antiquarian shops were first displayed in upper-class parlours, as mentioned in many early twentieth-century books on home décor. Furthermore, many postcards, especially during the Christmas season, were sent by children, as interviews with postmasters emphasize.<sup>620</sup> Despite Schor’s assertion that postcards were seen as “the very example of the female collectible”<sup>621</sup> and related statements in an introduction to a recent anthology of scholarship on postcards that the cards

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<sup>615</sup> Fraser, “Propaganda on the Picture Postcard,” 39.

<sup>616</sup> Schor, “Cartes Postales,” 212.

<sup>617</sup> In addition, Rebecca DeRoo in “Colonial Collecting: French Women and Algerian *Cartes Postales*” points out that “as tourists, both men and women bought [...] cards at kiosks, *tabacs*, and newsstands located near the sites pictured on the cards and exchanged the cards with members of either the same or the opposite sex” (in *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 89).

<sup>618</sup> George Gissing, *Will Warburton: A Romance of Real Life* (London: Dutton, 1905), 271.

<sup>619</sup> Hermann Jackson Warner, *European Years: The Letters of an Idle Man* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 272.

<sup>620</sup> “10 000 000 Post Cards,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1907.

<sup>621</sup> Schor, “Cartes Postales,” 212.

“bring into question notions of class, gender, and power,”<sup>622</sup> the examples above, as well as observational evidence gathered from perusing vintage postcards racks, make it clear that both male and female tourists of various social classes were writing postcards and these cards were addressed to men as much as to women. In keeping with the democratization of travel during this period, postcards were not bound by social and gender divisions.

Since their first appearance in the post, postcards were criticized for promoting a mediated experience. In the autumn of 1890, Charles Dickens Jr. expressed many of these anxieties about postcards. For him, what was at stake was the history of letter writing, specifically letter writing as an art. Lamenting the decline of private forms of communication, Dickens writes that senders “will not expend a whole penny on a stamp, not to speak of paper, ink, and envelope; but seizing upon a postcard, thick or thin, according to their taste, they proceed to write a quasi-letter upon it. [...] We distinctly object to being addressed with [...] stray superlatives upon a card, open to the eye of everyone who lights upon it.”<sup>623</sup> His contemporary, Sims, reflected during a visit to the Swiss Alps in 1900 that the group of tourists he was observing “had come up not for the sake of the experience of the scenery but to write postcards and post them at the top.”<sup>624</sup> The reason tourists travelled, from the intentionally cynical perspective of one not engaged in the postcard fervor, was precisely to purchase postcards. It was the speed at which postcards were churned out and mailed out that often irked their detractors, with the postcards functioning as semaphores for an increasingly fast-paced world.

Yet, it was precisely these aspects of modern life that the German post office fostered when it conceived of the postcard. Heinrich von Stephan, Germany’s postmaster general in the 1870s and a figure associated with the development of the postcard, argued in the early days of the postcard that a move towards briefer messages was necessary in an increasingly modern world. He declared that “the

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<sup>622</sup> David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson, “Introduction” in *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), xi.

<sup>623</sup> Charles Dickens Jr., *All the Year Round: A Weekly Journal*, Autumn 1890, 395.

<sup>624</sup> Cited in Long, “W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist,” 77.

present form of the letter does not [...] allow of sufficient simplicity and brevity for a large class of communications. [...] Let there be sold at all Post Offices, and by all postmen, forms for open communications.”<sup>625</sup> From the onset, postcards were conceived of as a medium made necessary by modernity, specifically by a modern self that was always public, always “open.” To return to the obituary of Emanuel Hermann, after citing resistance to the early postcards, such as fear of giving a “would-be libeller an excellent opportunity of disseminating his libels,” the *Times* writer concludes “but the public desired the postcard.”<sup>626</sup> Perhaps this is putting too fine a point on an obituary’s verb choice, but the word “desired” is telling. To feel desire, the public must have felt an absence, thus the *Times* article implies that it is the public that willed into being, or, to be more prosaic, brought about, the postcard. This form of communication was an extension of the yearning for affordable opportunities for travel and for quick, efficient correspondence while abroad.

#### 4.1.2 Scholarly approaches to postcards

Because they are mass produced, postcards only received scholarly attention relatively recently.<sup>627</sup> They have often been disparaged to varying degrees in mid-century art historical work on view paintings, in travel writing, and in leisure studies. For example, Haskell sought to recuperate the works of the *vedutisti*, specifically Guardi, as more than mere “picture postcards.”<sup>628</sup> The travel writer Mary McCarthy celebrates the city but also sees it as having debased itself, noting that Venice is “part amusement park, living off the entrance fees of tourists, ever since the early eighteenth century” when Venetian crafts became “sideshow” and “Francesco Guardi’s early ‘views’ were the postcards of the

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<sup>625</sup> Cited in Schor, “Cartes Postales,” 210.

<sup>626</sup> “Inventor of the Postcard Dies,” *New York Times*, 24.

<sup>627</sup> On debates about the status of postcards, see Mark Simpson, “Postcard Culture in America: The Traffic in Traffic,” in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, vol. 6: *US Popular Print Culture, 1860-1920*, ed. Christine Bold (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 169).

<sup>628</sup> Haskell, “Francesco Guardi as *Vedutista* and Some of his Patrons,” 268.

period.”<sup>629</sup> Buzard, in his study of nineteenth-century tourism, also sees postcards and other souvenir images as diminishing the experience of travel by prompting what he describes as “picturesque seeing.”<sup>630</sup> Tourists, in his analysis, preferred perceiving Europe as “a continent of pictures” from the perspective of the “panoramic-picturesque” which “flattened objects out, [...] dividing them into a series of images flashed before the viewer.”<sup>631</sup> Hugh Honour declares of the Basilica di San Marco that “a million garish picture postcards have failed to vulgarise or hackney the beauty of this extraordinary façade.”<sup>632</sup> Postcards are invoked as a metonym for a crass, inauthentic experience of travel.

Walter Benjamin’s often misunderstood concept of the artwork’s aura may be, in part, the reason postcards were sidelined for so long. Benjamin’s 1936 essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” explores the impact of technological reproduction on artwork, seeing potential in the fact that “the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition.”<sup>633</sup> Defining an artwork’s “aura” as its “ritual function,” Benjamin argues that mechanical reproduction has caused a loss of art’s aura and an increase in art’s exhibition value and political function.<sup>634</sup> Benjamin does not bemoan this loss of the aura but rather values art that is made more accessible through reproductions. Mark Simpson, in his analysis of American postcard culture and the photographer Walker Evans’ project of recuperating postcards as “folk documents,” is one of many who seem to misread Benjamin.<sup>635</sup> Simpson writes that Evans “disarticulated the postcard from its resolutely industrial, [mass-produced] context in order [...] to protect it from modernity and preserve what Walter Benjamin, another irrepressible postcard collector, famously termed ‘the work

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<sup>629</sup> Mary McCarthy, *Venice Observed* (New York: Harcourt, 1963), 7.

<sup>630</sup> Buzard, “A Continent of Pictures,” 34-35.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Hugh Honour, *Companion Guide to Venice* (Suffolk: Boydell, 1965 and 1997), 32.

<sup>633</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1935) in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, eds. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York: Routledge, 2004), 65.

<sup>634</sup> Benjamin, “The Work of Art,” 67.

<sup>635</sup> Walker Evans’ statement that “the picture postcard is a folk document” is cited in Simpson, “Postcard Culture in America,” 70.



of art in the age of mechanical reproduction.”<sup>636</sup> For Benjamin, though, postcards do not need to be rescued from what Simpson describes as their “massification.”<sup>637</sup>

Postcards are now recognized as valuable objects of study precisely because they are mass-produced mediators of experience. Dean MacCannell observes that “picture postcards circulate throughout the world tying tourists together in networks.”<sup>638</sup> MacCannell suggests that the souvenir is often described as “no substitute for the real thing” in order to prevent it from “becoming elevated in importance to the point where it breaks its relationship to the attractions.”<sup>639</sup> MacCannell himself prevents the postcard from being elevated in importance, since he considers it as no different from souvenir matchboxes, ashtrays, and tea towels.<sup>640</sup> More recently, Urry, who coined the term the “tourist gaze,” and Paolo Parmeggiani, in leisure studies discourses on Venice, follow MacCannell in seeing postcards as having the ability to curb individuality or agency on the part of the tourist. Taking this mass culture approach, Urry considers the postcard as one of many examples of how “the gaze of the tourist is “media-mediated.”<sup>641</sup> Parmeggiani describes a “spiral of representation” in which “tourists caught in this cultural circle reproduce the same images in their personal photographs.”<sup>642</sup> Parmeggiani laments that “what was once, during the Grand Tour, the acquisition of cultural capital has nowadays been transformed into collecting and displaying icons of that culture,” which he terms “picture hunting.”<sup>643</sup> Both he and Urry see the tourist desire for souvenir images as a postmodern malaise, but, as I emphasize in Chapter One, eighteenth-century tourists in Venice were also interested in buying as well as seeing, with *copistes* hired or engravings purchased since tourists wanted copies of the view paintings of Canaletto. Hunting for pictures, in the form of one medium or another, has always been part of the experience of travel.

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<sup>636</sup> Simpson, “Postcard Culture in America,” 170.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>638</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 148. The first edition was published in 1976.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>641</sup> Urry and Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, 116.

<sup>642</sup> Parmeggiani, “Integrating Multiple Research Methods: A Visual Sociology Approach to Venice,” 98.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid., 102 and 98.

Recent scholarship on artists and writers who resist conventional travel and conventional tourist imagery offers both a critique of the ritual of writing postcards and further insights into how postcards standardize tourist experiences. Long, in his study of the German writer W.G. Sebald, argues that postcards, when placed together in an album, become “linked to other images within the album rather than to their referents” so that “space becomes abstract.”<sup>644</sup> Furthermore, he argues that postcards “reduce all travel to the passive consumption of a series of narrow, prescribed, and normative visual experiences.”<sup>645</sup> Postcards, like the photographs that preceded them, participate in scripting tourist behaviour. However, Long, as well as the leisure studies discourses referenced above, places too much weight on the ‘work’ a postcard does, over-determining the control and effect of popular culture.

Initially seen as lowly by scholars, the postcard now has been overly-imbued with agency. Postcards are now understood to have dictated what parts of the city were important and how they should be remembered.<sup>646</sup> Souvenir images do participate in the process of shaping tourists’ memories, but to suggest that they decree impressions leaves the tourist with no agency and disregards the fact that by the early twentieth century textual and visual travel imagery was quite varied. Travel memoirs, guidebooks, photographs, travel posters, postcards, and paintings all influenced the tourist’s experience and memory of a place. Furthermore, since postcards were sent as well as collected, a tourist’s memory of her visit to the Piazza San Marco could certainly supersede the image of the square framed from a particular angle in the postcard she bought to mail to a friend. As Louis Menand has observed, where any writing on Venice “takes place” is “within the set of all things that have been written about Venice and every other representation of that city.”<sup>647</sup> The same can apply to the viewing of tourist images. Visitors to Venice do not operate with only one representation in mind that

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<sup>644</sup> Long, “W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist,” 78-79.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Louis Menand, “Practical Cat: How Eliot Became Eliot” in *The New Yorker*, September 19, 2011, 81.

determines their memory but, to use Menand's phrasing, with "all things that have been written" and "every other representation." While in part a symbol of social control, the postcard can also mobilize diverse memories and critical engagements with the image it depicts and circulates.

Postcards have also been studied more closely as examples of popular culture rendered personal upon being purchased. *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*, a 2010 collection of both classic and new essays, includes a study by Nancy Steiber of early twentieth-century postcards of Amsterdam. Stieber sees the postcards as part of a civic project that varied depending on the collector's sense of aesthetics and nostalgia. Residents of Amsterdam in the early twentieth century experienced a cityscape that was changing dramatically.<sup>648</sup> Stieber argues that "for some, postcards became a way to reinforce their identification with the city by mediating their own experiences with the spaces. For others, postcards provided documentation of change in the city as it happened. And for still others, an Old Amsterdam created in postcards in which all signs of modernity had been erased from the contemporary city satisfied a desire to restore harmony to their disrupted urban experience."<sup>649</sup> I follow Stieber in emphasizing the postcard purchaser's agency in choosing how the postcard image will function.

From a postcolonial perspective, the figures in postcards are of primary importance. I include a brief survey of this scholarship here since it has prompted my attention to how residents of Venice are depicted in the souvenir imagery sold to tourists. *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards* (1998) includes analyses of how the visual conventions in postcards of foreign lands shaped tourists' perceptions of the countries' inhabitants and geography.<sup>650</sup> Before this, Maalel Alloula, in *The Colonial Harem* (1986), argues that early twentieth-century erotic postcards of Algerian women

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<sup>648</sup> Steiber, "Postcards and the Invention of Old Amsterdam Around 1900," 41.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds., *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1998).

created for a French market of male viewers present the country as a body that has been conquered.<sup>651</sup> Postcards often serve as evidence of non-European societies presented as spectacles for white tourists. The cards are, in the words of a *New York Times* article on a Japanese collection, “the quintessential tourist documents, revealing how a culture exoticizes itself.”<sup>652</sup> As Christraud Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, editors of *Delivering Views*, emphasize, the locals depicted in colonial postcards often performed their ethnicity to coincide with the pre-conceived views of tourists.<sup>653</sup>

The messages travelling with the postcards have also become objects of study in recent years. Postcards are being given roles as the quick, chatty ancestors of recent developments in communication.<sup>654</sup> Attention is devoted to how postcards shaped correspondence and tourist practices, with the postcards seen as symbols of various aspects of modernity. Simpson suggests that the handwritten messages on the postcards should be analyzed to consider how these “joined and thereby complicated” the circulation of postcards with moments of “dissonance” between the image and the content of the message.<sup>655</sup> Such a project is limited by the fact that many vintage postcards available for viewing and purchase today are in a pristine state, unmarked and unmailed. Those that have been mailed do include instances of what can be considered a break with conventions. In the example that opens this chapter, the writer praises Venice but praises his hometown more. Generally, though, the postcards sent from travel destinations mostly include conventional messages about what has been visited and how one’s travels are progressing. This light tone is in keeping with the medium, the postcard’s limited space and public nature negating, as Dickens observed, the possibility for more contemplative missives.

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<sup>651</sup> Maalel Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986). DeRoo nuances Alloula’s analysis of the Algerian postcards by considering the postcards in the context in which they were collected, in souvenir albums prepared and displayed by French women (DeRoo, “Colonial Collecting,” 85.)

<sup>652</sup> Sarah Bayliss, “A Passion for Postcards: The Unpretentious Art,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2002, 2.27.

<sup>653</sup> This concept is often described using MacCannell’s term “staged authenticity” (see Chapter Five of *The Tourist*) and has also been articulated by Philips, in “Souvenir art and the negotiation of North American identities,” 174.

<sup>654</sup> Brenda Danet, *Cyberplay: Communicating Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 161.

<sup>655</sup> Simpson, “Postcard Culture in America,” 170.

While Naya's photographs were recognized legally as art and given copyright protection early in their history,<sup>656</sup> the postcard as a souvenir has often been made to stand for the opposite of art, for all that is brash, derivative, and inauthentic. During the past decade, the postcard has been embraced as an object of study, but it is often understood in leisure studies discourses as having such control over perception that tourists are rendered unable to shape their own experiences. Such approaches give the postcards agency but remove it from the individual tourist. Other scholarly work on postcards focuses on the visual conventions in the images, as in Steiber's work on how the residents of Amsterdam engaged with the postcards they collected. In leisure studies projects, tourists are the focus, but the visual conventions of the commercial souvenir images they purchased are often overlooked. In what follows, I bring these two approaches to postcards together by focusing on the ways in which the specific visual conventions in the Venetian postcards signalled the essential aspects of both Venice and the experience of touring the city.

#### *4.2 The recto: Conventions in Venetian postcards*

Postcards of Venice, unlike those of Paris and Amsterdam, seem to have been produced exclusively for tourists. Unlike other Western European cities of art and culture, Venice was not undergoing excessive changes in its urban layout in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The very topography of the lagoon city made such drastic change impossible. While residents of Paris were buying postcards engaged in "the promotion of the nation and its capital" as modern and urban,<sup>657</sup> and locals in Amsterdam were collecting postcards to remember their city before its modernization, Venetians were walking through the same squares and streets and navigating the same canals as their ancestors did and as their descendants would. Postcards of Venice were not records of a

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<sup>656</sup> For a discussion of this, see the section on Venice as a center of commercial souvenir photography in Chapter Two.

<sup>657</sup> See Schor, "Cartes Postales," 214-215.

changing urban landscape. The visual conventions in Venetian postcard imagery of the turn of the twentieth century instead highlight the pervasive presence of the tourist.

While they depict and frame spaces exactly as in the photographs that were their source material, the postcards favour bright colour and painterly scenes. Black-and-white and sepia postcards were also produced, as well as postcards without tourists, but most surviving postcards from the period use colour and many can be grouped into two types: painterly scenes of architecture and of canals that present the city as dreamlike (fig. 4.2) and images focused on a tourist figure, with colour being used to highlight the accoutrements associated with tourism (fig. 4.3).<sup>658</sup> The tourist in this second set of postcard images is often a woman wielding a red parasol. She strolls through various scenes, and she is accentuated through colour so that even if there are other women in the image her red parasol indicates she is the focus, even if she is not placed in the physical center of the image. Although Venice in the 1890s and early 1900s was associated with disease, especially outbreaks of influenza, because of its maritime climate, the postcard's pleasingly optimistic colour choices and the tourist figure's carefree movements advertise the opposite.<sup>659</sup> Much like Canaletto's paintings in the eighteenth century, postcards of the female tourist with red umbrella promoted the salubrious effects of touring the city.

In the postcards featuring a strategically positioned tourist, the figure is often presented from the back or side or, if facing front, with hazy, almost featureless faces, as in the commercial souvenir albums. By transforming the figures in the original photograph on which the postcards are based into indistinct versions of themselves, the postcards, like the images in the commercial souvenir albums, present viewers with the figure of an archetypal tourist, either the parasol-wielding female flâneur or,

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<sup>658</sup> The source for this is a study of postcards in antiquarian shops in Venice. My inspiration for studying colour is Johanne Sloan's "Postcards and the Chromophilic Visual Culture of Expo 67" in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

<sup>659</sup> George Dehner, *Influenza: Virus and History* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2012), 38. Twice in the 1890s Venice hosted international sanitary meetings that resulted, in 1903, in a conference in Paris in which delegates from various countries established international quarantine rules. As the travel writer Jan Morris observes in *Venice*, the city had for centuries been associated with influenza (London: Faber, 1960).

less often, her male counterpart. Significantly though, unlike in the souvenir albums, the postcards often show a tourist alone rather than with companions, encouraging a sense of contemplation and, by extension, prompting the purchasers of the postcard to see themselves in the place of the postcard tourist, thus prioritizing the tourist's perception of the city.

#### *4.2.1 Colour, line, and texture in Venetian postcards*

In the postcard described in the opening paragraphs of this chapter (fig. 4.1), the photograph on which the image is based is reworked so that the palaces on either side appear to be quick sketches, hand-drawn outlines filled in with blocks of colour. On the right side of the image, the bell tower is transformed from a solid mass in the original photograph to a penciled outline, as insubstantial as the featureless faces of the passengers on the vaporetto plying the canal. The postcard presents architecture in a sketch-like fashion, thus suggesting a tourist's own drawing of the scene.

The vogue for hazy outlines is also evident in postcards that pretend they are painted with watercolours and in those printed on postcard paper whose tactility recalls a canvas. In a postcard produced by the Scrocchi company of the Riva degli Schiavoni seen from the canal waters of the Bacino di San Marco, the scene is atmospheric and in motion (fig. 4.2). Clouds move across the sky, canal water ripples, the sails of boats and the bell tower of San Marco are all reflected in the water as a gondola glides along in the foreground. Even without the dabs of pink and violet, the postcard seems to be an attempt at Impressionism because of the way outlines are rendered insubstantial. The architecture is presented as being at the mercy of the elements. The arches of the Zecca, Venice's former mint situated across the Piazzetta from the Palazzo Ducale, are waving along with the sails and the bell towers in the distance are simply outlined, so that the scene appears dreamlike, in keeping with popular notions of Venice. Indeed, James muses that Venice "remains strangely the Venice of

dreams, more than of any appreciable reality,” Proust observed that the city “was one that I felt I had often dreamed before,” and the poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds, who wrote that “when you are at Venice it is like being in a dream,” incorporated this motif in his poem “Lines,” in which “lamp-litten Venice gleams/With her towers and domes uplifted/Like a city seen in dreams.”<sup>660</sup> To highlight one more of the many writers of the period who worked with this trope, the poet Arthur Symonds ends his poem “Alle Zattere,” in which the speaker conceives of the moon shining down on Venice as his beloved, with the lines “life dreams itself, content to keep/Happy immortality, in sleep.”<sup>661</sup> Postcards of the period cater to this approach to seeing Venice, with texture often contributing to the illusory effect. In a postcard of the Grand Canal, the view is also made to appear painted, with water, arches, gondolas, and mooring stations presented as a collection of brushstrokes, and the textured paper itself adding to the postcard’s appearance of being a small canvas (fig. 4.4).

Unlike travel posters, which were often illustrated by well-known artists, postcards tend to be anonymous.<sup>662</sup> As Johanne Sloan has emphasized in her work on postcards, the medium has been stereotyped as offering “an authorless point of view on the world.”<sup>663</sup> As Sloan, Schor, and Steiber have shown in their work on postcards of Montreal, Paris, and Amsterdam respectively, these ostensibly authorless postcards tend to present specific, subtle, messages associated with civic pride, modernity, nationhood, imperialism, urbanity, escapism, and utopian fantasy, *inter alia*. In the case of the Venetian postcards, their sketched architectural outlines, brushstroke aesthetic, and canvas-like tactility speak to how the producers of these souvenirs saw the medium. These Venetian postcards are not an authoritative document nor do they purport to be objective. Instead, they are presenting an

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<sup>660</sup>In *Pure City*, Ackroyd offers a list of quotations by Rilke, Ruskin, James, George Sand, Howell, Twain and others, all echoing each other on the motif of Venice as a waking dream. He also notes that the motif reaches its apex during this period but began earlier. In *Venetian Life* (1866), his memoir of his time as the American consul in Venice, William Dean Howells famously writes that Venice appears “dream-like and unreal” (British Library: Historical Print Editions, 2011), 433 (non-illustrated edition).

<sup>661</sup>Arthur Symonds, “Alle Zattere” in *London Nights* (London: Smithers, 1897), 59.

<sup>662</sup>On the artists who designed and illustrated Italian travel posters, such as Edmondo Bacci and Mario Borgoni, see Lorenzo Ottaviani’s *Travel Italia: The Golden Age of Italian Travel Posters* (New York: Abrams, 2007), 148-155.

<sup>663</sup>Sloan, “Postcards and the Chromophilic Visual Culture of Expo 67,” 179.



impression of a scene. The postcards evoke the late nineteenth-century fashion for watercolour painting as a pastime for young women, and are thus appealing to nostalgia for a past time since the trend for producing watercolours while travelling peaked in the late nineteenth century.<sup>664</sup>

The watercolour and brushstroke aesthetic is especially prevalent in Venetian postcards. Colour postcards of Florence and Rome, which were also based on photographs, typically did not rework the images to make them appear as hand-drawn sketches or miniature paintings. The postcards of these other cities of art and culture bear the same “Made in Italy” stamp along their dividing line and, in some cases, the same publisher’s trademark as the postcards of Venice, such as the ‘S’ for the Scrocchi insignia, but the scenes they present are largely substantial, with the details of buildings solid and fixed, rather than atmospheric and whimsical. Venice is particular for the period in that it prompted the production of the more fanciful aesthetic as well, one that visually echoes popular conceptions of the city as dreamlike.<sup>665</sup>

Artificial, brash colours were also quite popular in the postcards.<sup>666</sup> From the early days of photography, hand-coloured engravings of daguerreotypes and hand-coloured photographs were available.<sup>667</sup> It was not colour itself that made the postcards appealing, timely, and current, but the way it was used. In the earlier hand-coloured photographs, care was often taken to add pigment that corresponded as closely as possible to the colours of the actual sight. Walker Evans, in his 1948 essay on American colour postcards from the early twentieth century, praises early postcards that remained faithful to the images they were representing. In keeping with his own ostensibly documentary approach to photography, Evans writes that postcards “were usually made from black and white

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<sup>664</sup> Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians*, 74.

<sup>665</sup> The messages on the postcards that engage with the image on the recto reference the Venetian cityscape rather than the style in which it is depicted, which suggests that the watercolour and brushstroke aesthetic was naturalized by tourists rather than a source of commentary.

<sup>666</sup> Since no postcard catalogues of the period exist as reference points and with many of the cards printed by anonymous publishers, it is impossible to offer numerical data on how many postcards were coloured in a natural, representational way and how many were given artificial colours.

<sup>667</sup> For more on engravings and photographs coloured by hand in Venice, see Heinz and Bridget Henish, *The Painted Photograph, 1839-1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996), 184, as well as Zannier’s *Venezia nella fotografia dell’Ottocento* (Venezia: Bohm, 1986).

photographs subsequently tinted by hand lithography. Withal, the best ones achieved a fidelity and restraint [...] notably in flesh tints and in the rendering of patina and the soft tones of town buildings and streets.”<sup>668</sup> In contrast, in many of the Venetian postcards the opposite attempt is made. In a vertical postcard of the Salute church made by a company indicated as “S.G.V.” on the postcard’s verso, the church’s light grey façade of Istrian stone has been turned pink, the bell tower and surrounding buildings, also light grey in life, are given a supersaturated red, and the dome in the postcard’s interpretation of the view appears to be copper made green by time, thus matching the postcard’s water and sky (fig. 4.5). In a postcard of the Rialto Bridge by the Fratelli Garbisa publishers, the bridge is divided into sections of pink, green, and yellow pastel, with the same three colours repeated in the various levels of the palaces on the right side of the image (fig. 4.6). In both these representative postcards, Venice’s architecture, seemingly the reason for purchasing the postcard, takes second place to irreverent colour, with the city simply obliging as a backdrop for colour blocking, in the case of the Rialto postcard, or for painterly colour, as in the Salute image.

In these postcards of architectural scenes, the actual colours of Venice’s cityscape are of minimal importance, which signals a move away from souvenir images as documents of a city and a move towards the images as fanciful tokens of visits to Venice. The postcards chronicle the experience of travel to Venice, an experience often described as illusory and unreal. The postcard of the Salute church, for example, may not accurately depict the church itself or its surrounding buildings, but the saturated pinks and reds of the postcard evoke sunsets over the lagoon city and the blue-green cupola recalls the canals over which the tourists walk. Since the postcards included messages in which senders often offered their observations on the city, the image on the postcard’s recto can be seen as a visual metaphor for the message on the verso.

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<sup>668</sup> Walker Evans, “Main Street Looking North from Courthouse Square: A portfolio of American picture postcards from the trolley-car period” in *Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2010), 162.

#### 4.2.2 *Figures in Venetian postcards and recurring accoutrements of tourism*

It is through the figures depicted in the postcard images that these souvenirs become more specifically linked to the experience of being a tourist in Venice. The postcards often include the figure of the tourist, encouraging purchasers to place themselves in the Venetian scene. In a black and white postcard of the Bacino di San Marco, with the Piazzetta on one side and the Salute church and Dogana on the other, a canopied gondola carrying three tourists, one wearing a white boater hat and reading a book, pushes off for a tour from the Riva degli Schiavoni (fig. 4.7). Another gentleman, also wearing the white boater with black ribbon worn by tourists in summer, watches the group from the Piazzetta as the gondola heads off. This real-photo postcard operates in the same ways as the photographs of tourists discussed in the previous two chapters. The viewer functions as a stand-in for the Venetian photographer who observes the tourists performing their tourist rituals. The image assumes an ethnographic quality since it documents the practices of the tourist culture. The viewer can also be seen as a fellow tourist, with the image fulfilling the tourist's desire to see his or her own likeness in the foreign place so as to evoke some degree of control over the foreign.

In the brightly-coloured postcards, the tourist enjoying the Venetian cityscape is often a woman. The convention of highlighting a female tourist through colour choices or positioning is more prominent in postcards than in earlier souvenir images featuring tourists, such as the single photographs and commercial souvenir albums. The female tourist in the postcards is either prominently placed in the foreground with other male tourists sidelined or in the background (fig. 4.8), or she is the only tourist in the scene (fig. 4.9), or, as in the example cited earlier, her parasol announces her as the main focus of the image (fig. 4.3).

The sartorial details given to the main female figure in these polychrome postcards register as the quintessential accoutrements of early twentieth-century tourism: a white dress, or a blouse and skirt combination, in keeping with summertime Edwardian fashion, a wide brimmed hat, and a parasol. The Edwardian white dress often featured transparent muslin sleeves and collar, covering the body even in summer in light of the fear of falling ill due to drafts, and cheaper materials were often purchased by middle-class women to achieve the same translucent effect.<sup>669</sup> This summer dress seems to be the more formal, conservative, and draft-conscious version of the earlier ‘pneumonia dress’ so called because of the notion that its provocative, skin-revealing style would bring on illness.<sup>670</sup> The white dress in these postcards courts the idea of a perceived threat to the health of tourists, a notion that increased with the publication of Thomas Mann’s novella *Death in Venice* (1912) in which the melancholy central character, Gustav von Aschenbach, dies of cholera while visiting the city. The postcard evokes such fears only to promptly counter them with the cheerful colour of the parasol and the female tourist’s carefree meandering about the city. She reappears in numerous Venetian postcards of the period, always wearing her white dress and twirling her red parasol, so as to suggest that tourists could wander at ease without fear of disease.

In the postcards of tourists, the sartorial is quintessential: tourist culture is evoked through the particular, specifically through dress, hat, and parasol.<sup>671</sup> Filippi’s photographs of tourists in Venice attest to the ensemble as a characteristic summer touring outfit (fig. 2.38), as does Mariano Fortuny’s 1905 photograph of his sister and two female friends seated by the Scala dei Giganti in the Palazzo Ducale, with the architecture in this case sidelined in favour of the aesthetically-pleasing triad of hats, dresses, and parasols. The fact that the typical clothing worn by visitors is reproduced in postcards for tourist consumption solidifies the tourists’ standing as representative aspects of the city. The white

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<sup>669</sup> Susan M. Watkins, “Fashion, Health, and Disease” in *The Berg Companion to Fashion*, ed. Valerie Steele (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 313.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.

<sup>671</sup> For the notion of the quintessential in photographs, see Berger, *About Looking*, 46.

dress and parasol are meant to temper the summer heat, and thus the Venice depicted in the postcards exists in an endless summer. Another seasonal marker, the red parasol, draws the eye to the female figure, giving her prominence as a representative figure symbolic of tourism in the city. It is precisely for her real-life counterparts, both male and female, that this postcard of Venice and of their own tourism exists.

These colourful postcards featuring a prominent female tourist reappearing at various Venetian landmarks were sent by and addressed to both genders. The tourist with the red umbrella who is pictured in various scenes in Venice is female but she is also the general viewing subject, the tourist observing Venice and observed by the viewer. Her clothing and accoutrements, accentuated through colour, align her with her broader representative group: the well-heeled visitor. If the purchaser of the postcard was a woman of the same class as the postcard tourist, she could align the intrepid postcard tourist with her own explorations of the city. If the purchaser was a man of the same class, the figure in the postcard could function as the idealized image of a travelling companion. But, as emphasized in the previous chapter, tourism had become more accessible to the middle classes by the late nineteenth century. Keeping this historical context in mind, the leisured and moneyed woman in these postcards was possibly positioned as an aspirational figure.<sup>672</sup>

In many of the postcards featuring a female tourist, another female figure acts as a foil: this is the poor Venetian woman with child in tow. While the tourist often wields her parasol, the local woman invariably wears her shawl. These figures are not only sartorially, ethnically, and economically distinct; they even seem to exist in different seasons. Figures of locals, as noted in the two previous chapters, are often included in commercial souvenir photographs as bits of local colour, their poverty presented as a charming and authentic part of Venice's romantic ambiance. In the

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<sup>672</sup> In her study of early twentieth-century tourism, Jill Steward shows that the middle classes "tried to emulate the lifestyle of the social elites" (110). See Steward's "Tourism in Late Imperial Austria: The Development of Tourist Cultures and their Associated Images of Place" in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds. Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2001), 108-136.

postcard of the tourist with red parasol on the top steps of the Scala dei Giganti in the Palazzo Ducale (fig. 4.9), the local woman with shawl and child walks across the scene, at the bottom of the staircase. The difference in height between the two women highlights their social and economic differences. In the postcard referenced above, the local woman, again with shawl and child, is seen from behind, existing, like the pigeons, as part of the picturesque quality of the scene (fig. 4.8). Furthermore, the tourist is made insular by her parasol, as in the postcard of the tourist walking through the Piazzetta (fig. 4.3). This ubiquitous accessory, while offering shelter from the sun, also limits her view, blocking out reminders of the city's poverty so that she continues her untroubled exploration of the city. In all three examples, the Venetian woman's poverty and disinterest in the architectural splendor that surrounds her contrasts with the financial and cultural capital of the tourist. The postcard scripts both women into these roles, encouraging the tourists purchasing the postcard to naturalize the contrast and see locals as quaint, prosaic folk and themselves as cosmopolitan and cultured.

The postcards featuring a single tourist figure, often depicted with a local foil, operate differently than those offering a painterly, impressionistic version of Venice. Sontag's reflections on photography can serve as a way of illuminating this difference: she suggests that photographing people turns them "into objects that can be symbolically possessed."<sup>673</sup> To the purchaser of these postcards, the contrasting figures of tourists and poor Venetians are types that can be understood, classified, "symbolically possessed." By extension, Venice itself in these images can also be understood in the same way. Significantly, the architecture and surrounding details in the postcards with a single female tourist are more concrete, more distinct, and more in keeping with their actual colour than in the first set of postcards studied here. The postcards featuring figures thus do the opposite of the painterly postcards of Venetian views. Because of their stylistic conventions, the hazy and indistinct scenes that eschew matter-of-fact presentation of the colours and outlines of

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<sup>673</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

architectural sites do not claim ocular authority or dominance over Venice for themselves or for the viewer. The two concurrent sets of postcards studied in this chapter, namely postcards of views and postcards with prominent tourist figures, offer two contrasting ways of mediating the experience of Venice for tourists. The differences between these two speak to the fact that postcards cannot be taken as a uniform whole dictating a single perspective of the city.

#### *4.3 Sending Venice: The writing and mailing of postcards in early twentieth-century Venice*

Postcards, with their various approaches to depicting Venice, were displayed alongside the commercial souvenir photographs still being supplied to various shops by Filippi and other photographers.<sup>674</sup> Varying perspectives were available, with the tourists most likely selecting a postcard image based on their or their recipient's preferred sights and aesthetic inclinations. The mass-produced souvenir becomes personal upon being purchased, as Stewart has noted,<sup>675</sup> and no other souvenir illustrates this fact more succinctly than the postcard since its commercially-produced image is accompanied by a personal message. As Long has argued in his work on postcards, the message that travels with the postcard "transforms a mass-produced artifact into an object of social interaction and communication."<sup>676</sup> While the messages that accompany postcards can be considered banal or a parroting of clichés, these conventional statements along with more irreverent messages are worthy of study since they are a visual sign of the collaborative nature of the medium: tourists add to the commercial image, thus participating in the tourist culture and the tourist images produced for them as they use the postcards to reinforce social networks.

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<sup>674</sup> See Chapter Two for the correspondence between Filippi and the shop owners selling views of Venice whom he regularly supplied with his photographs.

<sup>675</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, 138.

<sup>676</sup> Long, "W.G. Sebald: The Anti-Tourist," 79.

Before turning to the handwritten messages on postcards, a focus on the post office as a tourist space will provide more context for the experience of sending postcards from Venice at the turn of the last century. The post office had been a necessary part of the tourist's experience of travel since the mid nineteenth century,<sup>677</sup> but with the popularity of postcards this space became even more visited. In each chapter of this study, I have called attention to a space in Venice that, beyond the sites of art and culture, became a tourist space because of the souvenirs in fashion at the moment. In the eighteenth century, this space was Smith's gallery of view paintings which was accessible to well-connected tourists, and in the nineteenth century it was the photographers' shops that acted as lodestones for tourists. While the photographers' shops continued to be places where tourists gathered, the fashion for sending postcards made the post office another physical space in the city associated with souvenirs. Furthermore, if, as MacCannell has theorized, "postcards circulate [...] tying tourists together in networks,"<sup>678</sup> the nexus for this was the post office. By the early twentieth century, Venice's post office was both a practical stop for tourists and a cultural stop on the tourist circuit.

#### 4.3.1 *The post office as a tourist space*

Many of the mailed postcards of Venice now found in antiquarian shops were sent from Venice, as is made clear from the hand cancelled stamp. They were mailed from the train station's post office, and stamped "*Venezia Ferrovia*," or from the central post office, and stamped "*Venezia Centro*." In this central office, operating in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on the Grand Canal, the former warehouse of German traders, tourists could collect mail sent to them *poste restante*, packages were

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<sup>677</sup> Poste Italiane, the national postal system in Italy, was founded in 1862, before Italy's unification, and brought together the post offices and post houses of the different regions that would become Italy. The stamp was first introduced in Italy in 1850 and this coincided with mail being sent by train. Before this, mail was sent by the Italian equivalent of the pony express, with riders on horseback delivering mail that included the recipient's name followed by the address of the regional or local post office. My thanks to Mauro De Palma, director of the archives at Museo storico della comunicazione e Archivio storico di Poste Italiane in Rome, for this information.

<sup>678</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 148.



mailed or collected, and, unlike at the train station's office, tourists could linger in a spacious central courtyard.

The Fondaco dei Tedeschi became the city's central post office in 1872.<sup>679</sup> Known as the Palazzo delle Poste, the building tended to be referenced twice in most early twentieth-century guidebooks, first in the list of addresses related to practical information for the traveller and then in a more detailed entry on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi as an important building in Venice's late medieval and Renaissance history.<sup>680</sup> Baedeker's *Handbook for Travellers to Northern Italy* includes the palace in its list of main sites along the Grand Canal in each of its many editions from the late nineteenth century on, describing it as the former "depot of the wares of German merchants from the thirteenth century onward" and adding that, after the building was rebuilt in 1504, "the exterior walls were decorated with frescoes by Giorgione and Titian. Of these, the only vestiges are a figure on the side facing the canal and a Justice by Titian above the door in the lane. The building is now used as a custom house."<sup>681</sup> Beginning in 1906, guidebooks referenced the palace as both a significant architectural site on the Grand Canal and as the post office, listing its operating hours as eight in the morning until nine in the evening, with tourists able to collect mail in the central courtyard.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> The year when the Fondaco dei Tedeschi became Venice's central post office is somewhat unclear. In the 1880s, guidebooks published in Venice list the Fondaco as the Finance department. See *A Week in Venice: A Complete Guide to the City and Its Environs* (Venice: Colombo Coen, 1880), 295. Baedeker guidebooks from the late nineteenth century state the building is the city's custom house. Mary Lutyens writes that the Palazzo Grimani "was bought by the state in 1806 and occupied as Post Office until 1872 when the Post Office moved to the Fondaco dei Tedeschi" (Lutyens, ed. *Young Mrs. Ruskin in Venice: Unpublished Letters of Mrs. John Ruskin, 1849-1951* (Venice: Vanguard, 1965, 88). Lutyens' annotations correspond to the information provided by the Museo storico della comunicazione, and thus I am working with 1872 as the date when the building becomes the post office. However, it was only in the early twentieth century that guidebooks referenced the building as the central tourist office.

<sup>680</sup> In 1990, Poste Italiane issued a stamp with an illustration of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi to commemorate the fact that the building was the site of Venice's central post office since the 1870s. The stamp was given the title "*Palazzo delle Poste*" to acknowledge the term used to describe the building from the early twentieth century onward.

<sup>681</sup> Baedeker's *Italy: Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Baedeker, 1886), 263. The same text appears in subsequent editions. See, also, Olivia Remie Constable's *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). In 2007, the Fondaco was sold to the Benetton Group to be reconfigured, despite vocal protests, into a shopping mall, thereby returning the building, as Venetian commentators noted wryly, to its original function as a space for commerce. October 2010 was the building's final month as Venice's central post office.

<sup>682</sup> Baedeker's *Italy: Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: Baedeker, 1906), 285. The information on opening hours and other details is taken from the 1911 edition of the guidebook (London: Baedeker, 1911), 411.

The Fondaco was also known to tourists of Renaissance art and culture since it plays a part in a story Vasari tells in *Lives of the Artists* (1568) to illustrate a purported rivalry between Giorgione and his protégé Titian. Vasari notes that “this building is celebrated in Venice and famous no less for what Giorgione painted there than for its convenience to businesses and its usefulness to the public,”<sup>683</sup> which was certainly still the case over three hundred year later when the building was chosen as the central office for all correspondence. Although surviving pieces of the frescoes were only very faintly visible by the early twentieth century, as referenced in the Baedeker guidebook quoted above, tourists were still drawn to this site of Renaissance lore. As the largest palace on the Grand Canal,<sup>684</sup> and one located prominently near the Rialto Bridge and associated with both a Vasarian tale of artistic competition and the popular practice of sending postcards, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi was indeed “Venice’s famous post office,” as a 1909 article on postcard collecting described it in *Travel* magazine.<sup>685</sup>

Most significantly for the purposes of this study, photographs of the interior of the post office were made for purchase.<sup>686</sup> One such photograph, in the Poste Italiane archives, is captioned “*Palazzo delle Poste e dei Telegrafi- Salone del pubblico*,” thus highlighting the courtyard as a public space (fig. 4.10). The photograph features locals, not tourists, but, since it was produced not only for archival purposes but also for sale, it most likely appealed to tourists, especially in light of the fact that local Venetians seem not to have purchased commercial photographs of their city. Although the building’s Renaissance façade and its faint traces of frescoes by Giorgione and Titian made it a tourist site, it was the inside of the building that was photographed circa 1910 and sold alongside other black and white photographs of the city. This photograph, possibly sold as a postcard as well, offers the viewer a grand perspective of the central courtyard and its arches from one of the four writing desks

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<sup>683</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (1563), trans. Julia and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), 302.

<sup>684</sup> Mark Hudson, *Titian: The Last Days* (New York: Walker, 2010), 25.

<sup>685</sup> Untitled, anonymous article outlining various types of postcards, in *Travel*, vol. 15, 1909, 506.

<sup>686</sup> My thanks to Mauro De Palma for providing me with this photograph from the Archivio storico di Poste Italiane.

with inkwells positioned in this section of the hall. The viewer is thus approaching the desk to write or address his correspondence, as the figure on the right is already doing. Made at the peak of the postcard's popularity, the photograph can be understood as a record of the tourist's own postcard-writing practices while on tour.

Postcards need not be written or addressed at the post office, but the photograph offers the important detail that desks were provided for precisely such purposes, with the wide expanse of the courtyard encouraging those penning their postcards at the post office to congregate. Rather than limiting customers to a narrow space with a line leading to a teller, the courtyard prompts a more sociable, leisured interaction. As David Henkin argues in his work on postal history, post offices were “places to see and be seen [...], sites of self-presentation.”<sup>687</sup> This is especially the case in cities in which residents of various socio-economic backgrounds and foreigners mixed together in what was, during the peak of postcard writing, a key public space.

The photograph illustrates the fact that the post office combined efficiency and sociability, and placed individuals on public view. Although organized along its perimeter with windows neatly divided by subject to prompt speedy collection and mailing for customers, the courtyard space also encouraged those who entered it to linger, and in this way the very practical space of the post office was a tourist space similar to the photographers' shops studied in the previous chapter. However, unlike the space of the shop, which was largely a tourist enclave advertising in multiple languages, the post office with its signage only in Italian was essentially a local space.<sup>688</sup> Thus, tourists may have been more acutely aware of their presence as tourists here than elsewhere. The commercial photograph of the post office places not only the photographer but also the viewer as the subject of the attention of the others in the courtyard. If the viewer is a tourist, all local eyes are on him or her. The

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<sup>687</sup> Henkin, *The Postal Age*, 80. Although post offices by the early twentieth century were no longer the male preserve they once were, women who entered the post office to collect mail that was left for them in private pigeonholes had to enter a very public space, and risk the curiosity and gossip of whomever happened to be there at the time, to gain access to private messages sent to them while they travelled or that they wished to receive away from the prying eyes of home (72).

<sup>688</sup> Filippi's business card, included as an image in the previous chapter, cites his shop's services in various languages.

photograph suggests that in the contained space of the post office tourists were on display for the city's residents, as easily readable as the messages on the backs of their postcards.

#### 4.3.2 *The verso: Postcards as collaborative souvenirs*

The courtyard of Venice's central post office was initially open to the elements in the Renaissance and by the twentieth century covered by a glass roof. This made it an in-between space, both an indoor and outdoor space, and thus one that functions well as a metaphor for the postcard itself since this form of correspondence is also both private and public, and thus in its most liminal state when at the post office.<sup>689</sup> To borrow Sontag's notion of the photograph as a "token of absence," the postcard after it leaves the hands of its sender and as it begins its voyage to the recipient is a token both of presence, as in the proof that the traveller is in the city, and of absence, specifically the lack of both the sender and the city in the physical environment of the recipient.<sup>690</sup> When purchased and written in the city corresponding to its image, the postcard represents presence; when received, the postcard connotes absence and desire. Letters do not function in the same way. Although handwriting in general was thought to evoke the absent writer's presence, the paper on which the words in a letter were written did not connote a geographic tie to the city in which one wrote.<sup>691</sup> Furthermore, a postcard does not need its verso written on to be what it is. It is a postcard before the message is written, while a letter is not simply the stationery without the words. Perhaps because postcard messages are somewhat superfluous additions to the postcards, they have not been studied in much depth. Nevertheless, the message, when it is added, is significant since it is the tourist act of writing

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<sup>689</sup> This information about the post office's architecture is in Honour, *Companion Guide to Venice*, 189. It also appears in early twentieth-century guidebooks describing the Renaissance frescoes on the building's façade.

<sup>690</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 16.

<sup>691</sup> Henkin has written on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century ideas of handwriting as a link to the body, stating that "letter writers focused on the impact and significance of handwriting, pulling a metonymic string that linked chirography to hand to bodily presence" (*The Postal Age*, 55).

on the verso of the postcard that turns the postcard into a collaborative souvenir shaped by both producer and consumer, one which reinforced social links between those at home and abroad.

Given the millions of postcards sent every year from Venice in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the fact that postcards with messages are harder to come across since present-day postcard collectors value pristine vintage postcards, claims about existing handwritten messages can be difficult to construct. As Rachel Snow has recently argued in her work on real photo postcards with accompanying messages, the overwhelming number of them as well as the difficulty in deciphering the private dispatches in light of the passage of time makes the medium “a problematic subject for scholarly study.”<sup>692</sup> However, Snow also notes that “rather than viewing the unique characteristics [...] as a liability, [...] we might see the format’s particular attributes as a useful entry point into a critical analysis of the genre.”<sup>693</sup> Both the process of writing a postcard and the specific messages on existing cards are aspects of the postcard as a souvenir of both a city and a social connection between writer and recipient.

The very act of writing a postcard is significant as a marker of the senders’ conception of themselves as tourists. In their messages, tourists placed emphasis on their impressions, displacing, at least in their postcard duties, the authoritative voice of the guidebook with their own perception of the scene. However, the writing was still part of the larger conventions of travel. As noted earlier, Sontag considers that tourists engage in “the friendly imitation of work” by dutifully taking pictures while travelling.<sup>694</sup> Postcard writing involves the purchase of card and stamp, the composition of a message, the maintaining of an up-to-date address book, and the effort of mailing the postcard before the writer leaves the city it represents. This was more work than quickly framing and snapping a scene with one’s portable Brownie camera. Perhaps it is because postcard writing during the medium’s peak was

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<sup>692</sup> Rachel Snow, “Correspondence Here: Real Photo Postcards and the Snapshot Aesthetic,” in *Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 53.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid.

<sup>694</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 10.

a tourist duty, and a time-consuming one, that a good portion of the messages accompanying the postcards are rather prosaic, simply listing sights seen and people to whom the writer wishes to send regards. But, as Henkin observes in his work on postal history, “the postcard justifies, from the outside, by means of the borders, the indigence of the discourse.”<sup>695</sup> Postcard writers were under no pressure to compose extraordinary messages: the very fact that their ordinary messages were the captions to official, commercial images of extraordinary places made the mail they sent significant.

In my collection of vintage postcards sent from Venice, the postcard writers reference the specific Venetian sites they have seen and, often, the experience of riding in gondola, the approach to Venice by train from Mestre, and the boat ride along the Grand Canal from the train station. Many of the postcard writers also add, knowingly, that one must be judicious since all Venice cannot be done in one visit. A postcard sent from Venice to Innsbruck dated May 25, 1913, echoes many in announcing matter-of-factly that “there is just too little time to see everything.”<sup>696</sup> Often, the postcards also express what can neatly be described as *reisemalheurs*, or travel woes, a coinage of Freud’s in his own personal correspondence while travelling in 1908.<sup>697</sup> These experiences of arriving at the water-based city, visiting major sights, and navigating the difficulties associated with Venice’s topography are as representative of the city as the visual conventions on the postcard’s other side.

Instead of seeing these narrative tropes as evidence of the fact that tourists are passive recipients of tourist culture, the postcard’s handwritten messages with their quintessential elements can be seen as examples of the tourists’ agency. Visitors are recounting their own experience, with prosaic details such as names of travelling companions and arrival times particular to them, and thus the postcards remind us that the writers are aware of postcard writing conventions, of what they are expected to include, and are also eager to work within those conventions to offer a written snapshot of

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<sup>695</sup> Henkin, *The Postal Age*, 174.

<sup>696</sup> My thanks to Christian Stahn for translating from the Sutterlin script.

<sup>697</sup> London’s Freud Museum translated the term as “travel woes” for the 2007 exhibition “Vivienne Koorland: *Reisemalheurs*.”

their time in the city in a message written to a specific recipient. As Snow has emphasized in her work on the writing accompanying postcards, the “text still offers [...] a more intimate glimpse into the nature and tone of those involved in the postcard exchange, which is to say that textual additions may individualize without simultaneously clarifying.”<sup>698</sup> The messages that accompany the postcards, similar and yet specific to the individual, complicate notions of a general viewing subject. The writers of these messages are the theoretical everytourists, given the repeated motifs that form the content of most messages, and they are also distinct people, writing to a group of family and friends. They offer in their own hand details unique to them whose context, which as Stewart writes is the fate of all souvenirs, has been lost to “the death of memory, the tragedy of all autobiography.”<sup>699</sup>

Through their messages, postcard writers engage in their roles as tourists by representing themselves in the persona of the traveller for a known audience at home and also for whoever else might clap eyes on their message. Barthes writes that “we make another body for ourselves”<sup>700</sup> when we are being photographed and in the second chapter of this study I considered how tourists taking pictures with pigeons and gondolas enacted tourism, making other bodies for themselves. This could be extended to their postcard messages in which they also perform their role as tourists. Like the souvenir photographs tourists paid Filippi and other photographers to make of them in the Piazza San Marco, the postcard’s text is a representation of the particular tourist. Although tourists had control over the content of their postcard message, more so than the photograph taken of them, both the photographs they purchased of themselves and the postcard messages they wrote circulated in ways they could not control. Their private selves could be on view, in photographs that could be reproduced by the photographer and in postcards that could be read by many more than the intended recipient both while in transit, once at their destination, and when displayed in the recipient’s parlour in revolving postcard racks along with commercial photographs. This tension between the public and

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<sup>698</sup> Snow, “Correspondence Here: Real Photo Postcards,” 50.

<sup>699</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, 151.

<sup>700</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 10.

private in the postcard is not only a later scholarly concern but an anxiety present during the peak of the postcard's popularity. Dickens highlighted, as noted earlier, the public nature of the postcard, declaring that "some people lay the soothing unction to their souls, which consists of the belief that postcards are not read except by the receivers of them. It cannot always be proved that they are; but we may infer that such is the case. To begin with, the communication is quite open."<sup>701</sup> When postcard writers sent their message, they were aware that their words circulated more openly than a letter, and thus the messages, although personal, detailed, and intended for the recipient, were largely chatty, a tone, and a version of the self, made necessary by the postcard format itself.

When considering the verso of a postcard, the writing becomes a formal element to be analyzed. Although postcards are certainly mass produced, they resist being seen as examples of mass tourist culture since the commercial image is accompanied by the handwritten message. As Tamar Garb has written, handwriting "registers the private sagas of lived experience" and "tells of a moment which is no more."<sup>702</sup> The German handwriting, for example, in many vintage postcards of Venice tells of a time that is no more; specifically, the messages are written in the hand known as Sütterlin Kurrent, common in Germany and Austria until 1941, when it was abandoned in favour of the more universal Antiqua or Latin script used in other Western European countries.<sup>703</sup> In all cases, regardless of calligraphy, the message is often the only physical trace, along with any photographs, of a tourist's travel experience. However, unlike souvenir photographs of themselves, which could have been reproduced whether taken by the tourists with an amateur camera or by commercial photographers, the handwriting was not reproducible. As a souvenir sent to family or friends of one's travels, it had an immediacy the photographs lacked.

The handwriting on a postcard is a permanent marker of the sender's embodied presence: it connotes impermanence and mortality. When we read the message on vintage postcards, we are

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<sup>701</sup> Dickens, *All the Year Round*, 395.

<sup>702</sup> Tamar Garb, "Reisemalheurs," in *Vivienne Koorland: Reisemalheurs (Travel Woes)* (London: Freud Museum, 2007), 8.

<sup>703</sup> Philip Hensher, *The Missing Ink: The Lost Art of Handwriting* (London: Macmillan, 2012), 100.



reading the hand of one long gone. This quality of the penmanship itself, as well as the fact that the postcard as a medium solicits from the sender only a brief message, are both elements that court the romance of the ephemeral. Single professional photographs of Venice's Piazza San Marco and Rialto Bridge evoke a sense of timelessness or of frozen time, as analyzed in the second chapter of this study. In contrast, the postcards of these spaces evoke a sense of immediacy and transience not only because of their opposing style, as in bright colour and painterly strokes in contrast to the earlier black and white photographs' sharp, clear outlines, but also because they are accompanied by dates, stamps, postmarks, and messages in various stages of faded ink, all of which are temporal markers. The postcards offer traces of lives, to borrow Garb's idea that we "leave traces in words and things,"<sup>704</sup> and taken together they offer what Garb, in another context, has described as a "collective moment of narration" that is often "fractured."<sup>705</sup> Indeed, the messages, often similar, are, from our perspective, lacking the specific context of the individual sender, and thus fragmentary. The sender's words add to the postcard's associations with the ephemeral and also offer insights into the rituals and experiences of travel for this large, somewhat cohesive, group of early twentieth-century tourists in Venice.

Postcards prompted tourists to remember and record their movements through the specific city. The physical experience of the actual city is not overshadowed by the colour effects of the postcard. The postcard writers tend not to engage in a discussion of the style of the postcard but rather they write of their own presence in Venice itself. In the first postcard described in this chapter, the sender's recent and future physical movements become a significant part of his message. The postcard includes figures on a vaporetto, and the message's "Via!" references precisely such a Grand Canal ride, an experience specific to Venice. As well, the message about swimming shortly at the Lido, written on the canal water, points towards a future tourist movement that, at the time, was as much a part of visiting Venice as the tour in gondola. The tourist here has chosen a postcard that references his

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<sup>704</sup> Garb, "Reisemalheurs," 8.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 21.

activities as a visitor to Venice. With his messages about his water-based, Venice-specific movements written across corresponding parts of the image, the tourist tracks his movements through the city and quite literally grafts himself onto the scene he sends home.

The postcard sent to Ferrara emphasizes that postcards and photographs are, like view paintings, souvenir objects and not only souvenir images. Snow describes them as the “image-object,” a useful term for the postcard’s ability, when written on and mailed, to be “activated as a three-dimensional object.”<sup>706</sup> All postcards are image-objects since the card must be manipulated for the message to be read, but the postcard mailed to Ferrara, due to its creative placement of words, asks the recipient to turn the postcard first to the back and then again to the image side and continue the narrative there, with text appearing in sections of the image related to that portion of the message. While many postcard writers confine their simple messages about safe arrivals and sites visited to the designated portion of the verso, this writer, more uniquely but not as an exceptional case, uses the postcard more as an object to be handled than as illustrated stationery. Eighteenth-century view paintings, nineteenth-century photographs, and twentieth-century postcards are all artifacts related to tourism that have not only a visual but also a material component. As I have shown in this project, tourists, through their tastes, practices, and, in the case of postcards, their messages, participated in shaping each of these souvenirs.

Unlike travel literature, which, throughout the history of tourism, has been written and published by a select few, namely upper-class or well-connected travellers, postcards are the democratic, accessible medium for the expression of travel narratives. The messages, written in haste or with care, were sent to armchair tourists or to world travellers, to enhance a postcard collection or simply as a duty when travelling. They are part of the discourse of travel. Although some postcard writers engaged creatively with the postcards they mailed, the postcard message does not necessarily

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<sup>706</sup> Snow, “Correspondence Here: Real Photo Postcards,” 51.

refer specifically to the image with which it travels, although there is a relationship between image and text since the writers choose images that resonate with their time in Venice. Despite the inherent difficulties in making claims about these messages, the text of a postcard is a significant part of the souvenir and can be studied for its formal and thematic elements, and as a tangible example of the rituals of tourism.

#### *4.4 Conclusion*

Because of the particular combination of commercial image and personal text inherent in the medium, postcards foreground the role of both tourists and the producers of the souvenir in constructing the behaviours and visual and social expectations associated with being a tourist, and, specifically in this case study, a tourist in Venice. The circulation of Venetian postcards was part of what can be termed the postcard craze at the beginning of the twentieth century, a context that generated anxieties about postcards as conveyors of public messages and as souvenirs that mediated the experience of travel.

While much of the scholarship on postcards argues that postcards offer a homogeneous image of the city they represent, my study offers evidence to counter this claim. Early twentieth-century postcard images of Venice vary widely in style and meaning and exist along with numerous other factors, foremost among these the physical experience of touring a city, in shaping tourists' impressions. Cheerful, colourful postcards of Venice were especially popular, possibly as an antidote to the city's association with disease. The other type of polychrome postcard, which used impressionistic brushstrokes, evoked the ephemeral atmosphere that was often part of literary evocations of Venice. By being fancifully coloured and 'painted,' these two types of coloured postcards of Venice do not claim to be authoritative, objective documents. The creative use of colour

or the illusions of brushstrokes on the postcard's recto are the visual complement to the verso's handwritten, subjective text.

Unlike the fancifully-coloured postcards of Venetian cityscapes, the cards that feature a tourist, often a female tourist, are coloured realistically and delineate architectural outlines clearly, conventions which suggest that these postcards do present themselves, and by extension those who purchase them, as having a comprehensive understanding, rather than an impression, of both the scene and the figures depicted in the image. However, these postcards, through their sartorial elements, also place emphasis on interiority. The tourist, depicted alone and thus observing the Venetian scene in silence with her field of vision limited by her parasol, highlights and encourages the purchaser's own contemplative state. Much like the figures depicted in the images used for the commercial souvenir albums sold in Venice, the figures of tourists and locals in these postcard images are given blurred features, suggesting that they stand for types, with the figures of local Venetians functioning as decoration for the scene and the tourist registering as cultured.

With the popularity of postcards, the post office became a significant tourist space. As I have shown through a study of early twentieth-century guidebooks, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi was both a practical and cultural stop on the tourist circuit.<sup>707</sup> Tourists visited this building known as the Palazzo delle Poste to write and mail postcards and to see the remaining fragments of frescoes painted by Titian and Giorgione. The fact that photographs of the interior of this palace were available for tourists to purchase attests to the importance of the post office in the tourist's experience of Venice.

The handwritten message that travelled with the postcard is as a tangible example of what was a newfound focus on the tourist's perception rather than the authority of the guidebook. The postcard prompts tourists to record their physical movements through the city, with the very materiality of the

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<sup>707</sup> Many of Titian and Giorgione's frescoes for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi were in a state of deterioration by the eighteenth century, although, as noted above, they were still included as noteworthy in nineteenth-century guidebooks. In 1939, a portion of the surviving frescoes was detached for preservation purposes, and the rest were salvaged in 1965 (See Juergen Schulz's "Titian at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi," *The Burlington Magazine* 143 (2001): 567-569). These surviving pieces are housed in Venice's Galleria Franchetti alla Ca d'Oro.

postcard, such as handwriting and stamp, evoking both immediacy and transience. The individual voices emerging from the postcard's verso, while specific in many of their references, often echo each other. The postcard messages present the essential aspects of the specific city, much like the visual conventions in the postcard's image.

The widespread popularity of postcards in the first half of the twentieth century can be understood to symbolize the social acceptance, and even the celebration, of the fact that the tourist adopts a role when engaging in tourist rituals, a role that is intended to be shared with the recipient of the postcard through the message that circulates with the image. More than Visentini's engravings of Venice in the eighteenth century, or Ponti, Naya, and Filippi's nineteenth-century photographs of Venice and the commercial souvenir albums based on these photographs, postcards as souvenirs highlight most what the popularity of all these souvenir images attest to: that this mediated experience is not a diminishment of the travel experience but one of its inherent qualities.

### Conclusion

When they were each at their peak as popular souvenirs of the city, the views of Venice studied here were considered as less than art, in large part because of their commercial success and the mechanism of their production. Canaletto's paintings were criticized for being repetitive and made with the help of the camera obscura.<sup>708</sup> Naya's photographs were seen as purely mechanical images before Naya won the landmark court case that acknowledged photographs were the product of an artist and thus should be protected by copyright.<sup>709</sup> Postcards were ridiculed as a trend that detracted from the experience of travel. Along with commercial souvenir photographs, they were seen by well-travelled writers such as James and others as akin to the baubles and trinkets displayed alongside them in the Piazza San Marco's market stalls and shops.<sup>710</sup> These paintings, photographs, and postcards of Venice are now appreciated for the details they offer about the past, but they are not often studied as part of the city's history of tourism. This project has recuperated these souvenir images by considering their visual conventions within a tourist context.

By seeing these pictorial representations of Venice as part of the city's long history of producing souvenir art for tourists, this dissertation has established the elements of continuity and shift in souvenir representations of the city over three centuries. This project has also explored the links between the visual representations of Venice and the Venice described in political tracts, literature, and guidebooks. While the *vedute* and the nineteenth-century photographs have been catalogued by art historians and archivists, vintage postcards of Venice have not enjoyed such attention, with this study being the first to investigate the Venetian postcards' provenance, production, and visual motifs. My hope is that others will also take on this object of study since so much is still unknown about these accessible and yet elusive souvenirs. Early twentieth-century postcards are in

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<sup>708</sup> Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, 95, and Smith, "Canaletto and the camera obscura," 232.

<sup>709</sup> Zannier, *Venezia: Archivio Naya*, 22.

<sup>710</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, 7, and Dickens, *All the Year Round*, 395.

many antiquarian shops in the city and yet offer up few clues about the ways in which they were produced.

Each chapter of this project has called attention to the collaborations, both tangible and more oblique, between the producers and consumers of Venice's souvenir images. These collaborations often influenced the content and aesthetics of the images. As well, souvenir images of Venice promoted certain spaces in the city over others and participated in shaping the ways visitors conceived of themselves as tourists in Venice. This dissertation offers a first account of Venetians making images for tourists that traces a line from Canaletto and Guardi's paintings to Naya and Filippi's studios, whose photographs were used for early twentieth-century postcards. Most recently, the work of Mazzega Art and Design, a thirty-year old company owned by Venetians Giancarlo and Massimo Mazzega, supplies a large portion of the postcard stock that is currently sold in Venetian shops.<sup>711</sup>

Massimo Mazzega photographs Venice for the postcards his company sells. While the company produces postcards of Venice's peripheral canals and bridges, its most popular postcards are of the Piazza San Marco and Rialto Bridge, in keeping with the focus on central tourist spaces established by Canaletto in his eighteenth-century *vedute*. Mazzega speaks of attempting to capture the same light that Canaletto evoked in his canvases, and of including figures to give scale to the scene. This is evident in his best-selling postcard of the Piazza San Marco (fig. C.1) taken from a similar perspective as the Canaletto painting discussed in Chapter One (fig. 1.1). In the company's photographs of central spaces, figures are often plentiful, in keeping with Canaletto's tendency to people his view paintings. Significantly, while Canaletto's paintings promoted the positive aspects of travel to Venice to encourage tourism and counter allegations of the city's corruptive influence, Venice today, while economically dependent on tourism, has more tourists than its infrastructure

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<sup>711</sup> My thanks to Massimo Mazzega for meeting with me in the summer of 2008 at the company's printing plant in Marcon, Veneto, and for his subsequent correspondence.

should maintain, especially in the parts of the city, such as San Marco and Rialto, promoted by postcards and tourist itineraries.<sup>712</sup>

Since the figures in the postcards are often tourists, the cards continue the tradition of featuring tourists that began with the nineteenth-century photographs of the city. For his postcards of the city's peripheral spaces, Mazzega often seeks out Venice at its quietest, framing the photograph he takes with details that register as the quintessential Venice, such as narrow canals lined with local boats (fig. C.2). While many of these postcards are horizontal rather than vertical, they still echo the visual elements included in Filippi's photographs of canals and bridges beyond the tourist circuit. Mazzega takes the photographs for these postcards when tourism ebbs in November so as to offer tourists the possibility of seeing the Venice that only locals usually see.

Mazzega is well-versed in which types of images are commercially successful. He photographs Venice's feast days and the fairs and events of local life in the city, but these images do not sell well; contemporary tourists often want their Venice to evoke a sense of timelessness or the particular Romantic aesthetic of solitary gondolas (fig. C.3) or the Bridge of Sighs. Responding to consumer demand, the company purchased an archive of photographs of Venice from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1960s since postcards of *tempi passati*, of a past time, are popular among tourists and the city's residents. Postcards focusing on Venice's lampposts are also a recurring theme in the company's repertoire of images, calling to mind the fact that Filippi often photographed his tourists next to these lamps in the Piazza. In the postcards, the lampposts are featured in the foreground of an image that includes part of Venice's distinctive architecture in the background (figs. C.4a and C.4b). These lamppost postcards also illustrate the company's presentation of Venice at dusk, or in appealingly inclement weather, such as fog or its rare snowstorms. Also appealing to tourists are images that offer an aerial perspective of Venice's distinctive shape, harking back to

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<sup>712</sup> On the impact of tourism in Venice, see Chapter Eight of Davis and Marvin, *Venice, The Tourist Maze*, esp. 206-207.



Jacopo de Barbari's early sixteenth-century woodcut map of Venice.<sup>713</sup> While the paintings of the eighteenth century did not present bird's eye perspectives of the city, nineteenth-century photographers did begin to present such a perspective, as noted in Chapter Two. A popular image now sold as a postcard is of Venice as a fish, that is to say a map of Venice that accentuates the lagoon's fish-like shape (fig. C.5). However, one cannot see the streets in the image. The postcard is produced not as a miniature map but rather as a visual representation of Venice's unique topography. This image, Mazzega notes, is one of the city's top postcard subjects, selling as much as images of the Piazza San Marco and the Rialto. The fourth subject that proves to be especially popular as a souvenir image of the city is of a gondola gliding into the Piazza San Marco during *acqua alta* (fig. C.6). Both the fish-shaped Venice and the gondola navigating high water in the Piazza speak to the tourist fascination with the precariousness and resilience of Venice as a city built on water, especially in light of greater awareness among tourists of the fragile lagoon ecology and popular knowledge of the ten-year project to install the Mose flood barrier to protect the city from the effects of high tide.<sup>714</sup>

Like Filippi before him, Mazzega visits his clients who own souvenir shops in Venice to determine which images are selling and to whom. Shop owners tell him that certain tourists seem to prefer colourful postcards with impossibly red sunsets or bright blue skies, and with 'Venezia' printed large on the image itself (figs. C.7 and C.8) rather than more discreetly on the white border. These postcards could be seen as the descendants of some of the early postcards of the city that reveled in deliberately unrealistic colour. After speaking with the shop owners who observe tourist purchases, Mazzega directs his graphic design team in light of this information. The company's process of producing new postcards can be divided into three steps. First, Mazzega photographs Venice with the goal of capturing the sensation of light in the city. Since the company also sells accordion booklets of

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<sup>713</sup> For more on how de' Barbari's detailed map of Venice played with perspective and compression to accentuate Venice's shape as an aquatic animal, see Deborah Howard's "Venice as a Dolphin: Further Investigations into Jacopo de' Barbari's View," *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 18, no. 35 (1997): 101-111, especially 106.

<sup>714</sup> For a concise history of the Mose project, see Antonia Windsor, "Inside Venice's bid to hold back the tide," *The Guardian Online*, June 16, 2015.

postcards, he then chooses the photographs that as a whole suggest what he refers to as *a percorso turistico*, a tourist path through the city. This will remind the reader of the way in which Visentini's engravings and nineteenth-century photographs were chosen for souvenir books and albums.

Afterward, with his design team, he determines which images will be retouched for what he has determined are, at least for the purposes of designing the postcards, two different groups of tourists. The images that court tourists with a Romantic aesthetic will be given muted colours or changed to black and white, framed in a white border with 'Venezia' printed subtly, and often produced in a large-scale format, known in the company's terminology as *cartolina artistica*. Others will be retouched, often by being brightly coloured, for general appeal. Often, images of the same space, such as the Bridge of Sighs, are altered differently so as to produce two postcards, one for tourists drawn to colour (fig. C.8) and another for those with Romantic sensibilities (figs. C.9a and C.9b).

While the content and style of the postcards can be linked in various ways to the souvenir views that precede them, the function of the postcard has changed. Writing and mailing one is now a nostalgic gesture evocative of a past time. Mazzega emphasizes that postcards are largely purchased to be kept as souvenirs rather than sent to others. The agency of the specific tourist is still prevalent, though. Like Primoli, Forain, and Bosc's afternoon photo project in gondola in the summer of 1899, tourists take pleasure, in their photographs and in their writing, in sending up the rituals of tourism and, by extension, the related visual conventions in souvenir imagery. Furthermore, even though the tourist's handwritten message might not now be part of the postcard as souvenir, the tourist makes the postcard personal in myriad ways: by placing it in albums or keepsake boxes, by finding it, and the corresponding memory it calls to mind, years later, or by attempting to photograph a similarly-framed view of the city, among other practices. As with the other souvenirs studied here, the specific individual still emerges from the broader category of tourist, even if the postcards are being designed with two broad groups of tourists in mind.

Ironically, while tourists seek out that which is made locally in other, more expensive souvenirs of Venice, thus accounting for the abundance of mask, lace, and glass ateliers in the city, the mass-produced postcard is, in Venice, still a locally-produced souvenir. However, even if this characteristic of the city's postcards was more widely known, a commercially-reproduced view is no longer sought after. Unlike their predecessors who took photographs with Brownie cameras but also purchased commercial souvenir photographs as the authoritative views of the city, contemporary tourists prioritize the images they take themselves. Mazzega does not recover the costs of producing new postcards. Since the postcard is, as he describes it, an *arte povera*, an art form that is sold cheaply, to keep his company afloat he also sells other souvenirs to the shops in Venice, such as calendars, key chains, and wine stoppers, and, more recently, popular toys for children. Nevertheless, almost three hundred years after Canaletto began painting Venice specifically for tourists, the tradition of local Venetians producing souvenir images of their city continues, at least as of this writing.

**Figures**



1.1 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Piazza San Marco*, c.1730. Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 118.75 cm. Cambridge, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University.



1.2 Francesco Guardi, *Piazza San Marco*, after 1780. Oil on canvas, 34.9 x 53.4 cm. London, National Gallery.



1.3 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Piazza San Marco: looking South-East*, 1740. Oil on canvas, 114.2 x 153.5 cm. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.



1.4 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Bacino di San Marco from the Piazzetta*, 1735. Oil on canvas, 48.8 x 81.8 cm. Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario.



1.5 Francesco Guardi, *Piazza San Marco*, 1760s. Oil on canvas, 62 x 96 cm. Bergamo, Accademia Carrara.





1.6 Francesco Guardi, *View of the Piazzetta San Marco towards the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore*, 1770s. Oil on canvas, 45 x 72 cm. Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro.



1.7 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *The Pier, looking towards the Mint with the column of Saint Theodore*, 1742. Oil on canvas, 110.5 x 185.5 cm. Milan, Castello Sforzesco.



1.8 Antonio Visentini, *Ex Aede Salutis, usque ad Caput Canalis*, 1735. Print of engraving in *Le prospettive di Venezia: dipinte da Canaletto e incise da Antonio Visentini*, ed. Dario Succi (Mestre: Vianello, 2008), non-numbered pages. All subsequent prints of Visentini's engravings for *Le prospettive* cited below come from this same source.



1.9 Antonio Visentini, *Caput Canalis et Ingressus in Urbem*, 1735. Print of engraving in *Le prospettive di Venezia*.



1.10 Antonio Visentini, *Bucentaurus et Nundinae Venetae in die Ascensionis*, 1735. Print of engraving in *Le prospettive di Venezia*.



1.11 Antonio Visentini, *Prospectus a Columna S. Theodori ad ingressum Magni Canalis*, 1742. Print of engraving in *Le prospettive di Venezia*.



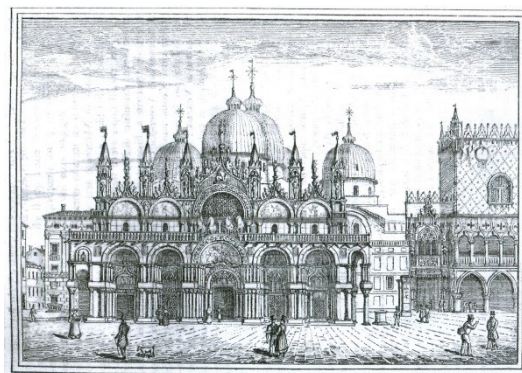


2.1 Tomaso Filippi, Piazza San Marco, looking towards the Basilica, 1895. Gelatin silver print. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



*Piazza di S. Marco*

2.2 G. Moretti, *Piazza di San Marco*, 1837. Print of an engraving, in Ermolao Paoletti's *Il fiore di Venezia* (Venice: Fontana, 1837). All subsequent prints of engravings in *Il fiore di Venezia* cited below come from this same source.



*Prospetto della R. Basilica di S. Marco*

2.3 G. Moretti, *Prospetto della Basilica di San Marco*, 1837. Print of an engraving, in *Il fiore di Venezia*.





#### 2.4 *Facciata Chiesa San Marco e*

*Piccioni*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album published by Attilo Scrocchi. Montreal, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. 914.53 v 555 ri. All subsequent images from the *Ricordo* album cited below are from this same source.



#### 2.5 Antonio Visentini, *Pons Rivoalti ad*

*Occidentem*, 1742. Print of an engraving in *Le prospettive di Venezia*.



2.6 Carlo Naya, Grand Canal and Rialto Bridge with gondola, 1870. Albumen print, 27 cm x 31 cm. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 47.



2.7 *Ponte di Rialto*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



2.8a Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Riva degli Schiavoni: looking east*, 1730. Oil on canvas, 58 x 101.6 cm.

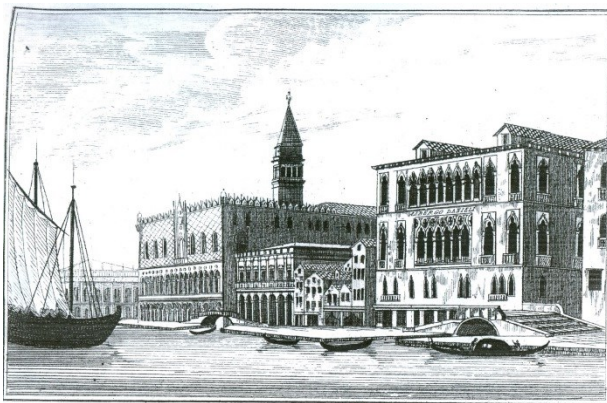




2.8b Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Molo: looking west*, 1730. Oil on canvas, 55 cm x 102 cm. Tatton Park, Cheshire.



2.9 *Riva degli Schiavoni*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



*Albergo Reale di Danieli*

2.10 G. Moretti, *Albergo Reale di Danieli*, 1837. Print of an engraving, in *Il fiore di Venezia*.



2.11 G. Moretti, *Ponte dei sospiri*, 1837. Print of an engraving, in *Il fiore di Venezia*.

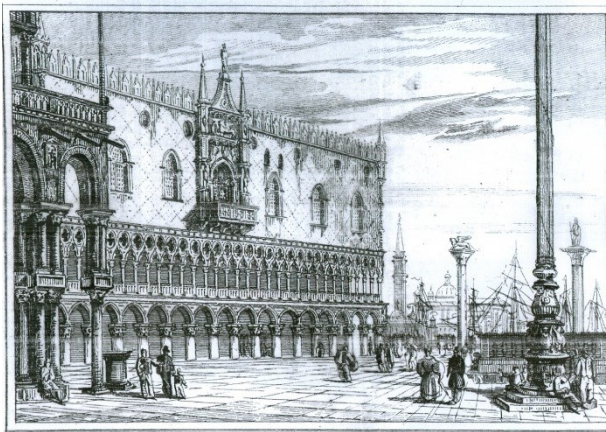


2.12 Tomaso Filippi, *Piazzetta verso San Giorgio*, c. 1894-1897. Hand-coloured photograph on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.





2.13 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Sketch of the Piazzetta, looking south*, 1729. Pen and ink, 21.3 cm x 31.7 cm. London, Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.



*Il Palazzo Ducale*

2.14 G. Moretti, *Il Palazzo Ducale*, 1837. Print of an engraving, in *Il fiore di Venezia*.



2.15 *Panorama, Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute e Dogana*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



2.16 Tomaso Filippi, *Panorama e gondola*, c. 1895-1914. Gelatin silver print on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.17 Francesco Guardi, *Gondolas on the lagoon*, c. 1765. Oil on canvas, 31 cm x 41.8 cm. Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli.





IRE 07-15 — VENEZIA — CANAL GRANDE DALL'ACCADEMIA — PALAZZO FRANCHETTI.

2.18 *Canal Grande dall'Accademia*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



2.19 Tomaso Filippi, *Tourist Feeding Pigeons*, 1894. Gelatin silver negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.20 Carlo Naya, *Piazza San Marco, with a view of the Basilica di San Marco, Palazzo Ducale, and Piazzetta, au clair de lune*, c. 1860-1880. Albumen print on paper, Studio Carlo Naya. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.

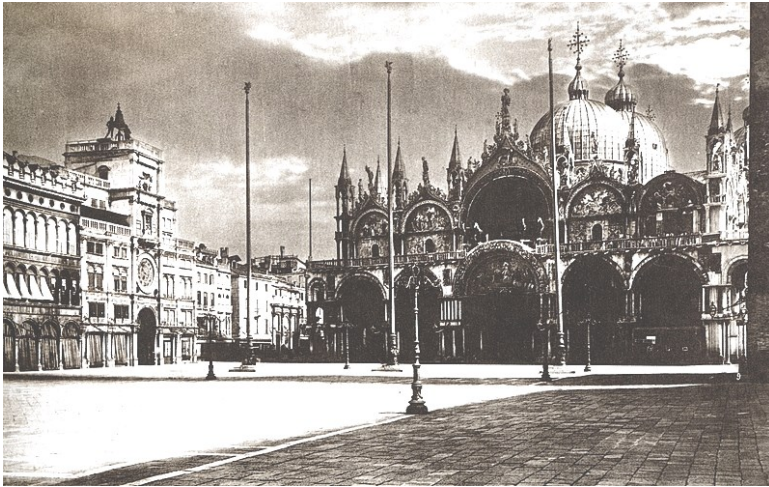


2.21 Tomaso Filippi, Rio and Campo di San Giustina, c. 1895-1914. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.22 Alexander John Ellis, *St. Mark's Basin with a view of the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute and the Dogana*, 1841. Daguerreotype. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 28.





2.23 Carlo Naya, Piazza San Marco, with a view of the Basilica di San Marco, au clair de lune, 1870. Photographic medium not listed, 27 cm x 31 cm. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 39.



2.24 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *Grand Canal: the Rialto Bridge from the South*, c. 1727. Oil on canvas, 45.5 cm x 62.5 cm. Holkham Hall, Norfolk.



2.25 Carlo Naya, Palazzo Mocenigo on the Grand Canal, c. 1880. Albumen print. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 157.



2.26 Tomaso Filippi, *Chiesa di San Marco con Orologio*, 1895. Albumen print. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.27 Tomaso Filippi, Young tourist with pigeons in Piazza San Marco, 1894. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.28 Tomaso Filippi, *Venezia: Piccioni a San Marco*, c. 1894-1900. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.29 Tomaso Filippi, Tourists with pigeons in Piazza San Marco, 1894. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.30 Tomaso Filippi, Tourists with pigeons and local child in Piazza San Marco, c. 1894-1900. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.31 Tomaso Filippi, Tourists with Kodak camera and pigeons in Piazza San Marco, 1894. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia



2.32 Giuseppe Primoli, Jean-Louis Forain and Jeanne Bosc in gondola, 1889. Albumen print. Fondazione Primoli di Roma.



2.33 Giuseppe Primoli, Photographer and tourists in Piazza San Marco, 1889. Albumen print. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 202.



2.34 Carlo Ponti, Tourists at the Bridge of Sighs, 1875. Photographic medium not listed. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 135.





2.35 William Etty, *The Bridge of Sighs*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 80 cm x 51 cm. York, York Art Gallery.



2.36 Stephen Thompson, *The Bridge of Sighs*, 1869. Photograph in Thompson's *Venice and the Poets* (London: Provost), 1869. Cambridge, Houghton Library, Harvard University.



2.37 Joseph Turner, *Venice, the Bridge of Sighs*, 1840. Oil on canvas, 86.8 cm x 117.1 cm. London, Tate Britain.



2.38 Tomaso Filippi, *Ponte dei Sospiri dal Ponte della Paglia*, c. 1895-1914. Aristotype. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.39a *Ponte dei sospiri*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



2.39b Tomaso Filippi, *Ponte dei sospiri*. Gelatin silver bromide negative on glass. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.40 Antonio Stom's *Lotta sul Ponte dei pugni tra Castellani e Nicolotti*, c. 1720s. Oil on canvas, 73 cm x 95 cm. Sold at auction in Venice in 1992. Private collection. Source: [www.artnet.fr](http://www.artnet.fr)

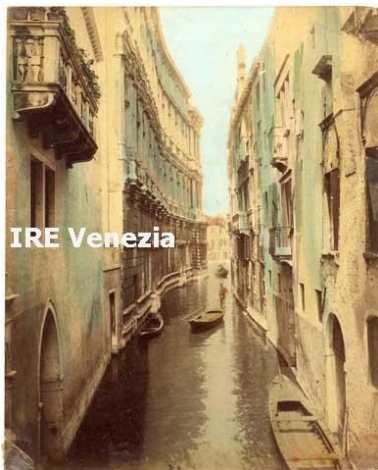




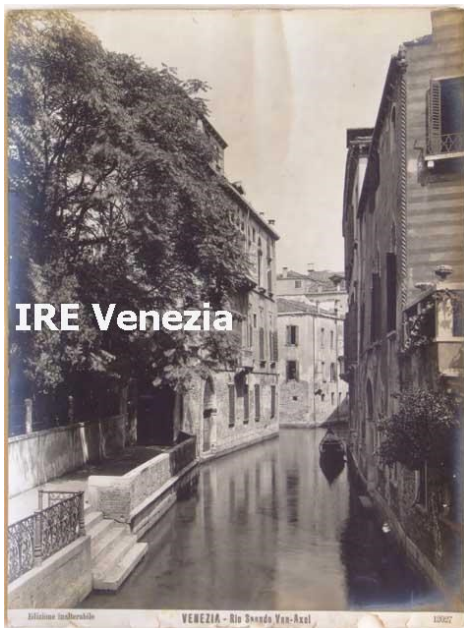
2.41 Ferdinando Ongania, *Canal del Lovo*, 1891. Heliogravure in Ongania's *Calli e canali a Venezia* (Venice: Ongania, 1891). In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 53.



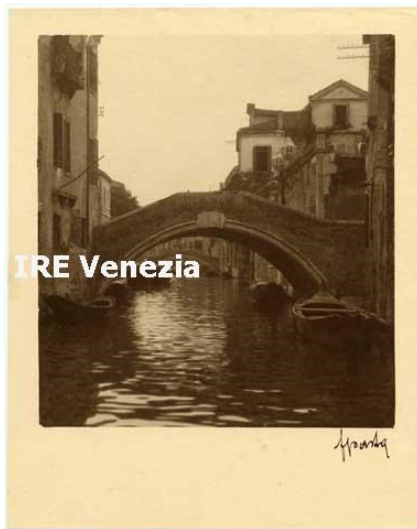
2.42 Tomaso Filippi, *Canale dei Greci* (from the Ponte della Pietà), c. 1894-1914. Aristotype. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.43 Tomaso Filippi, *Rio dei Materdomini*, c. 1895-1914. Albumen coloured print on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.44 Tomaso Filippi, *Rio Van Axel* (Rio delle Erbe o Van Axel), 1894-1915. Albumen print on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.45 F. Pasta, Bridge in Cannaregio, c. 1895-1914. Photograph on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



2.46 Giuseppe Primoli, Woman on a Bridge, 1889. Photographic medium not listed. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 67.



3.1 *Monumento a Colleoni*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



3.2 Studio Naya, *Pozzo a San Giobbe* (Around the Well at San Giobbe), c. 1895-1900. Albumen print. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.

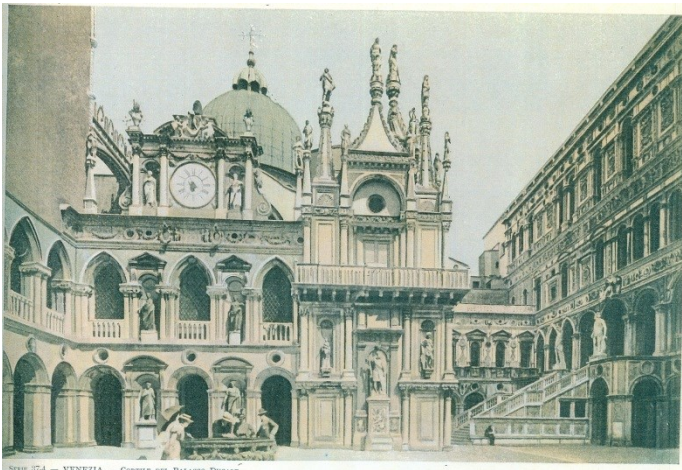




3.3 Tomaso Filippi, *Vegetable Merchant*, 1895. Photographic medium not listed. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 103.



3.4 Tomaso Filippi, *Festival Day*, c. 1900. Photographic medium not listed. In Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs*, 62.



3.5 *Cortile del Palazzo Ducale*, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



3.6 Tomaso Filippi, *Facciata Chiesa San Marco e Piccioni*, c. 1895-1914. Silver gelatin print on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



3.7 Tomaso Filippi, *Facciata Chiesa San Marco e Piccioni*, c. 1895-1914. Coloured print on paper. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.



3.8 Cover image of gondolier heading off from the Bacino di San Marco, early twentieth century. Coloured image on paper (based on a photograph by Tomaso Filippi) in *Ricordo di Venezia* album.



3.9 Tomaso Filippi's Italian business card, c. 1894-1914. Archivio Filippi, IRE Venezia.





4.1 *Venezia, Canal Grande, verso Rialto*. Postcard mailed June 1915. Publisher unknown. Author's collection.



4.2 *Riva degli Schiavoni, seen from the Bacino di San Marco*. Unmailed postcard, early 20th century. Scrocchi publisher. Author's collection.

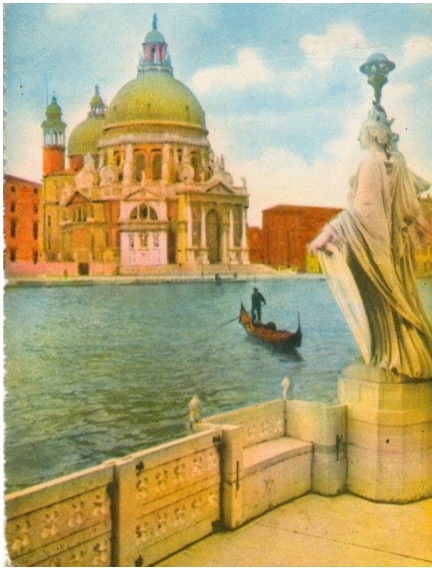




4.3 Venice, Palazzo Ducale. Unmailed postcard, early 20th century. Publisher unknown, Author's collection.



4.4 Venezia, Grand Canal. Unmailed postcard, early 20th century. Scrocchi publisher. Author's collection.



4.5 View of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute. Postcard mailed early 20th century, date unclear. S.G.V. publisher. Author's collection.



4.6 Venezia, Ponte Rialto. Postcard mailed May 1913. Fratelli Garbisa publisher. Author's collection.

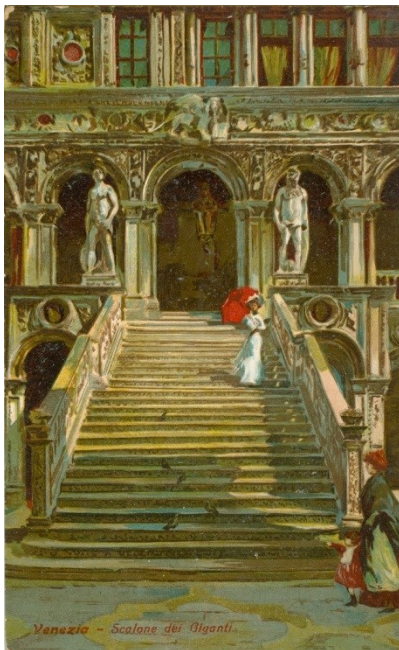


4.7 Venezia, Molo dalla Riva degli Schiavoni. Postcard mailed July 1909. Unknown publisher. Author's collection.





4.8 *Venezia, Piazzetta San Marco con antenna*. Unmailed postcard, early 20th century. Publisher unknown. Author's collection.



4.9 *Venezia, Scalone dei Giganti*. Unmailed postcard, early 20th century. Publisher unknown. Author's collection.



4.10 *Palazzo delle Poste e dei Telegrafi- Salone del pubblico*, circa 1910. Photograph. Museo storico della comunicazione e Archivio storico di Poste Italiane.



C.1 *Piazza San Marco*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-64.



C.2 *Fondamenta dei Mori*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-95.



C.3 *Punta della Dogana con Santa Maria della Salute*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-100.





C.4a *Punta della Dogana*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-78.



C.4b *Palazzo Ducale*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-138.



C.5 Map of Venice, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEP-125.



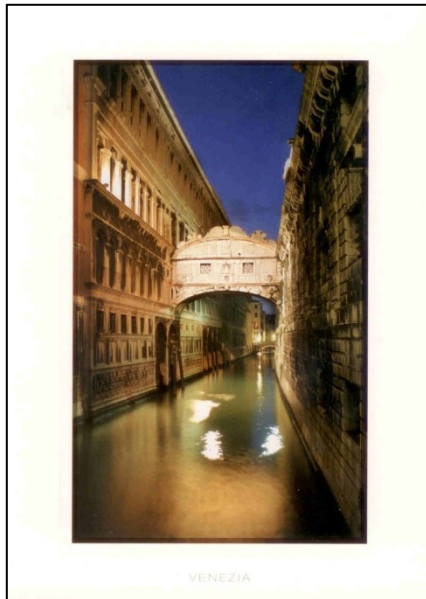
C.6 *Exceptional high tide on St. Mark's Square*, ©2006-2016. Vintage postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. K07.



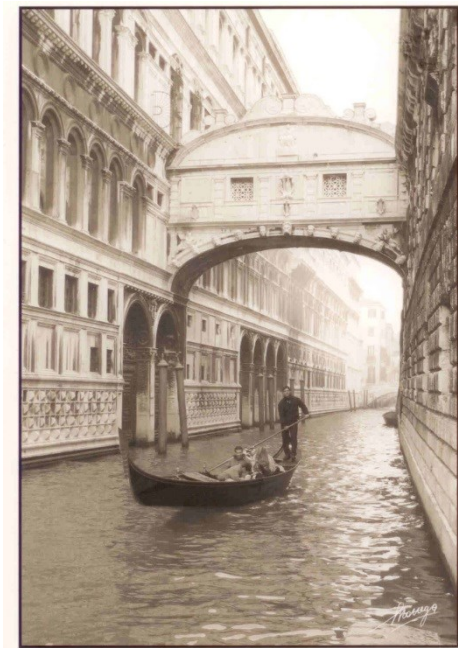
C.7 Collage images of Venice with red sunset, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEP-35.



C.8 *Ponte dei sospiri*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEP-16.



C.9a *Ponte dei sospiri*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-104.



C.9b *Ponte dei sospiri*, ©2006-2016. Postcard. Mazzega Art and Design. VEG-133.



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