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John Ruskin: A new Saint Francis of Assisi? The Saint, the Art Critic and the Yearning for Renewal

This paper studies the quaint comparison between John Ruskin and Francis of Assisi which was made in some intellectual circles in France and Italy at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It attempts to answer the question of how this comparison came about and what its intellectual premises were. Most of all, it shows how such a comparison of potentially marginal interest actually related to critical debates crystallizing on the search for the origins of the Renaissance seen as the first modern period.

This paper will focus on an unusual comparison made by intellectuals in France and Italy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, between the prominent art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Francesco di Bernardone, better known as St Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226). It will explore how this comparison came about and what it meant in the historical and cultural context of that time. It also hopes to show how this comparison played a role in the then raging debate as to when to locate the beginning of the Renaissance. Although the chronological timespan used here goes well beyond the Trecento, one of the points to be discussed is the fluidity of the chronology and the terminology used in the nineteenth century in an age when historical categories were not quite fixed.

1) The Saint and the Art Critic: compared Historiographies

St Francis's multi-layered historiography has undergone a complex evolution since the *Vita Prima* written by Tommaso da Celano in 1228. Following the discovery of the saint's tomb and relics in 1818, Francis enjoyed renewed popularity. In the first half of the nineteenth century, artists and literary figures generally presented him as a troubadour, a poet or a vicarious model through whom to achieve mystical beauty: in the wake of French Christian scholar Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853) who argued that St Francis was the first Italian vernacular poet and as

such could be considered a precursor of Dante¹, Dante Gabriel Rossetti included the saint in his translation of *Early Italian Poets* from the eleventh to the thirteenth century².

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, historians added to the palimpsest of the *Poverello's* life with the help of the critical method of historical investigation focussing on the sources used. As a result of the increasing number of publications, the interest in Francis spread to non-Catholic countries so much so that by the seven hundredth anniversary of his birth in 1881, he had become a household name throughout the Western world³. Scientific examination of the life of the saint started in Germany with Karl Hase's *Franz von Assisi, Ein Heiligenbild* (Leipzig, 1856)⁴, then spread to Italy where intellectual and liberal politician Ruggero Bonghi (1826-1895) included in his historical study appendices on the sources he used as well as part of his artistic heritage⁵. Indeed for many, the figure of St Francis like that of Dante remained inextricably linked to Giotto's oeuvre. This iconographical mediation also played a part in their increased popularisation to which Ruskin, among others, greatly contributed⁶.

Yet many of these scientific writings often resulted in fitting the saintly figure within the writer's own temporal agenda. Indeed the interest in Francis was often fostered by current intellectual and social debates in Europe. Where protestant writers such as Henry Thode could see Francis as a precursor to the figure of Martin Luther⁷, Ernest Renan's pupil Paul Sabatier published a biography in 1893-94⁸, which built up an anticlerical and anti-dogmatic vision of Francis⁹, thereby distancing himself from the official Catholic version and drawing the saint closer to his own socialist aspirations. Though the book was put on the index by the Vatican in 1894, it enjoyed twenty editions which ran well into the twentieth century¹⁰.

Ruskin's own encounter with St Francis in 1874 predated some of the studies mentioned above, yet it should be seen within a context of heightened interest in spirituality where art played a seminal role as mediator of religious experience. For example Anna Jameson (1794-1860) or Lord Lindsay (1812-1880) both published studies expounding the interconnection between art and religion¹¹. The encounter occurred at a peculiar moment of the art critic's life and came as part of a sequence of spiritual epiphanies either taking place in nature (as in Cumberland Hill in 1867) or mostly mediated through art (at Assisi in 1874 or in Venice in 1876)¹². Thus Ruskin approached the saint in a blend of mystical and artistic experience fuelled by readings and using the vicarious support of the frescoes in the Basilica of St Francis at Assisi.

Cross-referencing the *Diaries* and Cook and Wedderburn's *Works of John Ruskin*, Van Akin Burd identified what he called 'the Moment': on 19 June 1874, Ruskin's

copy of Cimabue's *Maestà* transformed his understanding of early Italian art and had a profound impact on his spiritual life¹³. Thereafter he supposedly identified with the figure of St Francis represented to the right of the fresco. Van Akin Burd perceptively saw on the drawing «a superimposition of Ruskin's own searching face over the Saint's features»¹⁴. Soon after the «Moment», Ruskin's «favourite disciple»¹⁵ and biographer William Gershom Collingwood (1854-1932) reported another occurrence: in Assisi, the art critic fell ill and «dreamt in his illness that they had made him a brother of the third degree of the order of Saint Francis – a fancy that took strong hold of his mind; and he wrote his *Fors* for May under great temptation to follow Saint Francis, not in adopting his creed but in imitating his renunciation. But saving commonsense reminded him of his duties to his pupils at Oxford, and he contented himself with playing at monks with the last survivors of the great Franciscan convent»¹⁶. Although Collingwood and Burd both confirmed the strong spiritual link connecting Ruskin to St Francis, Collingwood's condescending tone downplayed the effect of the experience which Burd upheld as fundamental. The discrepancy lying between direct experience and later interpretation thus begs the question of their reliability: how far did Ruskin, consciously or unconsciously, expand on his experience in Assisi to acquire the status of «Prophet» which pervades accounts in his later years and after his death¹⁷? How far did his biographers and exegetes interpret facts and feelings to build up Ruskin's persona and legacy and to make it fit in with their own beliefs and the public's expectations?

Accounts of St Francis during and after his lifetime are reported to have amplified some of his deeds in order to increase his resemblance to Christ. The same may be observed for Ruskin. French art critic Robert de la Sizeranne (1866-1932) produced an authoritative biography of Ruskin in 1897 which became a reference both in France and in Italy¹⁸. Using the same anecdote as the one mentioned above, he mingled it with Reverend Downes's account of Ruskin's compassionate generosity towards a Capuchin friar begging for his monastery in Rome for which the friar offered him a piece of St Francis's cloth¹⁹. De la Sizeranne did not limit himself to an ironic or sympathetic account of the episode; instead he re-wrote Ruskin's attraction to Franciscanism into a Voragianian legend:

Lastly, it is said that one night in Rome, Ruskin dreamt that he had become a Franciscan friar... Shortly after... he heard a beggar supplicating his name. He gave him an offering and was about to go away when the beggar seized his hand in order to kiss it. Then Ruskin quickly bowed down and kissed the elderly man. On the following day, the beggar came to his and asked him with tears in his eyes to accept a precious

relic; a piece of brown cloth which he claimed belonged to the robe of St Francis. A biographer claimed that the Saint himself had appeared to his disciple. ... Ruskin remembered his dream and hastened to the convent of Assisi for a pilgrimage. ... He could not have chosen a better patron saint and we cannot compare him to a purer model. Like Saint Francis, Ruskin performed nice miracles²⁰.

This adjunction of a modern version of the kissing of lepers²¹ represents a founding rite of passage in De la Sizeranne's book where history became legend and Ruskin grew closer in his *Imitatio Franciscani*.

In Italy, De la Sizeranne's late publication became the key text to read and understand Ruskin, much more than English biographies²². Of course this is not simply due to the language barrier. De la Sizeranne who believed that «there is nothing in history so beautiful as its legends»²³ skilfully mediated and adapted Ruskin to a *fin-de-siècle* audience of Catholic culture by building up on the renewed interest in St Francis of Assisi fuelled by Paul Sabatier and other writers. Thus similarly to St Francis, Ruskin's historiographers used his experiences to make them fit in with their own expectations. One may wonder however, what purpose such comparison may have served and what these expectations were.

2) John Ruskin: a New St Francis of Assisi? Early Critical Reception in Italy

Although Ruskin developed an interest in Italy early on following his first Grand Tour with his parents in 1833; though he travelled there many a times and though his subsequent ground-breaking publications transformed the perception Englishmen had of Italian art, architecture and restoration, his reception in Italy has undergone a more variegated history. The centenary of Ruskin's death saw the first overview of his reception and impact in Italy in a conference organised at the British Institute and published in 2006 under the title *L'Eredità di John Ruskin nella cultura italiana del Novecento*²⁴. Filling some important gaps in the literature on Ruskin and Italy, this collection of essays generally took Ruskin's death as starting point as the number of publications and translations on him soared in the Italian Peninsula around that time. In some cases however, these pioneering publications fuelled the legends circulating about the art critic and gave rise to further fables and myths²⁵. As a result, the reception of Ruskin in Italy was still at an early stage in the early twentieth century as some Italian critics lamented in 1905: «In Italy; that I know, we have nothing or very little {on Ruskin}, and this is truly regrettable»²⁶. However little known Ruskin may have been, the first comparisons between him and St Francis were made during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Before the first newspaper articles and the first translations of his works appeared in the last decade of the nineteenth century thereby contributing to make his thoughts accessible to a broader public, the name of John Ruskin was probably known to individuals from elite artistic or intellectual circles in different parts of the Italian Peninsula at least from the 1870s onwards. Among the restricted circle of Ruskin's Italian students, friends and followers in several cities, some occupied influential positions. Thus they sometimes pushed to give him greater recognition or to diffuse his revolutionary writings²⁷. Although only partial information can be provided at present, we can give as example the artist and secretary of the Venice Royal Academy of Fine Arts Giovanni Battista Cecchini (1804-79), who petitioned that institution over four years to elect Ruskin as Honorary Member, which became official on March 1st, 1877²⁸. Ruskin was comparatively well-known in Venice, not just for his own book *Stones of Venice* (1851-53), but also because he prefaced Alvise Zorzi's pamphlet against inconsiderate restoration, *Osservazioni intorno ai restauri interni ed esterni della Basilica di San Marco*, published in 1877²⁹. In recognition of his intellectual status, the Società Veneta di Storia Patria offered Ruskin the right to be amongst its founders. This prompted him to exclaim: «I am yours! I am at last a Venetian!»³⁰

In the nineteenth century, Italian *circoli* which were the broad equivalent of clubs or societies in England played an important role in the circulation of international ideas to local audiences. Sources seem to show that it is among these groups that the first pieces of information on Ruskin arrived in the major Italian cities. For example the mezzogiorno scholar and historian Ettore Ciccotti (1863-1939) gave a conference talk on «*The Fanciulla beata*» by Rossetti at the *Circolo Filologico* in Milan on 26th March 1893, in which he defined Ruskin as «one of the most powerful and appealing authors writing on art»³¹. These clubs thus largely contributed to raise awareness of international intellectual trends at the local level. With time and especially after Ruskin's death, the type of clubs or associations organising conferences on the art critic broadened as a direct result of the increased number of publications related to his life and works. For example the newly founded *Università popolare* in Milan in 1901³² or the *Federazione Nazionale delle Opere Femminili* a Roma in 1905 focussed on specific themes developed in Ruskin's works or further popularised his ideas³³.

The first printed articles on Ruskin seemingly appeared in the 1890s in periodicals and weeklies such as the Roman periodical *Il Convito* (1895-1907), its Florentine equivalent the weekly *Il Marzocco* (1896-1932) and the national weekly *Il Fanfulla* (1879-1919). Among these *Il Marzocco* was considered as «the periodical which contributed most to the popularisation of Ruskin's theories in Italy»³⁴. These

magazines were broadly influenced by anti-positivist and symbolist ideals and gave the decadent poet Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938) and his friends platforms to diffuse their ideas. These comprised, among others, the «prince of Italian art critics» Ugo Ojetti (1871-1946), Ruskinian Angelo Conti (1860-1930), writer and playwright Domenico Tumiati (1874-1943), and journalist, art critic and writer Diego Angeli (1869-1937)³⁵. Documents show that the circles revolving around D'Annunzio in the Italian capital knew the name of John Ruskin from the 1880s mostly as a result of his involvement in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and his patronage of Dante Gabriel Rossetti³⁶. Indeed Rossetti and Ruskin were mistakenly presented and polarised as the two forces leading the movement³⁷. According to Diego Angeli – whose brother Gastone later married William Michael Rossetti's daughter Helen – the *Caffè Greco* in Rome was the place where painters such as anglophile Giovanni Nino Costa (1826-1903) and intellectuals close to D'Annunzio first discussed and elaborated an adaptation of the English brotherhood in the mid-1880s³⁸. This consisted in a vague and mostly literary understanding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood based on anti-bourgeois and anti-materialist postulates, further fuelled by the reading of Dante and the rediscovery of pre-Renaissance painters praised by Ruskin and Pater, which D'Annunzio utilised in his own poetry³⁹. As he became the «mouthpiece of English Aestheticism» in Rome⁴⁰, D'Annunzio encouraged his elite circle of 'Noble Spirits' to probe English writers. Interestingly, Ojetti seems to have written the earliest article devoted entirely to Ruskin which appeared in *Il Fanfulla della Domenica* and which recounted Ruskin's unhappy and variegated relationships with Effie Gray and Rose La Touche⁴¹.

A friend of Paul Sabatier's, D'Annunzio visited Assisi in 1897 with his close friend the art historian, writer and aesthete Angelo Conti. Under the influence of the Latinist scholar Annibale Tenneroni (1855-1923) whom he called a «candid brother»⁴², he developed a deep yet somehow pagan interest in Franciscanism⁴³ which is akin to Charles Algernon Swinburne's own agnostic paganism. Not unlike Ruskin, D'Annunzio strongly identified with St Francis and imagined himself to be a brother of the fourth degree. As a poet, he used episodes from the saint's life mingled with Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics in his *Vergini delle Rocce* (1895), while projecting to write a new *Hymn to the Sun* entitled *Frate Sole* (1898-9) as well as his own *Nuovi Fioretti* (1924-1927) a personal interpretation of the popular Little Flowers of Saint Francis⁴⁴. Not unlike Ruskin, some intellectuals compared D'Annunzio to St Francis in the press, as «a poet and a soldier» and a social reformer⁴⁵.

It is thus in this circle attracted by the idea of a Romantic Brotherhood, through the multi-faceted personality of St Francis and thanks to early Italian art that the comparisons between Ruskin «the Apostle of Beauty» and the saint came about.

At first it centred on concepts of «purity» and a «whole-hearted approach to art and beauty»⁴⁶, as it was mostly the mystical nature of Ruskin's aesthetic sensibility which was emphasised:

The devout and immense love for nature, the candid passion for mountains and lakes, for the trees and for the birds which nest above... all of this denoted a behaviour of Franciscan, not a philosophical belief; his doctrine was mystical and not logical; his school was more than anything a church⁴⁷.

Around 1900, the circle's interest in Ruskin broadened and shifted to a more widespread social meaning also following the increased social reading of St Francis emphasised by Sabatier's publication. In the article entitled *La religione dell'amore*, the Ruskinian Angelo Conti summed up the shift and added a social dimension to his mystical conception of aesthetics⁴⁸. He later wrote his own personal book on Francis of Assisi⁴⁹. Indeed some intellectuals saw Ruskin as offering an alternative 'social aesthetics' to industrialised societies based on greed:

Often he would repeat the advice given by the Poverello of Assisi: «work with your hand, continuously and honestly; not for greed but to set a good example and to banish greed» [...] The Ruskinian movement joins the renaissance of studies and the fondness for Saint Francis, of which Paul Sabatier is the indefatigable apostle⁵⁰.

The fashion for a 'ruskinian franciscanism' within the Italian symbolist and decadent circles which started in 1880s as a mystical and aesthetic experience thus broadened to encompass social concerns at the dawn of the twentieth century. It lasted for roughly a decade and tapped into convergent mystical moods, anti-positivist and anti-rationalist cultural trends specific to that period thereby representing a strong reaction to positivism, industrialism and modernity. In these circles the interest in Ruskin started to fade away in the first decade of the twentieth century under the French influence, the rise of the young avant-garde⁵¹, and the gradual popularisation of his oeuvre⁵². On the other hand the intense attraction to St Francis increased in the twentieth century as he became a capital figure used to justify nationalism or ecology in Italy and elsewhere⁵³.

3) Renaissance or *Rinascenza*? The Yearning for Renewal

Such reaction to modernity as upheld by symbolist and decadent circles in Italy was analysed by the poet and literary figure Arturo Graf (1848-1913) who con-

cluded with a call for «the sacred words: *rinascenza* of the soul». At a time when the concept and the terminology surrounding the phenomenon of 'Renaissance' was still subject to intense debates, this call was meant as a manifesto for a new form of art and life⁵⁴.

The concept of Renaissance coined in Jacob Burckhardt's founding study *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860)⁵⁵ offered a comprehensive survey of the breakaway which had taken place in the fifteenth century with the emergence of individualism, shifting creed and the rise of the State as a political and social organisation. Burckhardt's account of the first modern period therefore mirrored in many ways the latest developments occurring in nineteenth-century Western societies. Burckhardt's publication aroused intense debates; one of the most interesting bones of contention regarded chronology, i.e. when to locate the beginning of the Renaissance.

Wagner's son-in-law historian Henry Thode (1857-1920) preferred a «romantic theory of organic growth and spiritual principles»⁵⁶. In his *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien* (1885)⁵⁷ he presented the saint as the originator of «our modern era» crystallising a «movement of humanity» characterised by the emancipation of the individual and a sentimental conception of nature and religion⁵⁸, with the well-known consequence on iconographical representation. He thus aligned History on the Vasarian canon which located the beginning of the artistic renewal in the thirteenth century with Cimabue and Giotto.

Though agreeing on the rise of individualism and a renewed relationship to religion, Burckhardt and Thode disagreed on the origin of modernity and the role of Christianity as catalyst or inhibitor of such a process. Whilst Burckhardt's Renaissance with a new state system «partly presupposes and partly promotes the dissolution of the most essential dogmas of Christianity»⁵⁹, Thode's Renaissance harked back to the «ardent expectation of a regeneration of the world both spiritual and temporal»⁶⁰ expressed by medieval thinkers and picked up by romantic intellectuals and artists.

In a seminal study entitled *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art*, Erwin Panofsky looked at the substantial differences between periodical upsurges of interest in classical culture during the medieval period and the 'self-realisation' which characterised the phenomenon which started in fourteenth-century Italy⁶¹. He was thus able to find some common underlying principles between the Carolingian revival, the twelfth-century proto-renaissance and proto-humanism: all these movements subsumed their interests in the classical past into an *interpretatio Christiana* or Christian philosophy⁶²; in addition they were all transitory and were followed by «an estrangement from the classical past»⁶³. Yet Panofsky

devoted a chapter to the painters defined by Vasari as the *primi lumi* in which Giotto holds pride of place for having revolutionised the picture space. He analysed their pictorial practices in order to assess whether they should be seen as part of a renaissance or the Renaissance. Although Panofsky confirmed their status of precursors, he also showed that their contribution lay in their return to nature, rather than to the classics. Indeed Giotto was considered by Boccaccio or Vasari as a 'naturalist', and as such not an imitator of the ancients⁶⁴. In addition he still operated within the Christian philosophy which Panofsky saw as indicative of a renaissance⁶⁵.

In pre-First World War European societies saturated with transformation due to the rise of positivism and industrialism, ascribing the beginning of the Renaissance to St Francis and Giotto meant opting for a model based on the regeneration of culture and artistic representation through a renewed relationship to nature and the search for love, beauty and God. It is the latter *rinascenza* or renaissance that Italian intellectuals such as Giulio Vitali were ascribing to St Francis and his follower John Ruskin: to him «this happy and blissful moment [of an imminent spring... of a new life] was revealed to art by the sons of St Francis; this moment is presented to the contemporary world again by men like John Ruskin»⁶⁶. This is also what de la Sizeranne presented as Ruskin's mission: to uphold the «spirit of humility and sincerity... of liberty» over the «spirit of science and perfection»⁶⁷.

Conclusion

Reinforced by the artistic innovation of Giotto, the figure of St Francis thus came to embody a palingenesis. He was seen to offer a renewed relationship to nature, beauty and God which was further reinterpreted as a new historical and spiritual landmark by men like Henry Thode, or a new social and political vision by men like Gabriele D'Annunzio. In many respects, John Ruskin's aesthetics and social concerns echoed St Francis's and his identification with the saint fostered comparisons amongst those who yearned for a renewal. It is interesting to mention that Thode's theory lost ground fairly quickly and that his idea that St Francis could be the initiator of the Renaissance was discarded around the First World War. In parallel, at the occasion of Ruskin's centenary in 1919 when it seemed that science and technology were triumphing in the modernist world, art historian Antonio Muñoz lamented that «the figure of John Ruskin who seemed that of a saint, of a reformer of souls and customs, has almost completely lost his halo»⁶⁸.

- 1 P. APPLEBAUM, *Saint Francis in the Nineteenth Century*, «Church History», 78/4, 2009, p. 804.
- 2 D. G. ROSSETTI, *Early Italian Poets from Ciullo D'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri (1100-1200-1300)*, London 1861. Unsurprisingly, the defects and qualities of these poems are very similar to those ascribed to «primitive» painters: Rossetti mentioned «imperfect expression», which nevertheless offered «a treasure of grace», pp. vii-viii.
- 3 APPLEBAUM, *Saint Francis*, p. 801.
- 4 K. HASE, *Franz von Assisi, Ein Heiligenbild*, Leipzig 1856.
- 5 R. BONGHI, *Francesco d'Assisi*, Città di Castello 1884.
- 6 J. RUSKIN, *Giotto and his Works in Padua: Being an Explanatory Notice of the Series of Woodcuts Executed for the Arundel Society after the Frescoes in the Arena Chapel*, London 1854.
- 7 H. THODE, *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*, Berlin 1885.
- 8 P. SABATIER, *Vie de Saint François d'Assise*, Paris 1893.
- 9 A. VAUCHEZ, *François d'Assise*, Paris 2009, p. 350.
- 10 APPLEBAUM, *Saint Francis*, p. 809.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 801.
- 12 V. A. BURD, *The Christmas Story*, Newark, London 1990. This book was particularly helpful in unravelling the complexities of Ruskin's spiritual life.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- 15 R. DE LA SIZERANNE, *Ruskin et la religion de la beauté*, Paris 1897, p. 9.
- 16 W.G. COLLINGWOOD, *The Life and Works of John Ruskin*, London 1893, p. 144. It seems that Collingwood's entry is closer to Ruskin's own views than de la Sizeranne's, as Ruskin discusses and questions Saint Francis of Assisi's choice of poverty: for more information see «Letter XLI: Bernard the Happy», in *Fors Clavigera, Letters to Workmen and Labourers in Great Britain*, ed. D. Birch, Edinburgh 2000, pp. 180-181.
- 17 Ruskin's status as prophet was very much part of his official historiography by the 1890s. William Gershom Collingwood (1854-1932) published one of the first official accounts of the Master's life in 1893, supervised by Ruskin himself and proofread by Joan Severn. Divided up into four sections, the book gave a chronological evolution of Ruskin from «Boy Poet» (1819-1842) to «Art Critic» (1842-1860) to «Hermit and Heretic» (1860-1870) to «Professor and Prophet» (from the Slade Professorship of 1870 onwards). The last part «Professor and Prophet» opens with the following verses: «*Essa è la luce eternal di Sigieri, / Che leggendo nel vico degli strami / Sillogizzo invidiosi veri*» (Dante, *Paradiso*, X, 136), thereby placing Ruskin in a tradition of great thinkers who were persecuted for their love of truth. W.G. COLLINGWOOD, *The Life and Work of John Ruskin*, London 1893. Likewise, Ruskin's publisher George Allen even wrote in his obituary: «*Some of us... accepted him as a prophet, a preacher and almost an inspired apostle*», in G. ALLEN, *A French critic on Ruskin*, «*The Times*» 2 Feb. 1900, p. 14. This was followed by a lecture delivered by Richard Warwick Bond at the Royal Institution on 29 May 1900 entitled *Ruskin, Man and Prophet*, «*The Times*», 18 May 1900, p. 13.
- 18 DE LA SIZERANNE, *Ruskin*. For recent studies on de la Sizeranne, see S. BANN, *Robert de La Sizeranne, médiateur de Ruskin et de la peinture anglaise*, in *Relire Ruskin*, ed. M. Waschek, Paris 2003, p. 103-119; S. BANN, *Analogie et Anachronisme dans l'œuvre critique de Robert de la Sizeranne*, in *Histoire de l'Histoire de l'art en France au XIXe siècle*, eds R. Recht, P. Sénéchal,

- C. Barbillon, F.-R. Martin, Paris 2008.
- 19 R.P. DOWNES, *John Ruskin: A Study*, London 1890, pp. 23-24.
 - 20 DE LA SIZERANNE, *Ruskin*, p. 85: «On conte enfin qu'une nuit, à Rome, Ruskin rêva qu'il était devenu frère franciscain... Peu de temps après ce songe ... il s'entendit implorer par un vieux mendiant... il lui donna son offrande et allait continuer sa route lorsque le mendiant lui saisit la main pour la baiser. Ruskin alors se penche vivement et embrasse le vieillard. Le lendemain, il voit entrer chez lui ce loqueteux, les larmes aux yeux, qui le prie d'accepter une relique précieuse, un morceau de drap brun, ayant appartenu, assure-t-il, à la robe de Saint François. N'était-ce pas le saint lui-même, dit un biographe, qui était apparu à son disciple ? ... Ruskin se rappela son rêve et courut aussitôt en pèlerinage au couvent d'Assise... Il ne pouvait mieux choisir son patron et nous ne pouvons l'assimiler à un plus pur modèle. Comme St François, Ruskin fit de jolis miracles».
 - 21 T. DE CELANO, *Les Vies de Saint François d'Assise*, Paris 2009, p. 17: «Il vit un jour un lépreux venir à sa rencontre et, devenu plus fort que lui-même, il s'approcha de lui et *l'embrassa*». This episode is already present in Rev. Downes's account as Ruskin «took (the friar) round the neck and kissed his lips»; DOWNES, *John Ruskin* p. 24.
 - 22 J. MILSAND, *Esthétique anglaise: étude sur M. John Ruskin*, Paris 1864. This study is derived from two articles which appeared in the «Revue des Deux Mondes»: *Une nouvelle théorie de l'art en Angleterre*, 1 July 1860, and *De l'influence de la littérature sur les Beaux-Arts*, 15 Aug. 1861.
 - 23 R. DE LA SIZERANNE, *Ruskin at Venice, A lecture given during the Ruskin commemoration at Venice, September 21st 1905*, London 1906, p. 66.
 - 24 *L'eredità di John Ruskin nella cultura italiana del Novecento*, ed. D. Lamberini, Florence 2006.
 - 25 J. CLEGG, *La presenza di Ruskin in Italia cento anni fa*, in Lamberini, *L'eredità*, pp. 95-109, p. 98.
 - 26 G. VITALI, *Le idee fondamentali di Giovanni Ruskin*, «Rivista d'Italia», anno 8, vol. 2, fasc. 12, dicembre 1905, p. 973: «In Italia, ch'io sappia, poco o nulla ancora abbiamo; e cioè è veramente deplorabile»
 - 27 The best known of them was archaeologist and architect Giacomo Boni (1859-1925); for more information, please see A. BELLINI, *Giacomo Boni tra John Ruskin and Luca Beltrami*, in Lamberini, *L'eredità*, pp. 3-30.
 - 28 A. ZORZI, *Ruskin in Venice*, «Cornhill Magazine», n.s., 21, 1906, pp. 250-265, 366-380: 367.
 - 29 Jeanne Clegg wrote a seminal book on Ruskin and Venice which maps his relationship to the city but which only occasionally involves the Venetians themselves. J. CLEGG, *Ruskin and Venice*, London 1981.
 - 30 ZORZI, *Ruskin in Venice*, p. 262.
 - 31 E. CICCOTTI, *La Fanciulla beata di Dante Gabriel Rossetti e un giudizio di Max Nordau*, Milan 1893, p. 12.
 - 32 E. BALEGNO, *Ruskin e il suo apostolato sociale*, Milan 1901.
 - 33 This is where Giulio Vitali first delivered his paper in February 1905: VITALI, *Le idee fondamentali*, p. 973.
 - 34 C. BERTONI, *Croce e il Ruskinismo italiano: i rapporti con Conti e Il Marzocco*, in Lamberini, *L'eredità*, p. 32.
 - 35 *I Nobili Spiriti*, ed. G. Oliva, Bologna 1974. The expression was originally coined by Pascoli to

- describe the collaborators of Il Marzocco and Oliva defined a «nobile spirito» as «colui che privilegia la sfera artistica e ne fa il filtro attraverso cui guardare ogni manifestazione dell'uomo», pp. 7-8.
- 36 B. SALETTI, *I preraffaelliti nella critica d'arte in Italia tra Otto e Novecento*, in *I Rossetti tra Italia e Inghilterra*, ed. G. Oliva, Rome, 1984, pp. 5-35.
- 37 Th. NEALE, *Ruskin, Rossetti and Cie*, «Il Marzocco», 9/4, 2 Aprile 1899, p. 2.
- 38 D. ANGELI, *Le Cronache del Caffè Greco*, Rome 2001.
- 39 S. DI PINO GIAMBI, *Adolfo de Carolis*, Florence 1992, p. 23.; see also G. PIERI, *The effects of the Pre-Raphaelites on the Cultural consciousness of D'Annunzio*, in *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth Century Europe* ed. R. Longford, New York 2009, pp. 178-200.
- 40 DI PINO GIAMBI, *Adolfo de Carolis*, p. 25.
- 41 U. OJETTI, *Gli amori di John Ruskin*, «Il Fanfulla della Domenica», 1893, p. 5.
- 42 *Al Candido fratello: carteggio Gabriele D'Annunzio – Annibale Tenneroni*, 1895-1928, ed. M. Menna, Lanciano 2007.
- 43 *Ibid.*; see also F. DI CIACCIA, *Attrazioni e illusioni francescane in Gabriele D'Annunzio*, Assisi 2009.
- 44 E. MARIANO, *Il San Francesco di Gabriele D'Annunzio*, «Quaderni del Vittoriale», 12, 1978, pp. 90 and 98.
- 45 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 46 U. OJETTI, *Notes on the British Section*, in *International Fine Arts Exhibition, Rome, 1911, Souvenir of the British Section*, ed. I. Spielmann, London 1913, p. 84.
- 47 A. MUÑOZ, *Nel Centenario di Ruskin*, «Il Marzocco», 24/8, 23 Feb. 1919, p. 3: «L'amore immenso e devoto per la natura, la candida passione per le montagne e per i laghi, per gli alberi e per gli uccelli che vi nidificano sopra erano in lui un atteggiamento da francescano, non una convinzione da filosofo; la sua dottrina è mistica, non è logica; la sua scuola è più che altro una chiesa».
- 48 A. CONTI, *La religione dell'amore*, «Il Marzocco», V/4, 28 Jan. 1900, p. 1, quoted in *Il Marzocco: carteggi e cronache fra Ottocento e avanguardie, 1887-1913: atti del seminario di studi, 12-13-14 dicembre 1983*, ed. C. del Vivo, Florence 1985, p. 88.
- 49 A. CONTI, *San Francesco (con un saggio di Giovanni Papini)*, Florence 1931.
- 50 VITALI, *Le idee fondamentali*, pp. 988-989: «E spesso ripeteva il consiglio del Poverello d'Assisi: 'lavorate colle vostre mani in lavoro continuo e onesto, non per cupidità di prezzo, ma per buono esempio e per cacciare cupidità... Il movimento ruskiniano si ricongiunge con il rinascimento degli studi e delle simpatie francescane, di cui Paolo Sabatier è l'indefaticabile apostolo».
- 51 The decline of interest in Ruskin started much earlier in France when Stéphane Mallarmé translated Whistler's *Ten o'clock* lectures in 1889 which pictured Ruskin as a moralist; initial enthusiasts such as Marcel Proust turned against Ruskin in the early 20th century. For more information, see BANN, *Robert de La Sizeranne*, p. 152.
- 52 E. SDEGNO, *Le prime traduzioni artistiche*, in Lamberini, *L'eredità*, pp. 221-246.
- 53 For a discussion on the use of Saint Francis by Fascism, see *San Francesco d'Italia - Santità e identità nazionale*, eds T. Calìò, R. Rusconi, Rome 2011. For more information on Saint Fran-

- cis and ecology, see J.A. MERINO, *Francesco di Assisi e l'ecologia*, Padua 2010, and the encyclical 'Laudato Si' by Pope Francis I, 2015: <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html>
- 54 A. GRAF, *Foscolo, Manzoni, Leopardi, Preraffaelliti, Simbolisti, Esteti*, Turin 1955, p. 305: «le tre sacramentali parole: *rinascenza dell'anima*».
- 55 It was translated in Italian in 1876, in English in 1878 and in French in 1885.
- 56 R. BENDIX, *Max Weber and Jacob Burckhardt*, «*American Sociological Review*», 30/2, 1965, pp. 176-184: 178.
- 57 H. THODE, *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*, Berlin 1885.
- 58 H. THODE, *Saint François d'Assise et les origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, Paris 1885, p. ix.
- 59 J. BURCKHARDT, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, London 1890, p. 547.
- 60 R.P. OLIVER, *Recent Interpretations of the Renaissance*, «*Italica*», 12/2, 1935, pp. 130-135: 132.
- 61 E. PANOFSKY, *Renaissance and Renaissances in Western Art*, New York, San Francisco, London, 1972.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p. 107.
- 64 *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 19-32.
- 65 *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.
- 66 VITALI, *Le idee fondamentali*, p. 988: «questo momento felice e gaudioso {di una imminente primavera... di una vita novella} rivelarono all'arte i figli di San Francesco; questo momento presentano di nuovo nel mondo contemporaneo uomini come Giovanni Ruskin».
- 67 DE LA SIZERANNE, *Ruskin at Venice*, pp. 45 and 51.
- 68 MUÑOZ, *Nel Centenario di Ruskin*, p. 2: «la figura di John Ruskin che pareva quella di un santo, di un riformatore di anime e di costumi ha perduto quasi interamente la sua aureola».