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Temporal Forms in the Nineteenth-Century British Mediterranean

by

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ABSTRACT

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*Temporal Forms in the Nineteenth-Century British Mediterranean* examines how nineteenth-century British travelers constructed, reinforced, or resisted imperial and cultural identities in Mediterranean spaces. Specifically, it analyzes how what I call “heritage discourses” structure literature, travel, and foreign affairs. How, for example, can we understand Percy Shelley’s proclamation in *Hellas* that “We are all Greeks” at the same time as Britain relinquished Parga to the Ottoman Empire? Universal heritage discourses that reinforced a shared identity pitted preservation against military strategy in the Mediterranean where empires overlapped; these same historical motives, though, facilitated proto-archaeological imperialism, launching controversies, such as the Elgin Marbles debates, that endure today.

The nineteenth-century Mediterranean was a geographic contact zone between empires, where the Great Powers jostled for control. But it was also a *temporal* contact zone for British imperialists who could not, as they did elsewhere, sweep away existing cultures. In accounts of Italy, Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land, I examine conflicts of time that travel brings to the fore of narrative. Each chapter focuses on a different temporal model—inheritance, embeddedness, presentism, and network—in order to theorize the convergence of past and present that I argue is heightened in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. The methodology I develop is a politically aware formalism that takes time as its object. Time, I show, functions across narrative sequence and lived experience, organizing both how bodies move through space and how texts codify that movement.

Recent work on transnationalism has yet to account for the fundamental temporal relationship between Britain and the Mediterranean that captivated travelers. *Temporal Forms* aims to fill this gap, exploring the links among history, narrative, and imperial time that manifest when travelers confront the extant landscapes of their heritage. Heritage proves powerful through this space, with the potential to reinforce imperialism and to incite revolution. It both acts upon and is made by the present. I argue, therefore, that the Mediterranean region affords examinations of how historical narratives intervene in geopolitics, how travel writers redefine time across scales, and how classical and biblical heritage shapes imperialism in British culture.
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INTRODUCTION

“Almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean,” James Boswell asserts in his *Life of Samuel Johnson.* Boswell ventriloquizes Johnson as a paragon of eighteenth-century taste, invoking a *cultural* hierarchy that develops through the nineteenth century and manifests in a *political* hierarchy: the British Empire. The foundation of dominance for “us” (English readers) over “savages,” as Boswell articulates it, is the Mediterranean, the source of cultural and political heritage that British writers deployed woven into discourses of imperial progress. Because of Britain’s superior cultural heritage, nineteenth-century imperialists could argue, Britain had not only a right to dominate but also as a duty to modernize. Heritage, in this sense, differs from history in its power to signify identity in the present; it is not only the past but a particular shared past through which the present articulates a political and cultural community.

It matters, I will argue, that nineteenth-century Britain mapped its narratives of racial and cultural superiority onto “shores” that became tangible to them again after Napoleon Bonaparte’s defeat, marking the beginning of an era of British naval dominion from Gibraltar to the Levant and opening the circum-Mediterranean region to eager travelers. The Mediterranean was a geographical “contact zone” between empires, to use Mary Louise Pratt’s term, where the Great Powers jostled for control. But the Mediterranean was also a *temporal* contact zone for Western imperialists who could not, as they did elsewhere, completely sweep away existing cultures and histories. Mediterranean heritage, as Boswell had insisted, was itself the basis of nineteenth-century Britain’s sense of superiority and the impetus driving countless tourists to
contribute to a booming travel-writing market in England. However, travelers who sought the past on these famous shores discovered landscapes teeming with present foreign life.

Of course, Boswell’s “shores” do not refer to a circum-Mediterranean geography that would include the north coast of Africa, Spain, and France; he is establishing a direct connection between eighteenth-century Britain and specific classical and biblical geographies: ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and Christian Jerusalem. Through travel writing, broader reliable travel technology, and antiquarianism, as I will show, the Mediterranean as a term defining historic and originary Western culture expanded in the nineteenth century to include Egypt and a broader eastern Mediterranean Holy Land in coastal Palestine and Syria. However, the development and continued popularity of the Mediterranean as a destination and as a cultural idea depended on Britain’s sometimes-tenuous dominance of the whole sea in the decades following the Napoleonic Wars. Without the navy’s direct control from bases in Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands, for example, ships carrying travelers and goods—the busy traffic William Thackeray describes in Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1846), as I discuss in chapter three—could not pass freely between England the “shores” Boswell indicates. I focus here primarily on lands that could be included in an expanded nineteenth-century definition of Boswell’s Mediterranean “shores”—Greece, Italy, Egypt, and the Holy Land—while keeping the broader imperial sea in mind as the space that enabled the obsession with its surrounding lands.

Even the Mediterranean lands onto which nineteenth-century Britain mapped its heritage, though, had uneven relationships to the Empire. Some spaces were sacred: Jerusalem, for instance, or, for Lord Byron, Athens, which his Childe Harold’s
Pilgrimage (1812-1818) labels “holy ground” and a “consecrated land” (II.88.828 and II.93.873). Others, like Italy, were historic, drawing antiquaries and writers to connect with an extant past, as I show in chapter two’s discussion of Pompeii. All the “shores” on which I focus here, though, shared a common relevance for British travelers and writers that, often problematically, combined reverence for a particular heritage with a drive to construct a particular imperial future.

I gather these culturally foundational Mediterranean spaces—both the historic and the sacred—under the term “antique lands.” Nigel Leask first developed “antique lands” as a critical term from Percy Shelley’s 1818 sonnet “Ozymandias” to examine how Romantic writers “temporalized” places like Mexico and India through aesthetic comparisons to the Mediterranean’s “marble wilderneses” with their “rich texture of literary and cultural associations” (Leask 2). Leask argues that traveling to antique lands implies a movement back in time or a tangible accessibility of the past. He claims that British writers specifically used antiquity as a mechanism of othering driven by the traveler’s aesthetic curiosity. My reading of antique lands focuses instead on places that do not fall neatly into a self/other, present/past binary. While Greece and Italy, for example, were certainly antique for nineteenth-century Britons, they could not be wholly regarded as past; while they were foreign they were also designated as originary for British culture as it was being constructed in nineteenth-century discourses of heritage. This dissertation shifts the critical focus on antique lands back to those classical and biblical landscapes that function as the sources of imperial aestheticizing and temporalizing. Leask explains, in reference to Egypt, that the “‘antique land’ is claimed as the heritage of Europe rather than of its contemporary inhabitants”; I argue that this
conflict of historic and contemporary perplexes empire and empire studies (114). My interest is less on antique lands as an aesthetic category than on the practical impact of landscapes densely imbued with Western heritage within geographical zones of “transimperial” urgency, to use a term popularized by Sukanya Banerjee. For Banerjee, “transimperial” defines texts, objects, ideas, or even forms that cross imperial space, such as Bengali marriage-plot novels written in English. I am adding a nuance to this description of motion to include spaces themselves that change imperial hands and geographic identities during the long nineteenth century (roughly, the period between the French Revolution and World War I, though, as I discuss further below, in the following chapters I mainly focus on a narrower period from Napoleon’s defeat in 1815, through the rise of Continental nationalist movements in the 1870s, to Britain’s acquisition of Cyprus in 1878).

The Mediterranean offered a uniquely complicated space for the British Empire to represent textually and politically because it epitomized competing concerns of a coexisting past and present. Distant places like Greece, Italy, Egypt, and the Holy Land were regarded as the extant landscapes of Western antiquity and, thus, were simultaneously foreign and domestic. In Rome, for example, British travelers sought the precedents of their own empire and expected to see the specific landscape with which they had been familiar since childhood. But, as I discuss in chapter two with Charles Dickens’s *Picture from Italy* (1846), when they actually traveled in nineteenth-century Rome and wrote narratives of their journeys, they had to confront the fact that Rome and Italy were also undeniably foreign and overlaid with present struggles and differences. These were crises of coexistence that registered both spatially (self vs. other or domestic
vs. foreign) and temporally (past vs. present). For example, Dickens not only laments Rome’s contemporary foreign Italianess but also remarks more neutrally how, “to an English traveller,” the “the burial-place of Caius Cestius” simultaneous marks the graves of Percy Shelley and John Keats (151). This sometimes-fraught multivalent coexistence, I show, defines the Mediterranean for nineteenth-century writers, who inherit and expand on preexisting complex notions of that geography.

As a term, “Mediterranean” is both definitive and ambiguous. The OED traces its usage as a proper noun in its modern sense to the sixteenth century, defining it as “the almost landlocked sea separating southern Europe from Africa” (“Mediterranean”). Encapsulated in this definition are two competing functions: the sea is “separating Europe from Africa” (and the East) both geographically and ideologically, but it is also connecting Europe to these “others.” As J. S. Howson writes in his 1849 lecture *The History of the Mediterranean*, “Gibraltar and Alexandria, with Malta between them, are the necessary stages between Britain and her Indian Empire … These waters have been the thoroughfare of nations—these islands the stepping-stones of civilization. Here the East and the West become familiar with each other”( 13 and 15). Whereas the OED defines “Mediterranean” latitudinally, on a north-south axis, Howson determines it longitudinally, from west to east. These divergent understandings betray an underlying cultural sense of what, precisely, is being separated and connected. Little scholarly attention has been given in recent years to the Mediterranean’s significance in British culture and empire, but when it has been given, it has generally focused on this latter sense of connection between London as an imperial center and Britain’s colonies, trading ports, and naval bases to the east. Iain Chambers has argued recently that
“Mediterranean” “is a construct and a concept that linguistically entered the European lexicon and acquired a proper name in the nineteenth century. There it simultaneously offered both the origin and the contemporary theater of European power” (12). Chambers marks the commencement of this “modern geographical, political, cultural and historical” Mediterranean at Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign of 1798-99. With the rise of modern imperialism in Europe, the Mediterranean became a strategic space of mobilization.

Chambers only briefly notes the “cultural and historical” classifications of the Mediterranean that, in Howson’s description, are an inescapable temporal register for Britons, but I will argue that these classifications are necessary for Britain’s conception of empire. As Thomas Hardy’s George Somerset describes in *A Laodicean* (1881), the Mediterranean was “the Great Sea, the historical and original Mediterranean; the sea of innumerable characters in history and legend that arranged themselves before him in a long frieze of memories so diverse as to include both Aeneas and St Paul” (*Laodicean*, 251, 252). Classical and biblical, this is also a space of modern and historical significance, a separation, true, but also a connection between here and there and between now and then. This historical significance of the Mediterranean is limited neither to the sea as a space of “crossing,” which is Chambers’s focus in reading the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Mediterranean, nor to the sea strictly as a body of water, which is the focus of David Abulafia’s exhaustive tome on Mediterranean history, *The Great Sea*, and Robert Holland’s more specific study of Britain in the Mediterranean since 1800. The OED takes a broader topographical approach, giving the etymology of “Mediterranean” to indicate anything “[o]f, relating to, or characteristic of the Mediterranean Sea, the lands or countries in or surrounding it, or their culture” (this figurative meaning extends,
like the geographical definition, to the sixteenth century). My focus will be on this broader Mediterranean region and lands significant to British national identity—such as Greece and Italy but also coastal Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, etc.—places where historical narratives of British cultural and religious superiority began.

*Temporal Forms* explores the links among history, narrative, and imperial time that manifested when nineteenth-century travelers confronted the extant landscapes of Western antiquity searching for, motivated by, and actually constructing heritage. Heritage, I argue, proves powerful, with the potential to reinforce imperialism and to incite revolution. It both acts upon and is made by the present. In the chapters that follow, I theorize how narrative navigates the convergence of past and present that is heightened in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. I draw on scholarship from three distinct methodologies: historicist work (including empire, travel, and cultural studies), textual analyses from literary formalism, and scholarship about time from phenomenology and the history of science. The resulting methodology I develop is a politically aware formalism that takes time as its object. Each chapter focuses on a different temporal model: inheritance, embeddedness, presentism, and network. Time, I show, functions across narrative sequence and lived experience, organizing both how bodies move through space and how texts codify that movement. Travel is what brings conflicts and constructions of time to the fore of narrative.

Journeys to real (or, simultaneously and problematically, real and imaginary) places, imply a mobile persona, whether it is the narrator, author, character, or some combination of all these figures. I will often designate that persona through the general term “traveler,” which is an identity I use differently from “tourist,” in line with James
Buzard’s distinction. While the former term invokes a kind of educated, non- or less-consumerist identity, “tourist” implies a leisure figure taking advantage of the tourism apparatuses that arise with Murray’s guidebooks, Cook’s tours, and affordable steam and rail travel. Very often, the figures of traveler and tourist overlap, though many writers expend significant effort to prove they fall into the former category. In fact, Buzard identifies a mode of “anti-tourism” through which travelers construct themselves in opposition to masses of tourists rushing by rail and steam from one site to another, guidebooks in hand (9, 12, 31-2). Most often, I use “traveler” as the more general term, giving attention to how texts construct that identity and to their investments in a particular rhetoric of mobility that allows, for example, the British imperial traveler to arrive anywhere in the world and describe the local inhabitants as “foreigners.” As I discuss in chapter four, this terminology facilitates a system of transnational belonging and exclusion whereby white British travelers are always “home,” while “foreigners” everywhere are always outsiders. As I also discuss in chapter four, “traveler” elides many significant definitions and counter-definitions; the “expatriate” and the “immigrant” are both travelers, for example, and could accurately denote the same person; yet we still deploy these terms in line with their racial, national, and economic connotations. While I most often use the broad term “traveler,” I want to direct critical attention to how this term functions and develops from nineteenth-century imperialism.

It is impossible to extricate nineteenth-century British imperialism from nineteenth-century historiography. The future and the present were steeped in the past, and, in fact, the growth of empire relied on a particular veneer of historical language to justify many of its expansions. Lord Palmerston, for example, famously defended his
aggressive foreign policy to the House of Commons in 1850 by declaring, “[A]s the Roman, in days of old, held himself free from indignity, when he could say Civis Romanus sum [I am a Roman citizen]; so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England, will protect him against injustice and wrong” (qtd. in Holland 78). Of Palmerston’s speech, Holland remarks, “[W]hat came to be widely interpreted as the definitive statement of British power overseas in the mid-Victorian age turned on an exercise of naval supremacy in the Mediterranean” (Holland 78). Palmerston’s speech, as Abulafia points out, attempted to justify the Royal Navy’s earlier blockade of Athens. In this speech, Palmerston is defending military activity at the expense of classicism by redirecting British cultural heritage; he is, as Abulafia says, “resoundingly appealing to the classics against, not in favor of, the behaviour of the Greeks … Something of the spirit of ancient Hellas could be assumed to have persisted in the Greek love of liberty, but it was not easy to see the descendants of Perikles and Plato in the Greeks of the early nineteenth century. And if one wanted true Romans, one needed only to turn to the British” (564).

Particular concerns of language and narration come into focus when we examine the travel material through a narrative lens. Though many scholars, such as Buzard, have addressed issues of traversing and representing space, there remains a dearth of scholarship addressing time and temporality in travel texts—even in Mediterranean narratives wherein conflicting temporalities expand across multiple scales from the individual to the political. This gap, I believe, occurs largely because time has been the object of narrative methodologies (narratology, formalism, new criticism) that focus on textual objects definitively termed “literature” (poetry, novels, short stories) in order to
analyze elements of construction within a whole, contained text. Meanwhile, travel
writing, as traditionally designated “nonfiction,” has been the purview of cultural studies.
But travel narratives are still narratives. They, too, for all their verisimilitude and
conventions of authenticity and authority, are literary constructions that have the
additional challenge of depicting real, often fraught and over-determined landscapes in
accordance with a fairly rigid set of descriptive conventions. As Eitan Bar-Yosef
explains, “This interplay between texts and real-life experience is typical of all travel, but
it is particularly typical of travel writing, as the readers-cum-producers enter the literary
tradition which shaped their expectations in the first place” (67). Specifically regarding
Victorian novels, Elaine Freedgood has examined how realist fiction can cross
boundaries of fictionality—a process that she describes as the “colonial effect” of
metalepsis, through which British readers imagine a fictional story that occurs in a real
but distant place and are also directed, through paratext, to similar objects at home (her
eexample being a novel set in Canada that references North American specimens
displayed in the British Museum). Travel writing, whether it purports to be true or
imaginary, crosses boundaries of fictionality just as its content crosses national or
geographic boundaries; in this sense, its form enacts its content.

The challenges of representing real places in narrative increase in spaces held as
formative in Western culture and identity, such as Greece or Palestine. In addition to
balancing real and imaginary, nineteenth-century writers had to consider prevalent
present and historic or even sacred depictions of these places, weighing their (often
derogatory) subjective impressions against cultural reverence. As I show in chapter three,
publishers could observe strict limits regarding how honestly one could describe
Jerusalem, for example—limits that did not complicate descriptions of places like India or Australia, where imperialism could strip the landscape of its history and rewrite culture through whatever violence best suited Britain’s commercial objectives, as scholars of empire and colonialism have well documented. But this method of erasure could never succeed for the British in the Mediterranean, or, as Hardy designated it in *Poems of Pilgrimage*, the “epic-famed, god-haunted Central Sea.” Violence—either ideological or, as in the case Palmerston defended, physical—in the Mediterranean’s revered landscapes required cultural justification back home that was not required of violence in other places. The Mediterranean included places where antique and sacred converged: heritage spaces. I examine how British writers engaged these lands together with existing ideology about cultural lineage and empire to produce a body of what I designate as heritage discourses centered on the geographical, historical, and imaginary Mediterranean.

To weave together the narrative work on time and temporality studies in fiction with the work on space, historicism, and travel, though, requires a historical study of time and time-keeping. Time, the following chapters demonstrate, can be a powerful organizing form capable of arranging both a self-contained narrative and the world that produced it. Time is what Caroline Levine defines as a “portable” form, “afford[ing] movement across varied materials” (7). The formalist J. Hillis Miller pointed out long ago, in his study of the Victorian novel, that “[t]ime is a fundamental dimension of fictional form”; a novel is “a temporal rhythm made up of the movement of the minds of the narrator and his characters in their dance of approach and withdrawal” (6). I argue that we can consider narrative time in the traveler’s temporal crises when she or he encounters conflicting rhythms in foreign places.
Narrative can experiment with timescales that manifest through travel and echo them back, both into the political world and into the literary world. But, as scholars of cultural studies have similarly argued, time organizes lived experience, from the individual rhythms of daily life to the collective “imagined community,” to use Benedict Anderson’s popular term. Srinivas Aravamudan, too, has analyzed the political and especially imperialist effects of literary forms outward onto a reading public through what he terms “national realism.” He traces how national realism and “[c]ultural nationalism … created coherent accounts of ‘Englishness’ through mechanisms such as the domestic-realist novel, but also through procedures of literary history that documented influence and generic change, canonized great authors, and identified literary culture as proceeding causally from predecessors and progenitors to inheritors and successors. Meanwhile, this diachronic romance means that transnational and transcultural processes were either silently ignored or deliberately marginalized” (27 and 11). Aravamudan focuses specifically on literature and the nation in the eighteenth century, but his concept of literature’s active role in nation-making demonstrates the portability of some narrative forms and processes; he reads these back onto literature as well, noting how the idea of Englishness helped create a canon. As Aravamudan suggests, I will read across genres. Time and travel writing—which I define capiously to encompass poetry, fiction, and nonfiction—in and about the Mediterranean’s antique and sacred lands are the narrative objects of this thesis.

**Temporality and Travel**
My work aims to explore time as a connection between literary and cultural studies. Narrative studies has not recognized travel writing as literature—as a product of the same constructions and issues of forms as poems and novels. Similarly, cultural studies has not been attuned to issues of form and the richness of analysis in and across individual texts—even those produced by professional authors, such as Charles Dickens, Harriet Martineau, William Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope. It is impossible to read travel writing thoroughly without both historicist methods and formalist methods, to account for its crossing of literary categories and genres. To ignore these texts is to participate in a “diachronic romance,” reducing and flattening nineteenth-century constructions of history, modernization, nationality, and globalization—and, of course, literature’s role in exploring and challenging all these concepts as constructions. My project intervenes, then, most significantly in three fields: temporality studies, new formalism, and transnational studies.

Temporality studies is an interdisciplinary field still emerging among philosophy, histories of science, cognition, and literature. Susie Vrobel, for example, takes up practical applications of temporality studies to posit a fractal time, which I explore more fully in chapter two. In outlining this temporality, Vrobel examines “the notion of duration and the structure of our Now using a phenomenological approach,” which she traces through Edmund Husserl, to focus on “our perception of duration and possible ways of modifying it” (Fractal Time vii, 13-5). Significant for Vrobel’s phenomenological approach but also for my literary one is a distinction between “two mutually exclusive temporal dimensions that manifest themselves as simultaneity and succession” (vii). For narrative, whether poetic or prose, simultaneity and succession
entangle. Husserl, as Vrobel notes, describes this phenomenon of experiential temporality through the metaphor of music, in which sequential notes can be heard not only in succession but also as a “coherent whole” in harmony.

Literary scholars have applied phenomenological studies of time to narrative, but these studies, while providing crucial developments in theory, are primarily limited to modern and contemporary literature—especially to postmodernist texts. Working forward from Paul Ricoeur’s foundational three-volume work of theory, for example, Mark Currie insists, “It is important to see all novels as novels about time, and perhaps most important in the case of novels for which time does not seem to be what is principally at stake,” although he considers contemporary novels as intervening in “narrative and philosophy” most radically (1 and 4). Jesse Matz’s “How to Do Time with Texts,” too, identifies a widespread critical interest in the modernist defiance of clocks and their mechanical “homogenous time” (836). Tracing this defiance through Henri Bergson and Salvador Dalí, Matz locates a general push to “defy clock time and realize temporal heterogeneity” in the twentieth century (836). Time keeping and time breaking go hand in hand, especially in literature. As Maureen Perkins asserts, “Just as a counter-imperial discourse was always present alongside the imperial, even at the very zenith of British power, so a counter-temporal discourse can be detected alongside the apparent homogeneity of Greenwich Mean Time” (13). Counter- or alter-temporalities became especially apparent after Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833) ushered in a sense of deep time, which I discuss in chapter two. For now, suffice it to note, as do John May and Nigel Thrift, that “the message of geology was of the earth’s great antiquity,” which “encouraged people to think in great expanses of time … at precisely the moment
at which people were also beginning to pay attention to ever smaller fractions of time,”
for instance, through industrialism’s organization of days into hours, minutes, and
seconds (12). The effect was a “multiplicity of times,” both individually and politically.
However, “[i]f nations, too, are actually made up of all kinds of time,” as Matz argues,
“then we need some theory other than that which has held sway since Gradgrind,
Bergson, Thompson, and Foucault” (836).

To temporality studies, which has been shaped primarily by phenomenology, I
contribute a study of temporal forms. I define temporal forms as the organizing forces of
time that function in the space between literary form and content without being held to
that textual space. As Levine explains, multiple forms can (and usually do) work
simultaneously (7-8). Time, as I will show, is a singularizing expression that encapsulates
multiple simultaneous temporal forms across scales, from individual daily experience to
histories of empires. A poem, for example, organizes meter and rhyme according to its
poetic form. At the same time, its content follows an internal structure of logic or theme.
The assumption that these two schema interact is a basic tenet of twentieth-century
formalist criticisms. We can talk about the relation of form to content as a tension, a
conflict, a harmony, a reinforcement. But between these coexisting, simultaneously
organizing schema, I argue, is a third organizing force: time. Time can organize from
within narrative layers, but it is not necessarily contained within, or limited to, that
narrative whole. Temporal forms present a conceptual challenge because they can
organize in conjunction with textual mechanics and content or in opposition; they can
seep into a text’s other organizing schema so that it becomes difficult or even impossible
to extricate them except in moments of textual rupture or revelation that expose each strata as distinct. And they can resonate outward, into lived experience.

In the chapters that follow, I will analyze four temporal forms that manifest in texts but expand into real places and lived experience. Inheritance, embeddedness, presentism, and network operate across texts and contexts, interacting with other simultaneous forms with varied effects. Even a single form, such as inheritance, can produce different timescapes, as I show in chapter one through Lord Byron’s genealogical palimpsest and Felicia Hemans’s cultural genealogy. Both these temporal forms, I argue, organize history and empire according to inheritance, but because Byron articulates time through landscape and Hemans through empires, the form that operates through the mechanics of succession manifests differently.

Temporal forms “afford” high “portability” between texts and contexts. While it might be difficult (but, perhaps, still possible), for example, to organize a political group according to a sonnet form or a marriage plot, temporal forms can exceed the texts that make them manifest. But we do not typically observe the temporal forms that organize our own experience unless something—such as the content of a story—makes them visible to us as forms rather than as natural and universal forces. Consider the extreme case of a journey not to the Mediterranean but to a fully imagined place: Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). In this fantasy travel account, Carroll stages a conflict of temporal forms between narrative voice and plot (the flow of content) when Alice encounters the White Queen, who experiences time “backwards” (155). Alice’s journey extends in one direction, aligning with the forward flow of narrative sequence as we read. All is well. The White Queen, though, is going the
opposite direction temporally; she is “living backwards.” Whereas Alice’s memory only works in one direction, the White Queen’s “memory works both ways” so that she can “remember things before they happen.” Alice tries to comprehend the conflict of temporal experiences, which the White Queen dramatizes by screaming before pricking her finger on her brooch. In this moment, Carroll brings multiple invisible flows of narrative time into the open by causing them to collide and break apart at the level of content (or, in narratological terms, within the fabula). Like Alice, we as readers are confused because the characters, who exist within one level of the narration, nevertheless experience conflicting temporalities (had the break in temporal experience occurred as a metalepsis, for instance, between the characters and the narrator, it would not strike us as so “impossible” because we are familiar with realist narrative technique). This “dreadfully confusing” confrontation is simplified by the fact that we cannot take the book and repeat Alice’s itinerary through the looking-glass; Alice’s experience with the White Queen in the wood only exists within the book. Dickens, however, describes a similarly “incoherent but delightful jumble in my brain,” in which he “took but little heed of time, and had but little understanding of its flight,” that is not a Wonderland but, as he declares in the last word of the chapter, is actually “VENICE” (Pictures from Italy 77 and 85).

Traveling to real, well-known places, I will show, creates conflicts similar to Carroll’s fantasy land where nonsense is commonplace. In fact, the conflicts among temporal forms in travel writing have an added level of disorientation when the author experiences something he or she has imagined and intends to relate later as a memory. Travel is, in a sense, to go through the looking-glass where, as Anthony Trollope’s
narrator explains in *The Bertrams* (1859), “[T]hese after all are the traveller’s first main questions. When is the table d’hôte? Where is the cathedral? At what hour does the train start tomorrow morning?” (90). Rhythms of daily life that normally pass so unnoticed as to be regarded as natural—when to eat, when to sleep, when to pray, when goods and people arrive and depart—become pure aperture, matters of urgency and suspense, which guidebooks attempt to resolve.\(^{12}\)

Matz’s call for a different theory of time between literature and its contents, I believe, is in part a call for a different methodology; I locate this alternate theory and methodology in the nineteenth century. Whereas Ricoeur uses “cosmological time” to signify the “clock time, objective time, linear time” that differ from phenomenological time, I argue that “clock” and “linear” times are far from “objective”; instead, these are naturalized, homogenizing, artificial structures for counting duration according to various dominating structures (qtd. in Currie 32-3). These temporal forms become apparent when some part of the narrative for telling them ruptures or collides with competing forms, like the White Queen “living backwards.” Part of what I seek to show is that time has a history—and one that is politically, religiously, and philosophically fraught. Albert Einstein, reminiscing on his Special Theory of Relativity (1905), famously said, “At last it came to me that time was suspect” (qtd. in Ermarth 16). Einstein’s early twentieth-century theory radically altered what people assumed about time—namely, that it was, as Isaac Newton had put it in 1687, “absolute” (1:9). But nineteenth-century writers, I show, also experimented with the limits of time as a force and a form. We should see Einstein and his contemporaries not as breaking with centuries of uncontested absolute time but as a continuation of decades of writers who, too, recognized that “time was suspect.”
My dual attention to temporality as an organizing literary and socio-political schema draws from methods of inquiry in what has recently come to be called new formalism. New formalism, although far from a strictly defined school or methodology, encourages attention to how forms operate between and across aesthetics and politics, to use Marjorie Levinson’s two primary categories (558). While the term “new formalism” has become prominent only in the last decade or so, gaining critical traction most recently through Levine’s work, the practice of analyzing how the world can be narrated and organized ideologically and then deployed politically has long circulated in work on historical narrative and studies of material objects as components of political identity. Scholars from Hayden White to Claude Lévi-Strauss have drawn attention to the narrative constructedness of history and social organization; Susan Stewart, Jean Baudrillard, and Simon Goldhill, among many others, have shown how the arrangement of objects in a space makes collective meaning. My work argues that we must read narrative as an active and constitutive part of these organizations of culture, and that time is the organizing form that moves us logically across this scale, from a poem to a museum to an empire. If the nation and even the larger empire constructs its common identity through heritage discourses, it makes sense to analyze those discourses at the level of their narrative structures.

Empire is significant to my work both as the largest register of my formal analysis and as a matter of content in the literature on which I focus. But the models of empire assumed in much postcolonial scholarship that traces the flow of power, government, and culture from an imperial center to its peripheries do not account for the circum-Mediterranean region’s significance for British imperialism. Britain maintained
transnational relationships with many Mediterranean lands that were not formal colonies but that nevertheless were governed or dominated by British Empire. In the Mediterranean, heritage was doubly complex because it both justified imperial expansion and circumvented the kind of modernization that proved effective for empire elsewhere. How, for example, can we understand Percy Shelley’s proclamation in the preface to *Hellas* (1821) that “We are all Greeks” at the same time as Britain relinquished Parga to the Ottoman Empire? (409). Heritage discourses that reinforced a shared identity pitted preservation against military expansion in the Mediterranean where empires overlapped; these same historical motives, though, facilitated archaeological imperialism, launching controversies, such as the Elgin Marbles debates, that endure today.

**The Other Lake District**

I have deliberately centered my research on transnational writing of the Mediterranean because this region in the nineteenth-century made issues of space and time urgent. The Mediterranean and its surrounding famous landscapes were ubiquitous across genres and literary forms in the nineteenth century. The Mediterranean region, although it remains under-examined in current scholarship, serves as the theme, the setting, or the space that enabled the production of texts by many well-known authors, including Lord Byron, Felicia Hemans, Lady Morgan, Mary and Percy Shelley, William Gell, Lady Blessington, Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Frances and Anthony Trollope, Edward Lear, Benjamin Disraeli, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Christina and D.G. Rossetti, Thomas Hardy, Mary Augusta Ward, Vernon Lee, John Ruskin, Henry James,
George Gissing—I could go on. I include this list to emphasize that the following chapters do not attempt to trace the Mediterranean exhaustively through nineteenth-century British literature. The Mediterranean influenced nineteenth-century British literature as thoroughly as the Lake District influenced all the various Romantic inhabitants of Dove Cottage. In fact, I suspect that there are not many themes one could trace so pervasively across genres in nineteenth-century literature.

The main texts I examine in this project span genres, including three long poems (Felicia Hemans’s *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy* [1816] and *Modern Greece* [1817] and Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*), two travelogues (Dickens’s *Pictures from Italy* and Thackeray’s *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*), two novels (Trollope’s *The Bertrams* [1859] and Susan Horner’s *Isolina* [1873], and two guidebooks (Susan and Joanna Horner’s *Walks in Florence* [1873] and John Ruskin’s *Mornings in Florence* [1875-1877]). With the exception of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, these are not commonly studied texts; however, with the exception of the Horners, these are all commonly studied authors—a misalignment that reiterates travel writing’s history as a peripheral literature. In addition, I have tried to give a sense of the textual landscapes and traditions of which these narratives are a part, such as chapter two’s discussion of the imaginative and scientific narratives of Pompeii or chapter three’s discussion of the specific challenges of English writers on the Holy Land. Some of these texts I encountered by accident, but the choices I’ve made about what to include here were not arbitrary. I have consciously chosen to follow travel tropes across genre boundaries where I see narratives participating in, or engaging with, British heritage discourses through the Mediterranean. These travel texts are not simply reminiscences of individuals
in an exotic or exoticized spaces; they actively reflect on the political and cultural
apparatuses that render both real and imagined travel in those real and imagined spaces
temporally surreal.

The settlement of the Straits Convention on 13 July 1841 meant that, as Holland
notes, “Great Britain could to a large degree control entrance into and exit from the
Mediterranean at both ends, that is, through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles”
(65). Despite incessant skirmishes, revolutions, and political uprisings throughout the
region, therefore, the Mediterranean became commonly figured as a stable “British Lake”
(66). As the sense of Britain’s identity expanded and contracted to accommodate naval
endeavors in the Mediterranean, travel among the region’s landmarks produced a unique
crucible of competing cultures and cartographies. British control of the sea for safe and
increasingly inexpensive transport brought together different travel modes, including
Grand Tourism, pilgrimage, and exoticized adventuring, as Thackeray demonstrates in
*Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* when he describes an evening at Jaffa
via the *Arabian Nights*, remarking that, even though his traveling party is dining in an
antique land, “we wondered to think that London was only three weeks off” (183). The
temporal closeness between London and Jaffa is a product of the steam technology that
transports Thackeray to a space he attempts to narrate in the context of the *Arabian
Nights*, but while there, he cannot escape the present (foreign and political) landscape as
it exists under Ottoman rule and not narrated imaginatively via antiquated literature.

For some, the Mediterranean was the sophisticated space of the Grand Tour,
linked with ideas of aristocratic education, high culture, and well-developed taste. As
Chloe Chard argues, a Grand Tour mode of travel extended well beyond the Napoleonic
Wars “as a set of concepts, assumptions, arguments, theoretical options and rhetorical strategies which determine the range and limits of what can be said or written about European travels that entail a journey southwards across the Alps” (*Tristes Plaisirs* 9). “Within the discourse of European travel,” she claims, “the concept of the Grand Tour is a culturally and socially privileged way of travelling that allows a speaking subject to claim specific forms of authority” (9). For other nineteenth-century travelers, the Mediterranean provided an extant antiquity available for study. Subjects including “neoclassicism, medievalism, and global natural history,” Noah Heringman explains, “flourished together, fostered by the disciplinary umbrella of antiquarianism and by an increased demand for, and division of, scholarly labour that preceded the ‘second scientific revolution’, the rapid proliferation of specialized disciplines after 1800” (2).14 For still other nineteenth-century travelers, the Mediterranean enabled imperial expansion and inter-imperial commercial development. My work sees empire as only one type of transnationalism, and one that is very often in conflict with, but always informing and being informed by, other modes such as leisure tourism, historical and proto-archeological travel, migrant and immigrant work (a category in which I include, perhaps somewhat controversially, “genteel” occupations, such as artists, writers, diplomats, international bankers, etc.).

The Mediterranean, as both a sea and a collection of famous “shores,” functioned simultaneously as a place of crossing and as a destination. It is easy to understand the significance of the Mediterranean as a geographical connection and division between Great Britain and its eastern colonies—particularly when we understand how thoroughly the British military depended on the navy for imperial expansion and control. But my
work begins by considering the Mediterranean as more significant ideologically than a pathway from London to Calcutta or Hong Kong and more culturally critical than as the acclimatizing lazaretto between West and East that Howson describes. During the nineteenth century, the Mediterranean, rather than merely a thoroughfare to the east, was vital in its own right. In fact, concern for immediate reconnaissance between British naval commanders and the ships in the water led the British government to reconfigure its centralized flow of power as a commanding network within two decades of the decisive Battle of Waterloo. Holland notes that, in 1834, the ambassador and the commander-in-chief stationed “away” in the Mediterranean gained “joint contingent powers” with London to mobilize the standing naval fleet (62). Crucially, “this meant that events of potentially immense cost to Britain … might in effect be triggered, not from Downing Street, but from the embassy in Constantinople and naval headquarters in South Street, Valletta” (62). From a martial perspective, at least, the Mediterranean was a British extension—and as a result, it could become so commercially as well, as I discuss in chapter three with Thackeray’s travel satire, Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo.

The success of British imperial commerce, as Thackeray illustrates, depended on the Mediterranean functioning as a connection and not as a separation, while simultaneously depending on divisions of east and west that mapped problematically onto constructions of heritage in antique lands. For example, the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company’s Guidebook for Passengers (1893) ends, after nearly ninety pages of information for British steam travelers about everything from the best shoes to wear on
deck to the distances between every port served by the P&O’s steam fleet and rail network, with an image:

![Figure 1: Peninsular & Oriental Company illustration, 1893 (88).](image)

This picture reveals several important themes for a study of nineteenth-century British-Mediterranean travel. First, the ideology of orientalism, of self and other, depends on commercially driven *exchange* more than *division* (but the two are not mutually exclusive). Secondly, in this illustration of cultural feminine ideals drawn by a Western company for a New World audience (the guidebook was prepared for the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago), the East, as one might expect, is orientalized, the position of her arms mimicking contemporary images of Eastern dancers. Meanwhile, the West, fair and racially northern, is dressed and posed in classical style, reminiscent of Greek statue. The Latin motto in the foreground, and the dominant P&O logo remind us that the West retains the power of narration, with the English labels “West” and “East” on the ribbon
reinforcing a lineage from the Greek and Roman to the British Empire. The linked letters connecting East and West, the motto, the ribbon, and the leering sun in the background draw the figures together, emphasizing that the two personifications, while separate, are not truly separable—at least in the era of British maritime dominance.

Mediterranean lands were crucial to imperialist ideology—crucial to imperialism, and yet resistant to colonization. Sioban Carroll uses the phrase “uncolonizable space” to describe the practical difficulties of exerting political authority over geographies like air and sea that cannot be physically occupied with any kind of permanence. The traveler at sea can only claim narrative sovereignty (or sovereignty of any kind) over the space she or he physically occupies at a given time. There are no places to carve one’s name or to gather distinct souvenirs. Most importantly, there are no physical structures or unique topographical features, no landmarks or ruins, through which to orient one’s travel narrative in space or time, given that a nineteenth-century seascape would be indistinguishable from a ninth-century one. I endeavor to show that this logic of the uncolonizable space, while certainly applicable to the sea, can function on land as well. Speaking specifically of Palestine and the surrounding lands familiar in British culture through the Bible and Christian geography, Bar-Yosef argues, “[T]he same elements which made the Holy Land so familiar also complicated its construction as a ‘colonizable’ space” (92). This concept of uncolonizability, I argue, is applicable beyond specifically religious landscapes to other Mediterranean places revered through classical antiquity, lands where, in Bar-Yosef’s words, British travelers express “an already existing claim to domination” (8). One might also think of the force of economic control or “informal empire” that is the focus of scholars of empire, including Enseng Ho, Robert
Aguirre, and Jessie Reeder. I am concerned here not with the New World as a space of exploitable labor and resources but with the Old World, where dominance proves necessary but exploitation presents an ideological contradiction. This project investigates the temporal registers of imperialism in uncolonizable spaces, the tension between past and present, between preservation and modernization.

**Touring Antiquity: The Mediterranean and Heritage Discourse**

The reader of Mediterranean travel writing may never see Cairo or Athens and compare the physical cities to accounts of them for accuracy, but that reader can (and probably will) judge the authenticity of those descriptions based on how they conform (or fail to conform) to countless travel texts, both new and old, circulating in the English literary market as memoirs, fiction, essays, poems, etc. These narratives, I argue, function as heritage discourses, constructing a shared sense of what a destination like Athens means for nineteenth-century Britons, as well as what nineteenth-century Britain means through that culturally constructed Athens. The ideological Athens becomes, through its pervasive presence in literature, art, education, government, etc., an element of both imagination and memory for British readers. Because Athens is an extant place, however, travel to Greece, though motivated by classical literature and art, can create conflicting perceptions. For both Byron and Thackeray, for instance, travel to contemporary Greece pits sensory experiences against sacred depictions. Their accounts of travel in this space attempt to reconcile what they experience with what they had imagined and what they remember reading from childhood, highlighting conflicting standards of authenticity.
Which is the real Athens—the ground under the traveler’s feet or the landscape as it appears in art and literature from Homer through the author’s present?

Mediterranean travel writing is a baggy genre, encompassing varied forms as nineteenth-century authors traced their own footsteps over the hackneyed itineraries of countless predecessors. In *Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of the Modern Journey*, John Zilcosky asks, “What is travel writing? Attempts to define it have immediately run up against the problem of travel writing’s heterogeneous form and content: written in prose, poetry, and dialogue, it appears as diaries, letters, tour guides, scientific writing, commercial reports, and ‘literary’ accounts. Furthermore, travel writing’s *style* is notoriously hybrid, ranging from the sober and scientific to the poetic and rhetorical” (7). Describing not only existing places but also *highly textualized* existing places, these travel accounts must still navigate fairly rigid literary conventions. Mediterranean travel writing encounters an additional challenge: it must bridge backward-looking history and forward-focused progress narratives. To read this interaction of personal time, cultural heritage, and narrative sequence requires a literary analysis of travel writing. However, much of the foundational scholarship on travel writing has been limited to cultural studies and history, where scholars read travel texts as nonfictional and authentic historical artifacts that convey their authors’ genuine experiences and impressions of journeying. I argue that this first principle of nonfictionality imposes disciplinary boundaries between, for example, Byron’s poem *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and Thackeray’s travel sketches, though, as I discuss in chapter three, the latter draws overtly on the former.
By acknowledging the literariness of travel narratives, we can begin to examine how they function within literature more broadly (beyond the “diachronic romance” of the canon). Dickens, for example, grapples with temporal and spatial paradoxes in his early *Pictures from Italy*, as I discuss in chapter two. These issues of telling time and space resurface throughout his more famous works, including his final, incomplete novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), in which Dickens’s depictions of Cloisterham forcibly recall descriptions of the crumbling ruins at Rome from the travel book. While my aim here is not to trace trajectories of travel influence across the works of individual authors, I do argue that literary criticism must recognize generally marginalized travel texts as central to the development of literature in the nineteenth century. Many of the nineteenth century’s canonical authors developed narrative innovations through travel writing’s unique challenges. Travel writing, and especially Mediterranean travel writing, exposed them to difficulties and possibilities of using language to represent real places and to navigate the difficult coexistence of here and there, self and others, then and now.

In addition to reading travel texts as more than auxiliary to literature, we should read these texts as *literature*; we should examine formal literary elements, especially those, like irony or apophasis, that function precisely through a misalignment between words and meaning. Arguably, the most consistently realistic texts on which I focus are the novels by Trollope (in chapter three) and Susan Horner (in chapter four); of the two semi-autobiographical travel narratives, Dickens’s *Pictures from Italy* describes Venice via a dream sequence (only naming it in the last word of the chapter) and Thackeray writes his entire “White Squall” chapter in verse. Even the guidebooks announce their departures from tangible referents. As I discuss in chapter four, Susan and Joanna
Horner’s guidebook, *Walks in Florence*, acknowledges that some of the objects they describe in their Uffizi itinerary are no longer there; John Ruskin’s *Mornings in Florence*, too, explicitly acknowledges the narrative fabrication of his six consecutive days.

Though I remain aware of a long nineteenth century that stretches from the French Revolution through the turn of the twentieth century, the bulk of my focus in these chapters centers on texts published between 1812 and 1877. Travel writing, of course, is not bound to this narrower period, but, I argue, the alignment of imperial politics with technological advances facilitated a boom in Mediterranean travel writing at this time. As Anthony Trollope describes in *The Bertrams*, for example, by the mid-century, Egypt replaces “the south of Devonshire” as “the only air capable of reinvigorating the English lungs” because it is easily accessible by steam (555). Though, as I discuss in chapter one, armchair travel was popular even while the Continent was closed to British travelers, advancements in steam and rail technology made actual travel accessible for an unprecedented number of people across classes as the nineteenth century progressed. Indeed, the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 served as a watershed for British travel that ushered in an era of Mediterranean fervor stretching from philhellenism to egyptomania. By the 1870s, however, the revolutionary rhetoric of liberty and independence that had united people across the Mediterranean against the French, Austrian, and Ottoman Empires began to shift into nationalist rhetoric. As I show in chapter four, wars across the Continent in the 1870s began to erode European identities, and, with the fall of imperial France in 1871, the significance and urgency of the Mediterranean for the British navy began to wane. Masses of tourists still visited Greece.
and Italy, but attention was increasingly drawn to the interior of Africa, central Asia, and the distant colonies.

*Temporal Forms* takes up Anglo-Mediterranean affairs during a period of simultaneous access and instability. Even though Britain had imagined the Mediterranean as a “stable, British lake,” as I mention above, control remained tense and uncertain. During the second half of the 1870s, though, the power balance of the Mediterranean radically shifted. In 1875, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli oversaw the British Empire’s purchase of 44 per cent of the Suez Canal Company’s shares, which, as Abulafia notes, “had enormous consequences for Egypt in the Mediterranean” and “vastly increase[ed] the influence of Great Britain in Egyptian affairs” (554). In fact, British control over the eastern Mediterranean was both a means and an end for ensuring access to Suez. Both to protect its shares and to increase their value, Britain looked to Ottoman-controlled Cyprus in search of a naval base more geographically convenient to the east than the base at Malta. As Holland puts it, “A Gibraltar in the east was what, rhetorically as well as strategically, Cyprus provided” (105). When the Ottoman Empire ceded Cyprus to the British in 1878, Disraeli returned to London “to a cheering throng of ‘jingoes’—the term was coined at this time—who acclaimed him on the way to Downing Street as ‘the Duke of Cyprus’” (107). According to Holland, this point of Mediterranean policy formed a “totemic moment in British politics, the imagery and rhetoric of which were to last a long time”; most significantly for my project, “[t]he acquisition of Cyprus sealed the identity of Britain as a pan-Mediterranean power with a permanent reach from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Levant. This command no longer fluctuated with events, prone to successive panics, but had become embedded in the life
of the region” (107). After 1878, Britain’s relationship with the Mediterranean changed as lands became simultaneously more British politically and less British ideologically, such as with the establishment of Egypt as a British protectorate in 1882. This establishment of British power, for my purposes, essentially colonized the Mediterranean far more effectively than constant fluctuating naval presence had been able to do. The acquisition of Cyprus, therefore, marks the furthest edge of my historical range here. Just as the British victory at Waterloo had re-opened the Mediterranean to British travelers, Britain’s assertion of full control from Gibraltar to Cyprus reconceived the Mediterranean as a modern and modernizing space.

I begin chapter one, “Inheriting Antiquity,” by examining models of history that imagine a cultural inheritance in poetry. I argue that, in the verse of both Byron and Hemans, the Battle of Waterloo becomes simultaneously an ideological and a geopolitical lynch-pin connecting Britain to the Mediterranean for antiquaries, politicians, and tourists. Hemans organizes history and British politics genealogically, establishing Britain as the rightful heir to Greek and Roman culture. She draws on universal heritage discourses at the heart of British philhellenism that required Britain to act in deference to the preservation of antiquities. Whereas in Hemans’s poetry this is best achieved by relocating historical artifacts to Britain—leaving Greece to the Greeks and the Greeks to the Ottoman Empire—Byron advocates the inverse. Greek antiquities, he argues, must be preserved in place because the landscape itself contains cultural significance. For Byron, history in the Mediterranean is a palimpsestic layering of experience (personal, cultural, and political). Through both Hemans’s and Byron’s popular verse, and through the sharp increase in circulating bodies and artifacts that verse describes, post-Napoleonic
philhellenism launched England into a Neoclassical self-identity on a scale that the eighteenth-century aristocratic Grand Tour could never achieve.

Much of the travel writing of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean grapples with an incongruity among imagination, memory, experience, and representation. In Chapter two, “Embeddedness in Place, Time, and History,” I analyze how geology and archaeology in southern Italy produced a space in which Britons could imagine a direct connection to what they perceived as their imperial ancestor, Rome. To analyze the remains of that ancestor, professional antiquarians at Pompeii like Sir William Gell sought to distinguish their work—work focused on objective observation of material details—from trends of early nineteenth-century leisure travel that sought to abstract landscapes into correct scenes and to record subjective impressions inspired by those scenes. But the extraordinary preservation of quotidian Roman life at Pompeii—instead of the great hero tales so familiar through classical education—challenged visitors like Dickens to rethink the scale of historical narrative. When *Pictures from Italy* depicts “a history in every stone that strews the ground,” then, I contend that it is reshaping history from a sequence of grand political events to a fractal structure that embeds potentially infinite self-similar moments at fine scales.

Mediterranean places were of supreme importance to both travelers and official agents of empire for strikingly different temporal reasons: the leisure travelers sought to visit antiquity; the military personnel and politicians sought to secure the British Empire’s future interests; and the antiquarians sought knowledge about the past and, eventually, the present. Recognition of these competing temporal perspectives resulted, at times, in a push to see the modern foreign space as well as the antique land. A.H.
Layard’s *Nineveh and Its Remains* (1849) marveled that “Although the names of Nineveh and Assyria have been familiar to us from childhood, and are connected with our earliest impressions derived from Inspired Writings, it is only when we ask ourselves what we really know concerning them, that we discover our ignorance of all that relates to their history, and even to their geographic position” (1:xx). Mediterranean spaces make vestiges of England’s origin stories tangible, legitimizing theories of exceptionalism and dominance; additionally, as Layard indicates, when visitors go to these places and confront the difference between the real and the imagined, they must also confront their ignorance about the world beyond the English cultural imagination.18 There’s a simultaneous knowledge, instilled through ubiquitous biblical and classical education, that one is or should be “master” over ancient history and culture (but perhaps is not) and an awareness that even the best knowledge of this type is not adequate preparation for interacting with real people and real politics in these real places.19 This knowledge gap was filled initially by other travelers’ firsthand accounts and even by descriptive fiction, such as Germaine de Staël’s *Corinne; or Italy*.

The relative stability of the “British Lake” after 1841 allowed easier access to the material places Britons had long imagined, which conversely produced the sense of instability when tourists actually confronted the physical places. The conventions of writing travel—and especially, I argue, of writing Mediterranean travel, which is the purview not only of individual experiences and reports but also of history, religion, and education—became more familiar, diffuse, and thus rigid over the nineteenth century. Buzard parallels these stylistic changes with changes in travel itself, arguing that with “technological and bureaucratic aids to tourism [that] evolved during the century, self-
styled ‘travellers’ were left to look for their privileged experiences of authenticity in the interstices of that ever-tightening network” (The Beaten Track 31). By the 1840s and 50s, which I discuss in chapter three, travel in the Mediterranean (and hence travel writing about the Mediterranean) was accessible even for non-elite Britons. The actual destinations they prepared to see contrasted with biblical, classical, and literary accounts, inspiring tales of disappointment that also quickly became trite in travel writing; yet, individuals still penned missives about how their experiences of sites they had imagined as vacant and picturesque were choked with noisy modern tourists. This mass of compatriots that English travel writers constantly bemoaned, though, was itself a part of the fluctuating tourist milieu—a dynamic matrix of landmarks, subjects, populations, nature, history, politics, and literature that constantly crossed boundaries between the text, the reader, and the broader world. Italy, Greece, and the Holy Land in particular proved complicated destinations for mid-Victorian travelers because these places were originary spaces of British Christian identity, as well as centers of British political and commercial interests. The disappointment that became common and even expected in travel writing had to be expressed in strictly conventional ways in antique and sacred Mediterranean lands. Deviance from such conventions threatened to undermine British identity at the moment when Britain was trying to establish itself as a global empire and advocating that cultural identity as superior to the world’s savagery—a category capacious enough to include inhabitants of formal colonies, Catholics, and anyone with whom Britain happened to be at war.

As I discuss in chapter three, “Profaning Time and Space in Genre and Geography,” both objective and subjective perspectives that revered and thus sought to
preserve antique lands clashed with the demands of mid-Victorian modernization.

Thackeray’s travel satire Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo and Anthony Trollope’s novel The Bertrams, I argue, use literary techniques like focalization to determine what in the Levant—especially in Palestine, Greece, and Egypt—is worth preserving and what ought to be made new. In my analysis of Thackeray’s writing, I engage Paul de Man’s definition of irony as a “rhetoric of temporality” that creates interpretive distance between the present narrating subject and his or her past narrative self. This irony in Thackeray’s travel writing, I argue, produces a text that is simultaneously performing the imperialist’s gaze and self-referentially indicting British imperialism in the Mediterranean. It is a self-referentiality that depends on apparatuses of empire and travel to exist, but then critiques those same systems from its place within them.

Trollope’s travel fiction, however, focalizes the sacred landscapes of Palestine and Alexandria through multiple voices, recasting their temporal associations for English readers. Because Trollope’s narrative is shrouded in protective fiction, different characters can describe, use, and redefine revered landscapes, leaving the strong narrator’s voice to evaluate the propriety of each possible perspective. I contend that Trollope evaluates these destinations and declares them either perpetually antique (and therefore sacred) or no longer containing Western heritage (and therefore available for Britain to modernize). In doing so, I argue, Trollope prefigures Britain’s twentieth-century geopolitical rebranding of the Levant or Near East into a new region with new connotations: the Middle East.
Questions of borders and nations dominated nineteenth-century Europe as the French, British, Ottoman, Austrian, and Russian Empires competed for control in the Mediterranean and on the Continent. Britain’s Crimean victory in 1856, Italy’s Unification in 1861, and Germany’s victory over France in 1871—just to name a few events of international effect—realigned European structures of power and identity. For British travelers in these spaces, political changes could prove unsettling, particularly in densely international places like Florence, which I consider in chapter four. I recover the work of Susan and Joanna Horner, two unmarried daughters of Leonard Horner, the sometime-president of the Royal Geological Society. Susan and Joanna lived much of their adult life together in Florence and wrote about European history, art, and politics. The sisters traveled frequently, residing often with their aunt in Paris, their sisters Mary and Katharine in Britain, and their sister Leonora in Germany. But constant tensions and realignments of political relations in Europe contrasted sharply with the sisters’ lived identities as Europeans, with an attendant sense of transnational European heritage. In 1870, a few months into the Franco-Prussian War, Susan wrote to Caroline Crane Marsh, her American friend who was the wife of the U.S. ambassador in Italy, “I think we shall be home [Florence] very early in October perhaps sooner as it is impossible for us to visit Paris now and we only wish our old aunt of 82 years of age were out of it—but she cannot be persuaded to leave. I am afraid all your sympathies are Prussian. Mine were at first—and I think that Louis Napoleon is the guilty being who has brought on this fearful calamity—who knows how much Bismarck had to do with it, as he has ‘an inveterate hatred’ of France! I do not think a man who has an inveterate hatred to any foreign nation is fit to rule his own.” Horner speculates on the causes of the war, concluding, “Alas for
both people—both so equally necessary for the progress and civilization of Europe.” In practice, the Horner family was European, with their network of family and close friends stretching over battlefronts and borders in living defiance of rising nationalist politics in Italy, Germany, and France as well as of British exceptionalism.

“Living the Past in the Transnational Network,” my final chapter, analyzes how the international community that thrived in post-Risorgimento Florence affected the heritage discourses underpinning the European nationalist movements arising in the later nineteenth century. I examine how authors such as the Horners and John Ruskin excavate a transnational and atemporal history in Florence that forges connections across political boundaries. Florence, as Susan Horner described daily life there, was a blend of a “living present” and an equally “living past.” History in Florence thus saturates the present and cannot be contained within a separate era; it is heritage in the sense of cross-temporal connection. For Ruskin, transnationality and modernity indicate the present’s disconnection and degeneration from a golden history. However, even Ruskin accepts that transnationality and syncretism in the past directly contributed to Florence’s ascendant art-historical moment. Horner uses heritage even further, to work across genres and nations, challenging late nineteenth-century European fervor for what she calls “aristocratic liberty.” This kind of liberty, as scholars like Jane Stabler and Alison Chapman have recently shown, grew around Italian unification and fascinated readers and revolutionaries across Europe and the Americas. In chapter four, I engage with Chapman’s and Levine’s concepts of nation and network to trace inter-imperial relations within the highly localized space of post-Risorgimento Florence. This network, I argue, is deep as well as broad, stretching across time and history as well as across land and sea. In
the art-historical and travel texts of Ruskin and the Horners, I identify a syncretic heritage that shapes European political identities.

In the proceeding four chapters, I endeavor to explain and to prove why travel writing, with all its challenges of classification, matters to studies of literature, empire, and time in the nineteenth century. Though I focus my arguments historically and geographically on nineteenth-century Europe, I hope that my analyses of the power of heritage as it acts upon and is constructed by the present participates in broader transhistorical and transnational reflections.
CHAPTER 1: INHERITING ANTIQUITY

In the early nineteenth century, several events fixed British attention on the Mediterranean not only as a mythological space—the setting of the Trojan War and Odysseus’ odyssey—but also as an arena in which present imperial conflicts played out. The eventual fall of Napoleon’s French Empire in 1815 re-opened the Mediterranean for British travelers, who then witnessed the sea’s significance rapidly increase as a political and military space in a way that had not been true in the pre-Napoleonic years.

Eighteenth-century Grand Tourists had created an itinerary of destinations in which a young aristocrat could polish his or her (but generally his) education and taste while attesting to the ascendancy of Western culture. The end of the Napoleonic Wars, however, launched a scramble for sovereignty in the Mediterranean that lent a new urgency to Britain’s temporal relationship with Greece and Italy. In fact, the first two decades of the nineteenth century marked the start of an unprecedented British military dominance that enabled travelers to access famous sites and to write about travel for an English audience eager for contemporary tales. These were not only “antique lands” but also heritage lands—places of significance to the historical narrative at the center of nineteenth-century British culture. But access brought with it confrontations between the subject’s imagination of landscapes significant to British heritage and his or her experiences of what were unmistakably foreign spaces. In this chapter, I will analyze how three poems—Felicia Hemans’s The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy (1816) and Modern Greece (1817) and Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage (1812-1818)—grapple with the conflicts of Western cultural heritage in the face of shifting Mediterranean
geopolitics. As I will show, each poem compromises between the demands of past and present via a temporal organization of inheritance.

Inheritance serves as a particularly poignant form to structure heritage because, whereas historiography depends on a sense of discontinuity or rupture with the past, heritage depends on a connection between past and present. Inheritance overcomes historical discontinuity by determining succession and organizing time via links from past entities to present. Because this chapter focuses on poetry, though, I will briefly clarify the relationship between poetic form and inheritance as a coexistent temporal form. While the poetic form of each text differs in its organization of meter and rhyme, inheritance operates as a common temporal form among all three. I locate this temporal form between the poetic form and the structure of its narrative content; from this narrative position, inheritance inflects inward, onto the poetic form, and outward, onto the patterns of historic and political engagement between Britain and the Mediterranean. For Hemans, inheritance determines a sequential genealogy in which empires inevitably pass away and their successors inherit cultural and political dominance on a global scale. For Byron, inheritance layers successive individual and historic experiences into a present palimpsest. Byron places personal and historic moments on the same plane but maintains sharp lines of distinction between the traveler’s present time and history rather than blending them together. Though Hemans and Byron bend inheritance to different ends regarding Britain’s policies in Mediterranean spaces, temporal continuity across time and space is central to both. At the same time, these three poems all bridge divisions between imaginative poetry and nonfiction travelogue, complicating borders between real and imagined geographies that will shape Mediterranean travel writing throughout the
nineteenth century. By relentlessly crossing genre boundaries, Hemans and Byron enable their poems’ temporal forms to resonate outward, influencing nineteenth-century constructions of British culture.

Both Hemans and Byron fixate on issues of time and history that inevitably arise in narratives of the British Mediterranean, organizing time via inheritance. For Hemans, inheritance is a diachronic lineage; her poetry depicts an inevitable succession of empires that is necessarily both political (an effect of military power) and cultural (an effect of supremacy in the arts). Byron, though, locates inheritance not in a sequence of geographically distinct ruling entities over time but in landscape; for Byron, inheritance creates a palimpsest, layering histories onto physical space so that succession is a matter of physical occupation of antique lands. I analyze inheritance in Hemans’s and Byron’s poems through four points on which poetic, political, and individual conceptions of time converge, alternating my focus between literary constructions (armchair geopolitics and geopoetics) and geographical referents (Waterloo and Greece). I begin by considering how a tradition of armchair travel facilitated the concept of imperial succession and created an ideological foundation for British foreign affairs. Then, I examine the dual poetic and political capacity of heritage in the specific context of the Battle of Waterloo, through which, I argue, British writers established a British Mediterranean conceptually and then politically. Waterloo served as the point historically at which Britain marked its succession to the role as the dominant Western empire; Waterloo also served as the point practically at which British travelers could access the Continent and the Mediterranean’s antique lands.
Just as inaccessibility had launched a mode of imaginative travel, though, accessibility required new narrative techniques to navigate the inevitable conflicts that arose when fancy encountered reality. The form of inheritance allows both Byron and Hemans to reconcile experiential knowledge with literary standards and traditions. I argue that Byron’s poetry narrates these conflicts between collective heritage and individual experience as palimpsest, while Hemans’s situates the rise and fall of French Empire in a broader temporality of imperial lineage, looking both backward on the fallen ancients and forward onto the British Empire that might come to pass. Greece becomes the crux of both Hemans’s and Byron’s models of inheritance and the point at which they most sharply break apart. The question of a new conceptual British Mediterranean for these poets is whether, for English readers, Greece is an extant place and the rightful cultural property of nineteenth-century Greeks living under Ottoman rule, or whether Greece is a transferable idea to which Britain has a legitimate claim.

The cultural discourses of British identity and progress in which Hemans and Byron engage depend on the histories of the Roman Empire and ancient Greece at the foundation of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British education.²² The classical culture that linked Britain to Italy and Greece complicated Britain’s rising imperial expansion across the Mediterranean. Martial exercises that expanded Britain’s control but threatened classical antiquities, for example, were likely to invoke public censure by philhellenes and antiquaries in London—a troubling catch-22 for politicians at least partially dependent on continued public approval for their success.²³ Or, as became clear with the removal of marble sculptures from the Parthenon that I discuss below, political alliances (with the Ottoman Empire) conflicted with popular or cultural alliances
(with Greece). These conflicts would continue to bedevil British affairs in the Mediterranean throughout the nineteenth century. Compromises between preservation and modernization (for example, both military and commercial expansion) depended on the kinds of temporal renegotiation that Hemans’s and Byron’s poems perform, as well as on the temporal organizations they construct.

After Napoleon’s Mediterranean campaigns, nineteenth-century British travel writers journeying in Greece and Italy could not avoid urgent conflicts between their own heritage and expanding empire. Of course, as Chloe Chard points out, individual Grand Tourists inevitably met disappointment when the present—in all its clamoring quotidian foreignness—encroached upon destinations Britons admired for their antiquity (Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour 2 and 11). But for these Grand Tourists traveling before Napoleon drew the British navy into the Mediterranean Sea, there were no clashes of priorities; the traveler could remain wholly invested in what was antique or exotic without concern for how it intersected with British politics. At the end of the eighteenth century, British maritime activity in the Mediterranean waned, as Holland describes, “dwindling as the 1790s opened. The Levant Company (holding by royal authority a monopoly in British commerce over much of the area) required a state subsidy to keep going, and the British consulate in Alexandria was actually closed down for want of activity” (9). In 1805, Prime Minister William Pitt “laid down the principle … that there should be no major military effort in the Mediterranean proper,” despite contemporary counterarguments by political historian and strategists such as Gould Francis Leckie, who argued that “Britain should construct ‘an insular empire throughout the Mediterranean’” (22). But with Napoleon’s expansion of the French Empire across the Mediterranean at
the turn of the nineteenth century, Britain began to recognize the geopolitical significance of these ports, where European powers inevitably overlapped.

Because Mediterranean lands, including Greece and Italy, were alternately battle zones and colonies for the French and Ottoman Empires, Britons were largely prevented from accessing them directly until Napoleon’s capture in 1815, and instead turned to popular imaginative and foreign accounts, such as Germaine de Staël’s novel *Corinne; or Italy* (1807), to fill this cultural gap.\(^{24}\) Both Hemans and Byron bridge divisions between imagination and reality, producing poetry that not only comments on current political events but also affects burgeoning Mediterranean travel and travel writing as they develop together after the Battle of Waterloo.\(^{25}\) As I will show in subsequent chapters, Byron’s presence in the Mediterranean continues to define British travel writing throughout the century.\(^{26}\) Hemans’s works, though, were more immediately popular, shaping the context in which Britons read and circulated Byron’s poetry throughout the nineteenth century—including, as I discuss below, Byron himself.

**Armchair Geopolitics**

Felicia Hemans never went to the Mediterranean. She did not walk among the ruins of the Parthenon or gaze up at the Coliseum; she never ascended the pyramids or waited out a Maltese quarantine. Yet, her prolific poetry wandered far and wide in ancient lands via a tradition of armchair travel that nevertheless extended its influence into international tourism and geopolitics. Hemans’s poems, especially *Modern Greece*, rely on a combination of adherence to a standard literary depiction of Mediterranean landscapes and quotation from travel accounts to validate her narrative authority.
Although this method of verification was swiftly giving way to narration “on the spot,” such as Byron’s, Hemans’s verses on Italy and Greece have more to do with those places as ideas of empire stretching across centuries than as present geographies. She is a witness in a different sense from Byron: unlike with the empires of classical antiquity, the French Empire’s rise and fall occurred within her lifetime. Hemans is thus “on the spot” historically to see the birth and death of a Western empire and to imagine the succession of another through current events abroad.

Hemans’s home-bound verse was timely, both in its topicality and in its address to a British public trying to redefine its political relationship with poetic landscapes. Because Hemans did not experience the stops and starts of travel, the disruptions of national borders or topographical features, or the monotonies of distances, she is able to rewrite a landscape as an imaginative geography that suited public sentiment. Her poetry depends on a sense of Italy’s and Greece’s nearness to the British Isles through classical antiquities’ longstanding permeation of British culture, and the effect in her poetry is of a syncretic antiquity at the heart of Britain’s self-styled superior Western culture. This cultural-historical ideology both informs how Britons imagine places they cannot see personally and shapes the expectations of those who do travel and subsequently interpret their experiences in travel writing of their own.

In 1816, Hemans published in quick succession two significantly different editions of On the Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy, a long poem that ruminates on the return of antiquities and art to Rome from France after Napoleon’s defeat. She followed Restoration with Modern Greece, another topical poem that takes the display of the Elgin Marbles as its occasion. Hemans’s two poems both address the subject of
modern empire’s engagement with its assumed origins in classical antiquity; yet they seem to advocate contradictory policies toward Italian and Greek antiquities respectively, as scholars such as Angela Esterhammer and Susan Wolfson have noted.²⁷ Whereas *Restoration* lauds the return of Italy’s treasures to their homeland (to varying ends across the first and greatly altered second editions), *Modern Greece* defends Lord Elgin’s removal of the Parthenon friezes and the national institutionalization of those antiquities in the British Museum. The second edition of *Restoration*, however, substantially revises Hemans’s position toward Mediterranean geopolitics and history.²⁸ Hemans does not cast Italy and Greece as vastly different spaces—quite the contrary, in fact—even referring to Florence as the “Athens of Italy” in *Restoration* (line 157). Her poems, I will argue, try to balance heritage with contemporary concerns about Britain’s role in the Mediterranean by writing a sense of historical lineage into worlds events. As a result, they depict different outcomes of a consistent temporal organization at the level of geopolitics and history.

Together, Hemans’s and Byron’s poems intersect, accounting for the sharp rise in a distinctly British Mediterranean catalyzed by the Battle of Waterloo. Hemans’s popular poetic constructions of the British Mediterranean articulate a political moment in which these lands take on present relevance; Byron’s poem (and Byron’s legacy as an English poet) increase over the nineteenth century, resulting in a popular legacy of British Mediterranean travel. Whereas Hemans captures the synchronic moment, Byron crystalizes the diachronic effect. Byron, as both popular biographers and scholars have thoroughly noted, journeyed in the Mediterranean and surrounding regions first as a recreational tourist, and then in self-imposed exile, settling in Italy until he joined the
Greek Independence movement in 1823. Hemans, conversely, never left Britain. Her immobility adds yet another dimension to Hemans’s (largely posthumous) reputation as a “domestic poetess.” Yet her poetry is far-reaching spatially and temporally, taking up the complexities of history and of politics. Hemans was by far the most popular poetic voice rhapsodizing about the Mediterranean in the early nineteenth century, even surpassing Byron for breadth of appeal. Her works, which combine recognizable and trendy poetic forms, such as rhyming couplets, with conceptual accessibility, appealed to contemporary readers broadly, and the timeliness of her writing catalyzed her successful poetic career. Hemans’s poetry thus reached an immediate popularity—albeit transient—that Romanticism’s “big” poets rarely experienced. Whereas Hemans was the poetic voice dominating her moment broadly, Byron was the poetic voice that gained longevity over time, becoming ubiquitous particularly in Mediterranean travel writing, from individual accounts to tour guides and novels. It was Byron whose legacy shaped both writing about and actual movement in Greek and Italian landscapes especially.

Because *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* was published over six years and in four cantos, it lacks the cohesive whole that one might instinctively privilege when analyzing form, and it differs substantially from Hemans’s verses on current events. Whereas cantos I and II (published together in 1812) focus on Childe Harold as a protagonist with a voice distinct from the poetic narrator, this persona fades in canto III (published 1816) until Byron sets him aside altogether in canto IV (published 1818), discarding at the same time one overt apparatus of fictionality, which had never been believable because the author himself was moving in the physical spaces of Harold’s sojourn. But where Byron’s installments allow the poet to make adjustments mid-publication, Hemans’s revision in
1816 to Restoration resulted in an entirely new edition that, I will show, radically alters the poems engagement with both Mediterranean heritage and geopolitics. Byron develops both his opinions and his poetic technique as the four cantos are published (and sold and discussed). In form, the poem’s four cantos of Spenserian stanzas remain largely consistent. In content and genre, however, the poem vacillates and expands across neat demarcations, as evident with the shifting narrative voice. It is, like Edmund Spenser’s Faerie Queene whose poetic form it shares, a poem of journeys, epic themes, and heroes, as its content, too, purports to follow a quest structure. Childe Harold belongs, Bernard Blackstone argues, to a tradition of “poetry of motion, conceived in motion” (5). On the poem’s form, Byron asserts in the preface to cantos I and II, “The stanza of Spenser … admits of every variety” and therefore can, in the words of Dr. Beattie, “give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me” (4-5). The Spenserian stanza, one of Byron’s points of criticism against Hemans’s Modern Greece, is itself a composite form; as Andrew Zurcher explains, it “borrows something from everywhere.”33 Yet by the nineteenth century, largely due to Spenser’s fame as a patriarch of English poetry, the form connotes enduring English culture. To write of the Mediterranean at this time and in this form is to reintegrate the landscape into the British poetic canon, an imagined geography of not only classical mythology but also British military prowess and artistic production.

Byron uses travel writing tropes to weave together literary tradition, history, politics, and aesthetics in a poem that meditates on the individual in a (practically as well as conceptually) transnational Western culture. Though Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage is a poem, it is also a travel narrative of the early nineteenth century—one that constantly
negotiates proto-ethnographic travel popularized by eighteenth-century antiquarianism and the styles of traveling, seeing, and creating based in aesthetics (such as Edmund Burke’s sublime and William Gilpin’s picturesque) that become integral to Romanticism. The traveler’s fantasy is to connect his personal memory with a broader history of Western civilization—one that marks the still-existing land itself as antique and culturally sacred. “Where’er we tread” Byron writes, “’tis haunted, holy ground … the sense aches with gazing to behold / The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon; / Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold / Defies the power which crush’d thy temples gone: / Age shakes Athena’s tower, but spares gray Marathon” (II.lxxxviii.828, 832-6). The sublimity of this experience registers both visually, as his “sense aches with gazing,” and temporally as he also gazes “to behold” not only what is physically present but also what can be remembered, the “earliest dreams.”

But while the poet details his impressions of the Mediterranean and the surrounding environs he visits in the main text of the poem, a different (and, at times, conflicting) voice comments through footnotes and appendices. Sometimes, as in Hemans’s work, these footnotes juxtapose factual information about geography and history with their poetic counterparts as Byron calls attention to the physical connections of poetic locales, reminding the reader that this is a landscape of mythologies, but that it is not wholly mythological. This is “haunted, holy ground,” in which “Each hill” still tells the stories of ancient Greece to travelers whose education has prepared them to recognize the landscape narratives, and this interaction between traveler and landscape “Defies” the destructive “power” of time’s passage. This is a travel narrative bridging fiction and nonfiction, while itself adding to genres of both imagination and exploration. Its temporal
form, as I analyze below, is a flat surface onto which disparate moments and scenes etched together: a temporal palimpsest.

Byron deploys authenticity techniques already common to travel writing at the turn of the nineteenth century, extending and developing them through his poeticization in a manner that will resonate through later travel writing. The first line of the preface to cantos I and II states, “The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe” (56). This assertion of spatial and temporal nearness establishes the speaker’s authority and indicates that his descriptions and impressions are accurate—even when they are limited to his subjective impression. As Stephen Cheeke points out, though, writing on the spot, for Byron, is more significant than a statement of authenticity and authority. “Spot,” Cheeke writes, is “a word almost talismanic in Byron’s writing, which emerges from the discourse of the picturesque and particularly from Gilpin’s injunction to record landscape impressions ‘on the spot’ in the 1790 essays … Byron makes this word work harder than any other in his writing. The ‘spot’ marks where history happened” (18-9). I argue in line with Cheeke that, for Byron, the precise historical space is key to poetic production, but I would add that, in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage at least, “the ‘spot’ marks” where the traveler’s personal experience of history as well. The English heritage-pilgrim thus seeks destinations sacred to his cultural tradition in order to link himself with them. Or, to put it another way, as Byron writes in his stanzas on Switzerland, “I live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me” (III.lxxii.680-1). What he achieves in this integration of the individual with his environment (in this case, a natural one) he wants to achieve with the historic environment: to integrate the individual’s life into the fabric of history. This is an
integration—but never quite a seamless blending—with surroundings different from Hemans’s social collective, and it re-emphasizes the necessity of the traveler to visit first-hand landscapes significant beyond his own time. This is the task Byron undertakes in Rome, when he calls attention specifically “To meditate amongst decay, and stand / A ruin amidst ruins” (IV.xxiv.218-9). To be “a ruin amidst ruins” is both to acknowledge one’s own mortality within time and to perceive extant remnants of an empire long dead.\footnote{35}

The exact spot is important as more than a verification of authority or authenticity. The writing of travel, according to Byron, binds the traveler to the environments he experiences abroad—even to the extent that it expands his being. By writing the poem “amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe”—at least hypothetically—Byron weaves together this literary heritage with an individual experience of the material place that inspires it. This is a concept Byron explores throughout the poem, but about which he becomes explicit in the preface to canto IV, in which he calls the poem “a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe” (509). He attempts to get beyond the finite temporality of the individual, but this link to landscape is limited to the traveler’s memory. It is a personal relationship of the subject and cannot extend beyond his own personal memory.\footnote{36}

Rather than presenting a problem, the temporal contrast Byron develops in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* produces a temporal aesthetic that, like the visual picturesque, depends on contrast to produce an ideal experience on one plane. Early in canto I, Byron describes the visual contrasts of the sublime and the beautiful that “Mix’d in one mighty
scene, with varied beauty glow” (I.xix.251). With the temporal contrast the traveler experiences in “antique lands,” there comes a sense of the individual’s connection with, and distinction from, a collective cultural past, present, and future. In canto III, for example, Byron recites the “theme” “to feel / We are not what we have been, and to deem / We are not what we should be” (III.cxi.1031, 1032-4, 1039). Though this reflection might be a “stern task of the soul” because it refuses to permit a sense of individual exultation or even progressive history, its accusation that “we are not what we should be” also provides the impetus to reflect and act in the present. (III.cxi.1039). To be in this space and conceive of this kind of temporal reflection on the triumphs and failures of civilization is to expand one’s consciousness beyond the individual’s limited experience. To be clear, this is not just the individual’s reflections on his own shortcomings; the first-person plural prohibits that. It is the individual’s reflection on humanity’s failures and degradation, of which he is a shareholder. The “We” includes Byron but is not limited to his person; it is also a moment of irony because, in actually experiencing this space, it becomes impossible to tell the history of political or civil triumph, as Hemans does, that made it significant for the traveler in the first place. As with the vibrant sights elevated by contrasts on which the traveler muses, the temporal contrasts elevate his temporal capacity beyond mere pleasure in the present.

**Waterloo**

Practically speaking, the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815 was the closest thing to a definitive event reopening the Continent and the Mediterranean for the British, signifying the downfall of the Napoleon’s French Empire. It remains a touchstone of
history for British patriotism and national identity across scholarship and popular culture—the Battle of Waterloo was even featured in the popular BBC comedy Blackadder. But, in fact, Napoleon never surrendered at Waterloo (whether he ever surrendered at all is a matter of historical debate; at any rate, it would be another month before he was formally in Captain Maitland’s custody). Like most events, Waterloo was a construction of heritage, an abstraction into coherence of many incidents in order to reinforce a collective national identity. As Marysa Demoor argues, the idea of Waterloo was a creation first of the periodical press in which news and commemorative poetry and prose intersected, later to be augmented by guidebooks and tourist accounts. As a tourist site, Waterloo was somewhat exceptional, though. Within a year of the battle, it became a new heritage site, as contradictory as that phrase may seem. Not a recycled destination from the pre-Napoleonic Grand Tour, the battlefield instead marked the fall of the French Empire (for Byron) and the opportunity for the creation of Britain’s Empire (for Hemans). Waterloo, and its almost immediate enshrinement in popular culture, is significant for scholars as a space in which we can trace “British national identity as constructed outside of its national borders” (Demoor 453). In fact, as Christopher M. Keirstead and Demoor claim in their introduction to a special issue of Victorian Periodicals Review on Waterloo, “Waterloo was the most sacred place of English national feeling on the Continent” (448). Keirstead and Demoor’s assertion is a fittingly hyperbolic enactment of nineteenth-century writing on Waterloo, which began almost immediately and has been revived in dozens of popular histories published around the 2015 centennial anniversary.
As a new heritage site, Waterloo also presented problems. According to Stuart Semmel, “[M]aterial vestiges of recent history … brought British writers face to face with the problem of memorialization, the difficulty of capturing the past” (10). This “problem” plagued writers who visited and sought to reflect on the site, including William Wordsworth, whose sonnet on Waterloo was rejected for publication, and Walter Scott, whose “Field of Waterloo” was derided in reviews as his own poetic Waterloo (Semmel 19 and Demoor 459-61). Philip Shaw explains, “Waterloo was perceived … from the outset, as a mythic event occurring outside the texture of documentary and annualized history” (3). In this section, I will look at Waterloo as a historicized event that required shifts in historicization. As Semmel notes of writing on Waterloo, “The conclusions these writers drew from their encounters with history-marked landscapes and remains amounted to a far-reaching examination of the nature of memory and historical consciousness … Examining how British observers after Waterloo viewed the recently ended conflict means asking how they conceived their relationship with history” (10). Both Byron and Hemans, I argue, confront this relationship with history—and by extension, relationship with time—though their poetic productions on Waterloo do not align.

Hemans’s heroic couplets in Restoration announce the poem’s social focus, as Wolfson mentions, the form being “associated with public poetry” (18), although the title page of the first edition only indicates its authorship “by a lady.” Hemans begins with an epigraph from Byron’s Giaour (1813), immediately putting her poem into a context of poetic travel. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Byron admired this poem, writing to John Murray before his travels, “I shall take Felicia Hemans’s Restoration, & c. with me; it is a good
If Hemans never traveled in the Mediterranean, her poetry did and, as I will show with *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, influenced Byron’s own Mediterranean travel writing. To the revised second edition (also 1816, published this time with Murray, marking the rise of her fame), Hemans adds her name and about 260 lines, including a completely new ending and several new scenes, including the sixty-three line reflection on the previous year’s Battle of Waterloo, an occasion Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* also commemorates. Waterloo, both in its immediate aftermath and in the 200 years since, proves an important catalyst for British identity connecting heritage and imperial politics ideologically as well as geographically.

With the addition of the Waterloo scene to her Italian poem, Hemans shifts from a triumph of Italian liberation from French imperial rule to a triumph of what I can perhaps best describe as historiographical imperialism. With the second edition’s quick succession, the restoration event became a matter of British activity rather than of foreign spectacle; Hemans’s second edition enfolds Italy into British national identity via the patriotic historical narrative of Waterloo, thus claiming the antique land ideologically for Britain. Hemans’s Waterloo scene is compelling not least because it connects the British political poet to the poem’s triumphant occasion—the restoration of the works of art to Italy—but also because, through Wellington’s victory, the poem casts Britain as the hero, restoring the damsel Italy’s last vestige of honor. Of Waterloo, Hemans writes,

Thither unborn descendants of the slain,

Shall throng, as pilgrim’s [*sic*] to some holy fane,

While, as they trace each spot, whose records tell,
Where fought their fathers, and prevail’d, and fell,
Warm in their souls shall loftiest feelings glow,
Claiming proud kindred with the dust below! (lines 77-82)

Though in 1816 no physical monument marked the spot, the land itself in Hemans’s verse can bear a historic record; the pilgrims’ “records tell” the history of this landscape, producing unity between British national (and nationalist) history and a foreign site. The very dust of the Waterloo battlefield commemorates this space for English travelers, who can trace their parentage in the “dust below” through Wellington, himself “Bequeath’d to fame by England’s ancestry” (line 44). The link Hemans’s line traces is genealogical on the level of blood—the “descendants” are linked to the “dust” by their fallen “fathers”—and historically, as this is a battle field on which a major geopolitical even occurred. Travel, for Hemans’s pilgrims, is thus simultaneously a passage through foreign space and a nationalist homecoming, both personally and in terms of the historical collective.

In addition to making Italy’s reacquisition of the artworks a matter of British history and identity, the added Waterloo scene interrupts what, in the first edition, had been a call for Italy to “Awake” and “rouse once more the daring soul of song / Seize with bold hands the harp, forgot so long” (lines 15, 25-6). Hemans calls for a restoration of artistic greatness to parallel the restoration of the artworks, but the monosyllabic and vivid verbs “rouse” and “Seize”—particularly the emphasis on “Seize” as the first word of the line—command Italy to recover not just its relics but also its cultural dominance with almost martial boldness. Immediately following the Waterloo stanza and British triumph, Hemans shifts the address back to Italy, the poem’s express locale:
And well, Ausonia! may that field of fame,
From thee one song of echoing triumph claim.
Land of the lyre! ‘twas there th’ avenging sword,
Won the bright treasures to thy fanes restored;
Those precious trophies o’er thy realms that throw
A veil of radiance, hiding half thy woe,
And bid the stranger for awhile forget
How deep thy fall, and deem thee glorious yet. (lines 85-92)

This address to Italy renegotiates the call to re-ascendancy. In regaining the tangible effects of its artistic achievements, Italy can produce songs again, but the song should be of the hero’s—Britain’s—“avenging sword”; meanwhile, the “trophies” themselves serve to “veil” the shame of a feminized, now-fallen Italy for the traveling “stranger.”

Hemans’s demarcation of Italy as the “Land of the lyre” recalls the musical imagery of her original call to Italians to “[s]eize with bold hands the harp” (in the second edition, now seventy lines above). With the added lines, she directly qualifies the original call to Italy: instead of an Italy rousing and seizing cultural dominance, Hemans presents an Ausonia veiled and “hiding” behind the glories restored by the hero, Britain, for the sake of the traveler’s gaze. The archaic term “Ausonia” at once antiquates it geographical referent and, through the double vowel and final “a,” echoes the feminine ending in Italian. Waterloo thus intersects Italian triumph, articulating a less-optimistic future for Italy proper but linking Ausonia and Albion through a common struggle.
The lineage Hemans draws from Italy to Britain through Waterloo, and the
gendered relationship she introduces in the revisions to this section, integrates these
landscapes through the shared event of the recent past. This is, in fact, the relationship
Hemans depicts in her early “Sonnet to Italy” (1812), in which she names “Albion” the
inheritor of “Ausonia.” The England-Italy relationship is one historical, geopolitical, and
poetic. The tangible connection through Waterloo and not the relationship between Italy
and England, or Ausonia and Albion, is new here. Hemans draws a line from “England’s
ancestry” through Waterloo to the antiquated “Ausonia” or Italy. Hemans depicts a
familial geography, but it would be reductive to interpret the personified landscape only
as an allegory for domesticity. The familial structure in fact provides a model for kinship
over time that differs from history’s accounts of wars and great men, or even
cartography’s expression of national meaning through borders and divisions.

In both Restoration and Modern Greece, aristocratic genealogy provides a schema
through which Hemans can negotiate politics and history. The trajectory of classed
patrimony, in which physical property passes in succession to the deceased’s heirs, is
legible to a British public trying to remap these places in relation to the modern British
moment. And Hemans is not alone in aligning Britain and the Mediterranean according to
this temporal form. The lineage structure was a popular historiography and geopolitical
foundation often evoked to justify British activity in the Mediterranean that otherwise
might have clashed with prevailing cultural mores at home. This lineage of culture and
empire was a prevalent historicizing trope throughout the nineteenth century to explain
Britain’s fascination with and reverence for lands that nevertheless failed to impress
visitors. Disproportionate attention has been paid to Hemans’s works about domestic
life, and readers from the Victorian period onward have been eager to resolve Hemans’s temporal form of lineage or inheritance into an overarching theme of maternalism. In this tradition, much of the modern scholarship on Hemans focuses on her position as a female poet and, as such, considers her work predominantly in the context of other women writers around the identity of the poetess, typified as a source of feminine inspiration in the later nineteenth century. Less attention has been paid to Hemans as a mainstream early nineteenth-century writer whose poetry directly engages with contemporary politics, antiquarianism, and aesthetics. One exception is Esterhammer’s article, which brings together Hemans, Byron, and Keats as three popular poets grappling with topical issues of empire and antiquity in early nineteenth-century Greece. Nanora Sweet, too, insightfully connects Hemans to a broader poetic community via form and political content in the historical context of Byron’s intertextual milieu. I argue that Hemans is of interest beyond her contributions to Byron’s writing or English domesticity. While her poetry demonstrates a sensitivity toward traditional British gender roles, she also uses gender dynamics to comment on international politics, such as with the feminization of Italy. Through her topical poetry that spans historical events, real and imagined landscapes, and poetic fiction, Hemans popularizes an understanding of Britain as both cultural descendant and paternalistic guardian of the Mediterranean’s antique lands. Byron, though he writes on location in the Mediterranean, cannot help but put his Mediterranean poetry into the context of Hemans’s; her broad readership is the same market that will launch a century-long tourist preoccupation with Byron’s Mediterranean travels and travel writings (including *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*).
Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage follows a loose travel itinerary of aristocratic Grand Tour travel; yet in canto III Byron departs from this itinerary briefly to, like Hemans, commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Byron places Harold at Waterloo, where no markers or ruins yet indicate the significance of the site. It is a modern historical space, with its official ideological function still developing. Prominently, in the first line of the stanza, Byron commands Harold (and the reader), “Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire’s dust!” (III.xvii.145). The emphatic first monosyllable and the exclamation point, followed by the dash that further draws out the sharp pause, arrest both the character and the reader’s mental traversing of this landscape. But even when the lines commence they do so with negative descriptions:

Is the spot mark’d with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral’s truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;— (III.xvii.147-50).

The stanza’s middle—the emphatic “None” marking an alliteration with the “Nor” directly above it—centers the Spenserian stanza’s nine lines on emptiness. Nature reclaimed this space with alarming yet admirable immediacy and imbues the ground with sanctity. Yet, there seems little possibility for the individual to be remembered when an empire can fall without leaving a physical trace. This is not the British patriotism that Hemans depicts but a melancholy observation on the obliteration of the French Empire
and its attendant rhetoric of liberty born of secular revolution) without a trace of ruins to mark the fall.

In struggling to determine how one achieves longevity and significance over great time when nations and empires can rise and fall so quickly (at least at Waterloo), Byron presents, through a variety of metaphors, a kind of diffuse history. There are “deeds which should not pass away, / And names that must not wither, though the earth / Forgets her empires with a just decay,” Byron writes, alluding, his footnote explains, to the story of Julia Alpinula (III.lxvii).45 But how to overcome this seemingly inevitable withering that claims the edifices of great empires and the action of epic battles alike? The solution comes as a two-part system of integration of one’s self with his or her surroundings and, through that integration, a diffusion of memory. Sometimes with negative results, memory works through the mental association of otherwise disconnected surroundings with an idea; for good or ill, it is the “electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound” (IV.xxiii.207). This is the fate of heroes only remembered through their integration into peasant narratives that, though they are fluid and mobile because they circulate orally, nonetheless link the heroes to place (in this case, Spain) through a kind of rural patriotism or nationality:

Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale?
Ah! such, alas! the hero’s amonest fate!
When granite moulders and when records fail,
A peasant’s plaint prolongs his dubious date.
Pride! bend thine eye from heaven to thine estate,
See how the Mighty shrink into a song!

Can Volume, Pillar, Pile, preserve thee great?

Or must thou trust Tradition’s simple tongue,

When Flattery sleeps with thee, and History does thee wrong?

(I.xxxvi.396-404)

Although here, in canto I, Byron seems to ridicule the “Mighty” who “shrink into song,” this is the fate he declares he is trying to construct by canto IV. Speaking in the lament of the exile, Byron writes, “I twine / My hopes of being remember’d in my line / With my land’s language” (IV.ix.76-8).46 As evident at Waterloo, where no monument yet exists to commemorate the epic event, and even later at Marathon, where no monument remains, the best hope for longevity and legacy are diffusion into the common collective memory.

Diffusion and integration are components of a temporal form that overcomes time. This structure reappears throughout the poem with both positive and negative content, sometimes as a triumph of legacy over time, sometimes as a stubborn recurrence of haunting remembrance. In canto III, for example, Byron considers several metaphors to describe how things can wither, break, ruin, and yet endure. At Waterloo, he moves through images of a rotting tree still standing, a broken boat still floating, fragments of buildings that outlast their whole, and a day in which the sun is never visible still passing, finally concluding, “And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on” (III.xxxii.288). The analogies do not end with this moral, however. This line, its end marked only by a colon rather than a period, continues the theme throughout the next stanza:
Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks. (III.xxxiii.289-92).

This extremity of despair, or “vitality of poison,” in this case is precisely what perpetuates enduring memory at Waterloo (III.xxxiv.299). To the battlefield unadorned with monuments, Byron apostrophizes,

Millions of tongues record thee, and anew,
Their children’s lips shall echo them, and say—
‘Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!’
And this is much, and all which will not pass away. (III.xxxv.311-5)

In this instance, as with the peasant’s songs, diffusion and longevity are a result of generations echoing a history; in fact, this enduring, diffusive narrative is “all which will not pass away.” The inherited oral history is, as in Hemans’s poem, both ancestral (passing on to “children”) and patriotic (telling a history not only of fathers but also of “countrymen”). Waterloo is significant for British heritage and popular culture as a landscape on which a major political event occurred, but it also matters as an event—the battle—that broke the Napoleonic discourse of legacy stretching from imperial France to classical culture. The death of the French Empire at Waterloo marks the death of Rome’s
self-appointed heir, creating the conceptual space for Hemans to lyricize Britain, the victor of Waterloo, into that vacant position. Additionally, Waterloo, though not itself anywhere near the Mediterranean, was directly responsible for the British maritime dominance (commercial, leisure, and military) that defined the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. In a very practical sense, Waterloo re-opened the Continent and the Mediterranean to British travel.

**Geopoetics**

With the reopening of the Continent, Britons could again access the revered sites of cultural antiquity that had been so popular for aristocratic Grand Tourists during the eighteenth century and, as scholars of travel such as James Buzard have noted, texts popular during Napoleon’s reign, such as *Corinne*, shifted to travel guides (complete with itineraries) despite their fictionality. Travel writing thus did not proceed seamlessly from earlier models but was thus refracted through imaginative accounts and armchair travel that adjusted the British reading public to a kind of travel writing that spanned fiction and nonfiction without pause. But with the dissolution of Napoleon’s empire, the Mediterranean also became the space in which much of Britain’s present and future international affairs were launched or decided. Hemans and Byron both produced influential travel writing of the Mediterranean, though neither was a typical Grand Tourist in the full pre-Napoleonic sense of the term. By redefining the sites of the Grand Tour in their poetry, both helped shape British travel’s development after the Napoleonic Wars.
Unlike their Grand Touring predecessors, writers on the post-Napoleonic Mediterranean witnessed landscapes that were well-known historically become significant politically as well. Priorities of preservation and modernization came into conflict here. Italy, for example, is “consecrated ground” in Hemans’s poem, but it is not wholly benign or disconnected from nineteenth-century imperial geopolitics (line 184). The praiseworthy “matchless gems of Art’s exhaustless mine” (line 158) can spark revolution. “[F]air art” can issue a “rallying call” to bid the “slumb’ring nations wake, / And daring Intellect his bondage break” (lines 165, 167-8). The rest of the stanza emphasizes the past triumph, but only for “th’ Enthusiast there, with ardent gaze,” who “Shall hail the mighty of departed days” (lines 177-8). When the artworks return to Italy, regular time seems to re-commence where it had paused under French control, taking up again its slow decay. As a result, the conceptual geography long important to narratives of antique lands had to accommodate post-Napoleonic political reinvention. In Hemans’s poetry, the genealogical shape of time maps history onto geography so that an imagined Italy and Greece supplant present Italy and Greece as physical foreign place. Especially in Italy, the imagined geography is crucial both poetically and politically because, in 1815, it refers to a partially post-imperial conglomeration of states on the Italian peninsula and surrounding islands.

In the wake of Napoleon’s downfall, British, Austrian, Prussian, and Russian delegates carved up the former French Empire in the Mediterranean, with each empire interested in regulating the others’ powers while positioning itself for commercial and imperial growth. Robert Holland explains that, between the Congress of Vienna (convening in November 1814) and the Treaty of Paris (signed November 1815) the
“Great Powers—a category now for the first time endowed with a distinct identity—were torn between a collective desire to restore the pre-Napoleonic order, and a crude temptation to grab individual spoils. This was particularly true of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. The security craved by the British Government led by Lord Liverpool was essentially maritime” (26). Though places like Gibraltar, Malta, and Corfu were significant to European politics in the Mediterranean, my focus here is specifically on the places of temporal conflict, such as Greece and Italy, where classical significance juxtaposed or even competed with the present’s demands and agendas.

Hemans’s Restoration mirrors this tension in the organization of its content. When in the second edition Hemans picks up the original lines after the Waterloo and Ausonia stanzas, it is to grapple with the present’s relationship with the past and to contemplate how time works—all in the service of establishing Britain’s role in Mediterranean geopolitics. Italy appears to be saturated with antiquity, and yet it remains significant to the present. Addressing the works of art directly on the topic of Italy, she writes,

Yes! in those scenes, where every ancient stream,
Bids memory kindle oe’er some lofty theme;
Where every marble deeds of fame records,
Each ruin tells of Earth’s departed lords;
And the deep tones of inspiration swell,
From each wild Olive-wood, and Alpine dell;
Where heroes slumber, on their battle plains,
‘Midst prostrate altars, and deserted fanes,
And Fancy communes, in each lonely spot,
With shades of those who ne’er shall be forgot;
*There* was your home, and there your power imprest,
With tenfold awe, the pilgrim’s glowing breast. (lines 115-26)

For Hemans, densely concentrated antiquity controls the present historical narrative; it “Bids,” “records,” and “tells”—present tense active verbs of narration. But the description is all pastness at work on a present “pilgrim,” a devoted traveler who has journeyed to hear this already-revered source of “awe.” There is nothing of present, foreign, Italian life in Hemans’s poetic Italy. Though the landscape Hemans illustrates is clearly in ruin, the ruin itself adds to the picturesque setting—one in which the natural geography houses “Fancy” in a way that is not possible for the objects during their temporary sojourn in France. There is a connection here between the natural environment—the “Olive-wood, and Alpine dell”—and the fallen edifices, all of which facilitate memory and imagination. Only in this space can the full power of the works of art impress the “pilgrim,” who must travel to see the objects among the landscapes that inspired them. The landscape is valuable historically and aesthetically—an almost-pastoral scene of “lonely” ruins where no present sights, smells, or sounds mar the imagined space.

Hemans revises what in the first edition had been a poem of revolution for Italy into a poem of heritage tourism and travel aesthetics for Britain. Rather than a wrecked civilization that, with the return of its art, once again possesses the impetus to rise again
into an imperial power, the ruined landscape becomes picturesque again for the sake of
the foreign traveler’s gaze. Originally, the lines “Where every marble deeds of fame
records, / Each ruin tells of Earth’s departed lords” had read “Where teems the soil with
records of renown, / Fame’s mouldering trophies, Empire’s ravish’d crown.”\textsuperscript{51} The first
edition offers a much more apocalyptic depiction of the fallen Roman Empire in which
the soil itself consists of decaying ruins of past splendor. The second edition includes the
ruins but realigns the focus of the scene. Hemans’s revision shifts her poem’s visual
composition, creating instead a picturesque landscape wherein the ruins provide fodder
for the “pilgrim’s” “awe.”

What is certain across the two editions of Restoration is that the works of art both
attest to past genius and carry the potential to inspire future achievement and assert
present imperial might (hence the relics’ appeal for Napoleon). Returning these objects to
Italy thus benefits the British Empire if only by ensuring that traveling Britons have
access to the artworks’ inspiration and, because of Napoleon’s defeat, to Italy itself. The
shift from Italy to Britain according to a genealogical temporal form becomes clear when
we consider the revisions in more detail. In the first edition, Italy’s returned treasures are
imagined as inspiring revolution. Hemans issues a call to action for the present-day
Italians to reassert the cultural superiority of their past. The first edition concludes,

\begin{quote}
Patriots and Heroes! could those flames return,
That bade your hearts with freedom’s ardours burn;
Then from the sacred ashes of the first,
Might a new Rome in phoenix-grandeur burst!
\end{quote}
With one bright glance dispel th’ horizons gloom,
With one loud call wake Empire from the tomb;
Bind round her brows her own triumphal crown,
Lift her dread Ægis, with majestic frown,
Unchain her Eagle’s wing, and guide his flight,
To bathe its plumage in the fount of Light. (lines 299-308)

With this crescendo of Italian patriotism, the poem originally ended. There is hope and potential for the entombed Roman Empire itself to rise again, a “new Rome,” despite the subjunctive construction between “could” and “Might” that hints at its fanciful nature. This type of phoenix metaphor, though, is not conducive to a genealogical model of time that establishes Rome as the past ancestor of rising Britain’s Empire. If the form of time or the trajectory of history is genealogical, a succession of imperial power depends on the definitive passing of the last ruler.52

The second edition, however, highly qualifies the call to action, and what had been a triumph instead becomes only a consolation. Accordingly, Hemans revises the ending of her poem, following the old call to action with a stanza break and then,

Vain dream! degraded Rome! thy noon is o’er,
Once lost, thy spirit shall revive no more.
It sleeps with those, the sons of other days,
Who fixed on thee the world’s adoring gaze;
Those, blest to live, while yet the star was high,
More blest, ere darkness quenched its beam, to die! (lines 309-14)

This short six-line stanza thoroughly neutralizes any possibility of Roman re-ascentancy. The first line emphasizes the impossibility of a “new Rome” poetically with “degraded” standing in relief from the march of monosyllables. But Hemans’s revision does not stop with Rome’s eternal entombment; she reiterates the old ending’s call to arms but transfers it onto the travelers, consoling Italy as follows:

Yet, tho’ thy faithless tutelary powers,
Have fled thy shrines, left desolate thy towers,
Still, still to thee shall nations bend their way,
Revered in ruin, sovereign in decay!

…………………………………………………

Genius and Taste shall love to wander still,
For there has Art survived an Empire’s doom. (lines 315-23)

Reverence is limited to extant objects attesting preset ruin after a past rise and definitive fall. And perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the continued state of political ruin in Italy attests to the greatness art had achieved in this place, triumphing over time and the natural mortality of empires. If the Roman Empire survives or is reanimated as a “new Rome,” then, it tarnishes the wonder of Art’s survival.

The revisions Hemans makes to the future’s hopes rewrite a call for revolution into a call for travel. The goal is not that Rome will reassert imperial dominance but that
this land will once more be a destination for travers from other “nations”—especially for Britain, whose tourists had largely been prevented from accessing it during the Napoleonic Wars. Britain not only values the antiquities of Italy’s lost splendor but also the cultural ritual of traveling to Italy, Europe’s museum, where nature can supply the ideal context for artworks. As I will show below, this is the argument Byron makes at Greece’s Parthenon; for Hemans, though, ideal tourism is not possible in Greece—natural effects like sunlight notwithstanding—because its present landscape is overrun by Ottoman forces.

Hemans not only qualifies the “new Rome” of the first edition, but she also completely re-casts the ending from Italy’s supposed earthly re-ascendance as a world power to a supernatural triumph. She turns from adoring the works of art themselves specifically in the context of Italian landscape, lines shifted later in the second edition (lines 409-60), and adds a new fifty-seven-line ending that turns its attention to scenes of the Holy Land and art’s specific representation and imitation of Christian ideals. The glorious artworks amid Italy’s “altars” and “aisles” (line 452) become “vain fictions, fancy’s erring theme, / Gods of illusion! phantoms of a dream! / Frail, powerless idols of departed time, / Fables of song, delusive, tho’ sublime!” (lines 461-4). In this new ending, the genius of art is neither human nor, after the fall of the French Empire, ensconced in secular patriotism. Instead, to “Roman Art,” she writes, “’twas given in fancy to explore / The land of miracles, the holiest shore; / That realm where first the light of life was sent, / The loved, the punished, of th’ Omnipotent” (lines 469-72). Here, Hemans consolidates the sacred and the antique in Italy, abstracting the nationality of this artistic genius. Following on these descriptions, the second edition, like the first, ends
with a direct call-to-action stanza but this time not to Italy specifically. Rather, it expands to include any traveler who happens to be looking at these artworks:

Gaze on that scene, and own the might of Art,
By truth inspired, to elevate the heart!
To bid the soul exultingly possess,
Of all her powers, a heightened consciousness,
And strong in hope, anticipate the day,
The last of life, the first of freedom’s ray;
To realize, in some unclouded sphere,
Those pictured glories feebly imaged here!
Dim, cold reflections from her native sky,
Faint effluence of “the Day-spring from on high!” (lines 509-18)

Hemans’s lines instruct the observer to acknowledge the “might of Art” but also to “possess” it; these lines, explicitly a directive to develop a heightened consciousness, subtly reinforce the traveler’s ownership of the works restored to Italy. The viewer here looks forward to death as a triumph articulated through time as she or he can, through art, “anticipate the day, / The last of life, the first of freedom’s ray.” The first edition’s liberation shifts from ongoing political events in the Mediterranean to a spiritual transcendence. Hemans moves the ending from an earthly triumph for Italy as a nation or even empire to a supernatural triumph. This revised instruction to “gaze” no longer calls present descendants of great masters to raise their nation to former heights but now
equally directs all observers of the artworks to reflect on the celestial beauty that inspired them to achieve religious transcendence after death. Hemans thus revises artistic genius completely out of temporality—both in the sense of measured timescales and in the sense of matters pertaining to earthly concerns. Declining civilizations will commence their decay, but the genius of art serves as a cultural inheritance that can be communicated via travel and reverence to the past.

Heritage in Byron’s poem becomes accessible, urgent, and potentially controversial as Mediterranean travel bring what has long been imagined into direct contact with what actually exists. Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* tries to integrate the traveler into the places he visits, while also working to reconcile English literature with its Western heritage in the Mediterranean region. The preface to canto IV lays out the cultural import of the poem’s geographic reaches; it traverses “the countries of chivalry, history, and fable—Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy” (509). And the poem itself hearkens to a transnational heritage of Western culture that informs the traveler before he even leaves home. Of Venice, for example, he remarks,

I had loved her from my boyhood—she to me
Was a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare’s art
Had stamp’d her image in me. (IV.xviii.154-59).
Venice is not just pre-known but pre-internalized, experienced and formative “from my boyhood.” The traveler here has a relationship with the distant landscape he’s never visited personally through a longstanding relationship with its artistic representation. Even Byron’s authority of writing “on the spot” is potentially clouded by the preconceived ideas and imaginings he carries with him across the Mediterranean—many formed through artistic representations that themselves have been born purely from fancy.

But Venice, once the traveler finally arrives in the place he had so long imagined, becomes relevant for present European international relations. Venice’s “lot / Is shameful to the nations,—most of all, / Albion!” (IV.xvii.149-51). Britain’s complacency in the post-Napoleonic annexation of Venice to the Austrian Empire becomes a source of present and (through the name “Albion”) poetic “shame.” This shame is two-fold, arising from a cultural investment in Venice as a heritage space and from what Byron expresses as a political similarity foretelling the revolution of the rising British Empire. To Albion, he insists, “the Ocean queen should not / Abandon Ocean’s children; in the fall / Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall. (IV.xvii.149-53). Here, Venice as a past center of maritime commerce and control, is Britain’s historical analog. In Byron’s poem, Britain is not quite the new Roman Empire that mid-nineteenth-century writers will evoke, but he does acknowledge Britain’s rise in global commercial and military power, largely because of its naval control of the Mediterranean. Of Italy more generally, he writes, “thy hand / Was then our guardian, and is still our guide; / Parent of our Religion! … Europe, repentant of her parricide, / Shall yet redeem thee” (IV. xlvi.417-22). As with the “Ocean queen” and “Ocean’s children” inversion describing the Britain-Venice
relationship, Byron produces a broader parent-child inversion between Italy (especially Rome) and Europe as a collection of empires descending from their common ancestor, Rome.

Like Hemans, Byron indicates a change in international dynamics as Britain takes on the role of principal Mediterranean power; Rome, the one-time political “guardian,” shifts to the cultural “guide.” In the “Chaos of ruins” that is Rome, the question of longevity heightens as both time and “Ignorance” combine to cast a “double night” over the ruins, leaving Rome a “desert,” a “void” (IV.lxxx-lxxx1). At the Palatine Hill, he remarks, “‘tis thus the mighty falls,” adding in a footnote, “The Palatine is one mass of ruins, particularly on the side towards the Circus Maximus. The very soil is formed of crumbled brickwork” (IV.cvii.963; 546n1). Here, the Palatine soil dramatizes the level plane of Byron’s historical palimpsest. The problem is the height of the fall into unintelligibility. An empire that had produced a “Roman globe,” after a measurable amount of time, results in unintelligible ruins (IV.cxi.955). The difference between the disappointment of this unknowable soil and the empty plain of Marathon is that latter still retains its mythological status in the mind of the traveler. Though there are no monuments to see, he remembers the story. Rome proves the opposite can be true: ruins can outlast the memory of them.

In the Mediterranean’s antique lands, the diffusion and integration of cultural memory exceed national boundaries, bespeaking a Western literary heritage that, in Byron’s rendition, includes the expatriate wanderer. Byron enacts poetically the contrast he sees between past he brings to Venice and present he discovers there. First, he laments, “In Venice Tasso’s echoes are no more … Her palaces are crumbling to the
shore” (IV.iii.19, 22). But then the stanza turns: “Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here. / States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die, / Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear” (IV.iii.23-5). The double lines structured around a sharp break at the dash emphasize the contradiction, which Byron expands in the next stanza: “But unto us she hath a spell beyond / Her name in story … Ours is a trophy which will not decay / With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor, / And Pierre, can not be swept or worn away— / The keystones of the arch! though all were o’er, / For us repeopled were the solitary shore” (IV.iv.28-9, 32-6). For the English traveler, Venice holds significance as the setting of revered English texts—a significance independent of the “decay[ing]” “Rialto.”

This significance, though fictional, invests the traveler personally and culturally in the land, presenting him with an experience that is simultaneously past and present, imaginative and experiential. Byron explains this experience, yet again, through diffusion and integration:

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied
First exiles, then replaces what we hate. (IV.v.37-43)
It is this immortal essence that depends not on the poet but on the readers who continue to disperse the poem. When past and present, imagined and actual, come together through travel but contrast so starkly, as Byron finds in Venice, a complex temporal form is required in order to capture the contradictions. In *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, this form, while capturing inheritance, is palimpsestic rather than linear, a level plane onto which here and there, past and present, physical and imagined converge but do not blend together.

Palimpsestic coexistence is not just of place but also of time, a model that acknowledges inheritance while the past remains distinctly visible. As a temporal form, the palimpsest does not, as does Hemans’s lineage form, depend on the death of the predecessor. Instead, Byron’s poem brings past and present together, distinctly defined but sharing the same space:

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Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk’st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen. (IV. cxxxviii.1225-1242)
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Inheritance here is not sequential but coexistent. As at Venice, roles can invert (“Ocean’s children” can become “Ocean’s Queen”) but the interrelation remains constant. Just as the traveler becomes integrated into the landscape he experiences, so too when he travels to historic or antique lands become integrated in a historical narrative that expands beyond his own limited life. Just as in Venice, Byron aligns his physical location with what “Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare’s art / Had stamp’d … in me.” This is not succession but palimpsest in which, as Stabler explains, “centuries-old historical figures and poetic characters exist on the same plane of reality as the poet … landscape is charged with energy” (128). And it’s not the poet’s simple present filled with historical beings; it also weaves in the traveler’s memories and hopes, creating a vastly dense tapestry of moments aligned by the ideas and the material of the antique place. On the spot, for Byron, literature merges with experience regardless of linear time.

Throughout *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Byron highlights the difference between landscapes as they are known in poetic tradition and their modern identities (politically and geographically). “Parnassus,” he explains in a footnote, is “now called Λιακυρά (Liakura),” and he dates this paratextual remark to qualify the “now” as “Dec. 1809” (82). The temporal form, a palimpsest in visual metaphor, becomes an echo in auditory metaphor. In addition to announcing his shifts between then and now, he marks his deviations from reporting on the spot. In the middle of Harold’s journeys in Spain, for example, Byron includes several stanzas written, according to his footnotes, in Turkey and Greece, “where now / I strike my strain, far distant” and rhapsodizing on the famous Greek landscape (I. lix.604-5; emphasis added). In fact, Byron’s footnotes sometimes compete with the poem, marking a travel narrative that runs parallel to the poetic journey.
While the poem takes up the enduring legends of heroes amid the inspiring topographies of the Alps (III.lxvii and lxviii), the footnotes reiterate the author’s immediate vicinity to that landscape; however, they depict the experience of travel more subjectively, focusing on the specifics of Byron’s experience: “This is written in the eye of Mont Blanc (June 3d, 1816), which even at this distance dazzles mine.—(July 20th.) I this day observed for some time the distinct reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentière in the calm of the lake, which I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is sixty miles” (438). All at once on the page, we are here and there, then and now. Crossing and re-crossing poetic and geographic boundaries, Byron’s travel poem makes a space between fiction and nonfiction that Mediterranean travel writing will occupy throughout the nineteenth century.

**Greece**

For both Byron and Hemans, the debates over the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles encapsulate the temporal tensions arising from Mediterranean geopolitics. After Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo in 1815, when many of the famed artworks his coterie of experts had transported from Italy to Paris were returned, a similar relocation of prized cultural antiquities was transpiring in London. In 1803, Lord Elgin completed his removal of many segments of the Parthenon in Athens, which he then shipped to England. In 1811, Elgin offered to sell the marble friezes he had removed to the British Museum, launching a five-year debate (both in Parliament and out) about whether the British government should purchase these relics. Byron vehemently protested Elgin’s actions in his first installment of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (cantos I and II, published
in 1812), as well as in his *Curse of Minerva*. The British Museum’s ultimate decision to purchase the Elgin Marbles in 1816, as Emma Peacocke argues, “signalled to many that the torch of glorious military and cultural achievement had been passed from classical Athens into Britain’s hands in the aftermath of Waterloo” (113). The institutionalization and display of this acquisition occasioned Hemans’s *Modern Greece*, along with many other poetic meditations, including Keats’s “On First Seeing the Elgin Marbles.” In the Marbles, conflicts between the preservation of important heritage objects and the threat of revolution in Greece became issues of national significance for Britain. The post-Napoleonic return of Italy’s art that served as the occasion for Hemans’s patriotic *Restoration* was an event widely lauded in Britain, seemingly uncomplicated by the still-ongoing Elgin debates. Perhaps the greatest difference for popular commentators boiled down to imperial identities. Because Greece was under Ottoman rule, Elgin could make the case in Britain that Greek antiquities were neither protected nor preserved, rendering his removal of the Parthenon friezes necessary for their survival of Eastern occupation of Greece. This was an argument based on assumptions of universal heritage that still shape the Britain-Greece antiquities debates today.⁵⁶ The debates surrounding, and the eventual purchase and display of, the marbles signaled a shift in British attitudes toward Greece and other antique lands in the Mediterranean, entangling Parliament in Mediterranean current events and literally bringing home international affairs for Britons. The antiquities of lands held significant to historical narratives of Western culture became a point on which political debates converged.

It is not clear which edition of Hemans’s *Restoration* Byron possessed when he complimented the text to Murray. Certainly he knew Hemans to be the author, a fact not
made public until the printing of the second edition, although there would have been nothing to prevent Byron applying that knowledge to one of the anonymous first editions still in circulation. Equally certain is that Byron despised Hemans’s next topical poem to take up antiquity, *Modern Greece* (appearing in June 1817). This text was published completely anonymously (whereas the first edition of *Restoration* announced its authorship “by a lady”). For Byron’s own part, he wrote to Murray of *Modern Greece*, “Why do you send me such trash—worse than trash, the Sublime of Mediocrity?” He continues more specifically that the poem is “good for nothing; written by someone who has never been there, and not being able to manage the Spenser stanza has invented a thing of his own, consisting of two elegiac stanzas, an heroic line, and an Alexandrine, twisted on a string. Besides, why ‘modern?’ You may say modern Greeks, but surely Greece itself is rather more ancient than it ever was” (qtd. in Hemans 536). Byron has in mind the physical landscape; Hemans, the imaginary. She is not referring to a foreign country overrun with foreign life, of course, but to Britain, the modern cultural successor to ancient Greece and inheritor of the Parthenon friezes harvested from Athens by Lord Elgin. Byron, however, had publicly made clear his own negative opinions on Lord Elgin’s removal of the friezes from the Parthenon in the second canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812). I want to draw attention here to the fact that Byron criticizes the poem not by engaging its political content directly but by critiquing its form, its lack of first-hand experience, and its temporality. In other words, he critiques this piece as travel writing, citing its failures of poetics and authenticity.

Just as at Waterloo, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* asks of Greece’s Marathon plain, “Such was the scene—what now remaineth here? / What sacred trophy marks the
hallow’d ground, / Recording Freedom’s smile and Asia’s tear? / The rifled urn, the
violated mound, / The dust thy courser’s hoof, rude stranger! spurns around” (II.xc.850-4). The break between “was” and “now,” which the long dash emphasizes, reiterates that
history here is disconnected but still present; it coexists with, yet is distinct from, present
life in this space. In Greece, Byron emphasizes the temporal contrast as an interplay
among the present, the remnants of classical antiquity, and the traveler’s own memory of
imagining these places as a child, but all are brought together in the travel narrative onto
a single plane. The past is dually personal and broadly historical, contrasting with what
the traveler reflects “amidst the very scenes” of his memory and imagination. The ruins
and antiquities alone are not sacred but the very landscape itself, even when completely
reclaimed by nature, consists of dust that serves as the “sacred trophy.” Antiquities such
as the Parthenon friezes, when dislocated from their proper historical settings and
recontextualized in places like the British Museum, lose for Byron the effect of contrast
critical for a picturesque sensibility.

Byron remarks on Greece’s significance to Western European tourists and its
suitability for the reflective mind. He cautions, however,

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste;
But spare its relics—let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed:
Revere the remnants nations once revered:
So may our country’s name be undisgraced,
So may’st thou prosper where they youth was rear’d,
By every honest joy of love and life endear’d. (II.xciii.873-81)

Byron’s plea to preserve the “magic waste” in place rather than removing endangered “relics” to Britain demonstrates a travel unique to places where the landscape itself plays a significant role in its cultural value. Byron encounters no such concerns at the battlefield of Morat, which he likens to Waterloo and Marathon; here, his footnote confesses, “Of these relics [the bones] I ventured to bring away as much as may have made a quarter of a hero, for which the sole excuse is, that if I had not, the next passer by might have perverted them to worse uses than the careful preservation which I intend for them.”

If the antiquities are removed in Greece, however, the landscape will be stripped of its unique temporal sublimity through which the traveler on the spot observes, imagines, and remembers simultaneously.

In Greece and Italy, Byron’s poem draws out the different moments juxtaposed anachronistically in the Mediterranean landscape. Athens, for instance, is the great “Ancient of days” from the “schoolboy’s tale, the wonder of an hour” that draws travelers to it as a site of cultural significance; it is also, the traveler notes, “a nation’s sepulchre” filled with the “defenceless” physical remnants of ancient Greece (II.ii.10, 15; II.iii.20-1). Byron adds a footnote to these stanzas contrasting “the record of what Athens was, and the certainty of what she now is … [Athens] is now become a scene of petty intrigue and perpetual disturbance, between the bickering agents of certain British nobility and gentry … Seylla could punish, Philip subdue, and Xerxes burn Athens; but it remained for the
paltry antiquarian, and his despicable agents, to render her contemptible as himself and his pursuits. The Parthenon, before its destruction in part, by fire during the Venetian siege, had been a temple, a church, and a mosque. In each point of view it is an object of regard: it changed its worshippers; but still it was a place of worship thrice sacred to devotion: its violation is a triple sacrilege” (189-90n6). Byron charges Britain and British antiquaries—those for whom Athens presumably holds the most interest and reverence—with making the ruin of Athens worse. Prior violations (of Scylla, Philip, and Xerxes) changed only the content of Athens’ temples, the type of “worshippers,” while the form “still … a place of worship” remained, “thrice sacred to devotion.” British antiquarianism, though, changes even the form, producing a complete destruction of all that had made Greece a significant “antique land.” Byron charges Britain with cultural crimes tantamount to grave robbing.

But for all his claims of authenticity, of lyricizing famous landscapes on the spot, Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* depends on precisely the kind of poetic geography that Hemans produces; Byron insists on not seeing what is actually there, despite being on the spot. After a long interlude describing what he wishes to see in Greece, Byron shifts in the next stanza, abruptly asking, “But where is Harold?” (II.xvi.136). The poet recognizes and announces his own meandering away from his character in his musings on Greece, marking his forgetfulness by voicing the question the reader has likely been thinking also. He catches Childe Harold up as far as Albania, then after inserting an Albanian song, Byron interrupts Harold’s narrative again, exclaiming, “Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth! / Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!” (II.lxxiii.693-4). To these lines—both past-centric and densely figurative, with the sequence from
apostrophe to metaphor to a highly contradictory chiasmus—Byron adds an appendix of “some thoughts on the present state of Greece” (120n1; appendix D 137-52). In this long note on the Greeks, Byron says, “Instead of considering what they have been, and speculating on what they may be, let us look at them as they are” (142). However, the description he offers of Greeks “as they are” is hardly the flattering image one might anticipate from the volunteer soldier of Greek independence. He writes, “The Greeks will never be independent; they will never be sovereign as heretofore, and God forbid they ever should! but they may be subjects without being slaves. Our colonies are not independent, but they are free and industrious, and such may Greece be hereafter … To talk, as the Greeks themselves do, of their rising again to their pristine superiority, would be ridiculous; as the rest of the world must resume its barbarism, after reasserting the sovereignty of Greece: but their seems to be no very great obstacle … to their becoming an useful dependency” (140-1). The layering of the past-focused poetic lines with the insistently present endnote highlights the contradiction of the British heritage traveler in the present Greek space. He experiences at once the competing pulls of preservation and modernization, of the heritage he inherits and the empire he must build to secure it. For Byron, only the palimpsest can capture this persistent contrast.

For Hemans, Greece, like Italy, is more compelling as an idea than a physical place—one that points back to Britain as the present keeper of Western culture. Hemans begins Modern Greece with an epigraph from James Thomson’s Liberty: A Poem (1735-6), in which, as Wolfson explains in her gloss, “Liberty narrates her history from ancient Greece to republican Rome (compared to modern Italy), to Britain” (62n1). Thus the epigraph, in addition to establishing context and poetic precedence for Modern Greece,
sets up a lineage of Liberty, a line through which Britain can trace its political and cultural ancestor in keeping with the model of genealogical temporality Hemans constructs in the second edition of *Restoration*. 60 Despite Byron’s protestations that Greece cannot be modern, the ancestral framing Hemans provides hints immediately that “modern Greece” lies not in the Mediterranean but decidedly further north, in Britain. Hemans’s shifting focus from Greece to Britain reverses the trajectory of the Grand Tour from east to west so that, as Esterhammer notes, “[b]y the end of the poem, the referent of Hemans’s title *Modern Greece* has shifted … and ‘Modern Greece’ designates, instead, a future Britain” (32).

Hemans’s mapping project in *Modern Greece* is also necessarily a temporal project, and one that serves the newly victorious British maritime forces particularly well. Because the imaginary space Hemans depicts establishes Britain’s cultural descent from Mediterranean origins, it sets up a precedent and justification for British possession of, and responsibility for, antiquities (the very possession for which Byron condemned his countrymen). Greece’s past genius and heroism, *Modern Greece* argues, were somewhat out of diachronic time. To Greece, Hemans offers a temporal elegy early in the poem, lamenting, “Thine were the minds, whose energies sublime / So distanced ages in their lightning race, / The task they left to sons of later time / Was but to follow their illumined trace” (x.95-8). 61 The lineage of superior cultures operates independently of ordinary duration; in this case, the temporal form of inheritance organizes the logic of the poetic information in opposition to diachrony. Along a diachronic timeline, modern Greeks descend from ancient Greeks; in Hemans’s alternative inheritance model, however, points of superior culture beget cultural descendants: The ancient Greeks were modern and so
out of time; present Greece, as Byron points out, is not modern, indicating a degenerated or defunct culture. For Hemans, modernity is not a teleological or permanent point on a timeline but a state of being—one that creates as lineage of ascendance despite the barriers of space or time.

Hemans facilitates her temporal form of cultural inheritance through the same tropes of travel writing that Byron uses to indict her failures of poetics and authority. For scholarly support of her position, Hemans cites authority on the physical geography as context for her imaginative geography—one in which England itself temporally borders the poetic lands of antiquity. As Wolfson points out, Hemans “enters the Elgin Marbles debate with the help of forty-four scholarly footnotes” (34). Hemans integrates the notes to establish the authority of personal experience she lacked, and she is careful to cite sources that themselves profess to speak “on the spot,” as in the case of Swinburne’s Travels in the Two Sicilies (62n5). For example, she exults,

Romantic Tempe! thou art yet the same—
Wild, as when sung by bards of elder time:
Years, that have changed thy river’s classic name,
Have left thee still in savage pomp sublime;
And from thine Alpine clefts, and marble caves,
In living lustre still break forth the fountain-waves. (XXIII.225-30)

What initially seems like a typical apostrophe to the river and valley famed through classical mythology in fact weaves topography into its lyricization just as expressly
nonfiction travelogues had long integrated poetry into their descriptions of physical space. By linking imagined and real space, Hemans inserts the present into lines focused on classical mythology. To these lines, Hemans appends two footnotes. The first, about which more in a moment, situates this description in the context of Henry Holland’s *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, &c. during the Years 1812 and 1813* (63n14). The second informs the reader, “The modern name of the Peneus is Salympria” (64n15). This second note demonstrates the poet’s knowledge of modern geography, but it also reiterates what has not changed—the river’s sublimity. Hemans, of course, does not personally know that “the fountain-waves” “still break forth,” but she does know that the image endures and is still capable of producing a sense of the sublime in the observing British subject—even the subject observing through the medium of verse.

The passage Hemans notes from Holland’s *Travels*, conversely, complicates the scene. Holland remarks on “the narrowness and abruptness” of the river and says, “[T]he imagination instantly recurs to the tradition, that these plains were once covered with water, for which some convulsion of nature had subsequently opened this narrow passage. The term vale, in our language, is usually employed to describe scenery in which the predominant features are breadth, beauty, and repose. The reader has already perceived that the term is wholly inapplicable to the scenery at this spot; and that the phrase of *Vale of Tempe* is one that depends on poetic fiction” (Hemans 63n14). To describe the “real character of Tempe” even more concretely in a way that will resonate for his English readers—readers familiar with the traditions, geological and poetic, to which he refers—Henry Holland resorts to a geological/geographical simile, introducing familiar English scenery to explain the character of the Mediterranean. “[T]o those who
have visited St. Vincent’s rocks below Bristol,” he writes, “I cannot convey a more sufficient idea of Tempe, than by saying that its scenery resembles, though on a much larger scale, that of the former place. The Peneus, indeed, as it flows through the valley, is not greatly wider than the Avon; and the channel between the cliffs is equally contracted in its dimensions; but these cliffs themselves are much loftier and more precipitous and project their vast masses of rock with still more extraordinary abruptness over the hollow beneath” (Hemans 63n14). When the physical geography fails to corroborate the idea, Holland uses English topographical features to relate a description through something concrete rather than fictional, but the picture he paints through this description allows his reader to imagine in detail and, perhaps, experience a fraction of the traveler’s sublime surroundings. This kind of reference to something tangibly accessible to readers is similar to the transnational metalepsis Freedgood describes. In this case, however, the boundary crossing is not only spatial but also temporal. Hemans chooses for her interlocutor and authority a not a fellow poet but a travel writer who, though “on the spot,” makes a point of translating between real and imagined landscapes, between ancient “tradition” and modern experience, and between English and Greek natural spaces.

The question of what has changed and what remains constant in Greece since antiquity is a matter of great urgency in Hemans’s poem because the answer will determine the moral responsibility of British geopolitics in the region. Hemans emphasizes the cultural death that has left the physical Greek landscape an empty geography, a corpse devoid of its former culture: “Grace, beauty, grandeur, strength, and symmetry, / Blend in decay; while all that yet is fair / Seems only spared to tell how
much hath perished there!” (xxx.298-300). Hemans imagines the Greek landscape’s power to affect the “pilgrim,” depicting a scene in which Greece is revered as an ancient, rather than a “modern,” landscape. This acts as a kind of consolation:

Though its rich fanes be blended with the dust,
And silence now the hallow’d haunt possess,
Still is the scene of ancient rites august,
Magnificent in mountain loneliness;
Still Inspiration hovers o’er the ground,
Where Greece her councils held, her Pythian victors crown’d. (xxv.245-50)

The repetition of the prominent “Still” as the first word of lines 248 and 250 emphasizes continuity over history and maintains Greece’s prominence as a desirable destination, sacred as Western culture’s historical or even originary landscape. The placement of “Still” in the syntax of each clause, though, also hints at arrested movement or inactivity. Until the end of each line that it begins, “still” could mean either (or both) “yet” and “unmoving.” Hemans continues from these lines to depict several Greek landmarks of significance from classical literature in the next two stanzas, concluding at the end of stanza xxvii, “And who can rove o’er Grecian shores, nor feel, / Soft o’er his inmost heart, their secret magic steal?” (xxvii.269-70). The final line of the stanza demands an added pause to unfurl Hemans’s looping syntax and comprehend a question that seem so simple as to be trite. Yet, this question, it happens, is not merely rhetorical. Stanza xxviii
begins immediately with a response: “Yet many a sad reality is there, / That fancy’s bright illusions cannot veil” (xxviii.271-2). This break turns the poem away from the Greece that “is rather more ancient than it ever was”—a Greece that, if it ever existed, remains “still” only in “poetic fiction,” to borrow Henry Holland’s phrase.

Present Greece, as Hemans depicts it, is an ongoing warzone, desecrated by Ali Pasha’s continued dominance. The comparison she draws between modern geographical Greece and modern cultural Greece, like Byron’s palimpsest, emphasizes historical discontinuity, though Hemans follows the break between then and now to a different conceptual end. Hemans raises concerns about the preservation of antiquities significant to Western culture thereby justifying the relocation of the Parthenon friezes to London, where they will be duly revered and protected. Hemans explores the concept of cultural lineage and historical discontinuity through two contrasting images of Greek motherhood. In the first, she alludes to the “Liberty” of the epigraph as she recounts the story of the Dance of Zalongo, in which a group of Suliote mothers threw themselves and their children off a cliff to avoid imprisonment or slavery.62 The women, fleeing Ali Pasha’s massacring troops, see that capture is imminent,

Then on the cliff the frantic mother stood
High o’er the river’s darkly-rolling wave,
And hurl’d, in dread delirium, to the flood,
Her free-born infant, ne’er to be a slave.
For all was lost—all, save the power to die
The wild indignant death of savage liberty. (l.495-500)
The mass murder-suicide is a defiant act of resistance—an insistence on the “power to die”—asserting the Suliotes’ sovereignty over themselves, robbing their enemies of the thrill of killing them and refusing to contribute to the welfare of the Ottoman Empire through work produced in slavery. But “Now is that strife a tale of vanished days,” Hemans explains, not an event of ancient history but of history nonetheless, a last noble act of the last noble Greeks. Instead, the living Greeks of 1817 are those who accepted “slavery,” thereby marking themselves as illegitimate and clearing the way for Greece’s antiquities to be entailed on England (lvii.562).


Hadst thou but perished with the free, nor known
A second race, when Glory’s noon went by,
Then had thy name in single brightness shone
A watch-word on the helm of liberty!
Thou shouldst have past with all thy light of fame,
And proudly sunk in ruins, not in chains. (lvi. 551-6)

The dichotomy Hemans produces—die free or live enslaved—works as a blanket cultural judgment: any living modern Greeks have assented to slavery rather than die in a blaze of
glory befitting Greek tragedy. These living Greeks, than, are not the rightful heirs of Greek culture, forfeiting their birthright to their cultural relics, nor can they be reasonably expected to preserve such treasures from Ottoman negligence or active destruction.\textsuperscript{63}

In justifying British possession of Greek antiquity’s relics, Hemans indicates Britain’s duty to protect these antiquities, held sacred through a common cultural history (lxxxviii.871-880). But history and thus the preservation of antiquities are not the only justifications Hemans cites for the removal of these heritage objects; the end of Modern Greece specifically details the promise of her epigraph from Thomson’s Liberty: that Britain will inherit cultural superiority from its direct (and now dead) ancestors, Rome and Greece, unifying imperial might and cultural prowess. Hemans asks, “And who can tell how pure, how bright a flame, / Caught from these models, may illumine the west? / What British Angelo may rise to fame, / On the free isle what beams of art may rest?” (xcix.981-4). Indeed, she critiques Britain for having failed to develop art because that failure has led to an overall stunted cultural development. To Britain specifically, she calls, “Yet rise, O land in all but Art alone, / Bid the sole wreath that is not thine be won!” (ci.1001-2). The unification of artistic genius (made possible by the relocation of relics that had been inaccessible and can now act as a precedent) with military domination promises Britain will live up to its potential as the heir of classical culture—and indeed, by conscientiously cultivating a balanced society, may even surpass its predecessors. The Elgin Marbles thus function as a kind of time capsule, communicating the divine forms of art to a society prepared to make the best use of them.

Although Hemans chooses for Restoration and Modern Greece topics of current events and present import, both the poems and the issues themselves are layered with
history and the present’s stewardship of the past. Hemans tries to understand time—how the past and future interact in and through the present—via space—how modern empires interact with Mediterranean lands. Of the British Museum’s display of the Elgin Marbles, she says, “And well that pageant of the glorious dead / Blends us with nobler days, and loftier spirits fled” (xciii.929-30). Britain’s acquisition of these ancient Greek relics is not, in Hemans’s construction, a perfidy against the modern Greeks (any of whom still living have renounced their cultural integrity and thus their right to their cultural past); it is instead a cultural inheritance that, coupled with martial dominance in the Mediterranean, promises Britain, the rightful heir of Rome and Greece, will achieve cultural superiority. But Hemans depicts precisely what Byron claims to be impossible: the present’s “blend[ing]” with the past. While Byron identifies past and present on the same plane, they contrast, creating a palimpsest in which each remains clearly demarcated. For Byron, inheritance is an inhabiting of the antique land in order to preserve heritage objects in place, whereas for Hemans, the objects must be transported for their safety and to enable Britain to rise as the dominant cultural and imperial power.

Byron imagines Britain’s inevitable ruin to declare human history both pointless and the only hope for memory to exceed time’s flow; for Hemans, Britain’s potential to rise and fall like other empires is the goal. Hemans does not except Britain from what appears an inevitable, even a natural fate of empires and civilizations as of individuals: mortality. Mortality, in fact, makes succession possible by demarcating the end of one reign without rupturing the steady flow of rule. To the triumphant Britain, Hemans concludes her poetic address:
Fame dwells around thee—Genius is thine own;
Call his rich blooms to life—be Thou their Sun!
So, should dark ages o’er thy glory sweep,
Should thine e’er be as now are Grecian plains,
Nations unborn shall track thine own blue deep,
To hail thy shore, to worship thy remains;
Thy mighty monuments with reverence trace,
And cry, “This ancient soil hath nursed a glorious race!” (ci.1001-10)

This apocalyptic scene depends on an inevitable revolution of empire. The pun on “Sun,” indicating that Britain will be the impetus for calling up new works of genius as well as the son or heir to past genius, reaches simultaneously into the past and future. As Peacocke explains, “By the late eighteenth century, it was common practice to envision existing structures in ruins” (114). In Hemans’s account, the possibility that the British Empire’s history and culture might, like that of Rome and Greece, outlast its political existence by centuries is a goal of triumphing over time.

For all his denigration of Modern Greece to Murray, Byron too capitalizes on the sea’s stubborn antitemporality and unconquerability a year later in canto IV of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage (1818). Byron apostrophizes to the Mediterranean:

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves’ play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now. (IV.clxxxii.1630-8)

Historical but timeless, the sea remains unaltered by changes in empire that claim to
dominate it. But Byron eschews the exceptionalism that colors Hemans’s inheritance
poetry; here, inheritance is purely coincidental as the “shores obey / The stranger, slave,
or savage” as well as “Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage” (and all are transient).

As a pilgrimage or quest narrative, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* is oddly circular.
It does not, in the end, move geographically beyond the Mediterranean Sea and its
surrounding environs. Byron writes in the penultimate stanza, “My task is done—my
song hath ceased—my theme / Has died into an echo” (IV.clxxxv.1657-8). The “task,”
though “done,” is not necessarily completed. Though the “theme / Has died,” it has died
“into an echo,” suggesting continuity in spite of the original vocalizer’s silence. The
pilgrimage ends with a similar contradictory finality and continuation: a contemplation of
the sea’s permanence, “boundless, endless, and sublime— / The image of Eternity”
(IV.clxxxiii.1643-4). It is fitting that the sea emerges victorious in this quest because it
remains constant.

Regardless of Britain’s inattention to the Mediterranean before the turn of the
nineteenth century and the controversy surrounding naval activity there, “[d]uring the
struggle against Napoleon a trans-Mediterranean world had been integrated and in various ways mobilized, with the British lodged at crucial points around it. Once Nelson had destroyed the remnants of the French fleet at Trafalgar, the Royal Navy’s control in these waters had been again assured; and during the hundred days following Napoleon’s escape from Elba during March 1815 even Marseilles was occupied by Sir Henry Lowe and his Corsican Rangers” (Holland 23). Strategic ports such as those at Gibraltar, Valletta, Alexandria, and Corfu became especially attractive to a military that, as Trafalgar proved, was more effective as a navy than as an army, and British maritime activity in the Mediterranean grew steadily from the post-Napoleonic moment throughout the nineteenth century. “It was the British presence in the Mediterranean, and the stability it provided,” Holland argues, “which made the region what an eminent historian [Julian Corbett] writing in 1904 encapsulated as the ‘keyboard of Europe’: if that was shaken, everything else would shake too” (6).
CHAPTER 2: EMBEDDEDNESS IN PLACE, TIME, AND HISTORY

The story goes that the catastrophic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius froze Pompeii in time, at the very moment of its destruction in 79 AD. The entire city remained suspended in eerie apocalypse until its rediscovery in 1748. The prevailing trope in travel accounts to the site, then, was that to journey to Pompeii was to go back in time. For example, the intrepid Lady Blessington remarks in her 1823 journal,

On finding myself occasionally alone in some apartment of the dwellings in Pompeii … I felt as if intruding, an unbidden guest, in some mansion, whose owners had but lately left it: and the echoes of the voices of my companions, from other buildings, sounded strangely in my ears, as if they were those of the departed hosts, reproaching me for thus unceremoniously exploring the secret recesses of their domestic privacy … My eyes involuntarily turned to Vesuvius, the cause of the destruction around me. There it was, tranquil as a sleeping child, and bearing no indication of its dangerous properties, save a light blue smoke, ascending to the sky, like that seen floating from some peaceful cottage in happy England … It seemed all a dream; and the fearful past appeared more real to the imagination than the calm and smiling present: the ruins alone attesting that Destruction had been here. (88)

Blessington’s description is typical of a particular kind of early nineteenth-century travel writing in its characterization of the traveling subject instead of a precise description of concrete objects. Blessington’s associative sequence of similes does not actually
describe what she sees but concentrates on what she imagines while seeing it. This negotiation raises a paradox: can something “real to the imagination”—let alone “more real”? Though she is ostensibly meditating on the specific ruins at Pompeii, the scene she sketches—including the vague “mansion” and Vesuvius, which she bizarrely likens to an English cottage—renders the scene a “dream.” This scene takes shape tenuously, as an abstraction of the scene’s physical details; it is also abstract temporally. Blessington marks “Destruction” in the past: it “had been here” but it is no longer present. What is present—temporally and spatially—then, is doubly ambiguous.

Pompeii proves both an ideal site and a conundrum for a variety of British travel writing, from leisure accounts to new antiquarian studies. On the prevailing image of Pompeii as a site that had emerged from antiquity fully intact and unspoiled, Charles Dickens soliloquizes that “so many fresh traces of remote antiquity” give the viewer a sense that “the course of Time had been stopped after this desolation, and there had been no nights and days, months, years, and centuries since” (Pictures from Italy 170). I want to emphasize two features of this passage: Dickens reiterates the sense of Pompeii being frozen in time, and he identifies this sense as an effect of “fresh” antiquities uncovered there. Pompeii was, as classicist Mary Beard explains, a favorite destination for nineteenth-century travelers who “enjoyed the illusion of stepping back in time” but who “were also intrigued by the ways in which the past was revealed to them: the ‘how’ as well as the ‘what’ we know of Roman Pompeii” (22). It was also captivating and eerie, as William St. Clair and Annika Bautz detail in their examination of Britain’s cult fascination with Pompeii (359-96).
Part of the allure of Pompeii was the fantasy that it offered a pristine archive of ancient things, and it demanded new methods of analysis—methods that facilitated conceptions of time as potentially infinitely embedded moments. Fascinating to travelers from antiquarians to poets, Pompeii was a space that inspired diverse kinds of historiography at a moment when history, as a specific discipline, was beginning to take shape alongside, and in distinction from, other kinds of antiquarianism, including geology and archaeology. In *Excavating Victorians*, for example, Virginia Zimmerman describes nineteenth-century Pompeii as a place where history, geology, and archaeology were tightly interwoven through shared methods of excavation and a concepts like stratigraphy. In this space, buried in volcanic ash for hundreds of years, antiquaries of all stripes could work in tangible, material artifacts rather than purely with classical texts. As a result, I argue, antiquarianism developed new theories and forms of time as travelers tried to narrate past and present among these recently rediscovered antiquities, launching scientific historiographies that, at least on the surface, rejected practices of narrative abstraction.

Here, it is worth pausing to emphasize the capacity of “antiquary” as a term that I will use to indicate not only the amateur collector or lover of antiquity and historic objects but also the professional and semi-professional scholars who studied the past. In accordance with the recent work of Noah Heringman, I include under the “disciplinary umbrella of antiquarianism” at this time history, proto-archaeology, and geology. What “antiquarianism” might mean in the 1820s and ‘30s was a matter of self-reflection and even debate among myriad amateurs and professionals, as was its relation to historical narrative. The eminent nineteenth-century historian Thomas Babington
Macaulay wrote in an 1828 review of Henry Neele’s *The Romance of History*—an essay tracing historiography from Herodotus to Walter Scott—that history “lies on the confines of two distinct territories,” or “hostile powers,” and “[i]nstead of being equally shared between the two rulers, the Reason and the Imagination, it falls alternately under the sole and absolute dominion of each. It is sometimes fiction. It is sometimes theory” (331). Macaulay highlights what he regards as a necessary tension in history between facts and narrative presentation, but these “rulers” constantly conflicted at Pompeii, where travelers well-versed in the stories of ancient Rome encountered physical remnants of that culture existing beyond classical history as it had been crafted as a Western heritage narrative. As I will show, methods of constructing the past had to shift in this period in order to accommodate such physical artifacts.

In this chapter, I examine how analyses of physical antiquities embedded within Pompeii produced a corresponding theory of embeddedness in history. Essentially, embeddedness as a temporal form, I argue, emerged from spatial concepts. At Pompeii, the Rome of famous poets and statesmen, well-rehearsed through British classical education, gave way to the daily life manifest in quotidian artifacts. Here, visible to the traveler, was a history without heroes or monuments, captured suddenly and randomly—a history of representative, not exceptional, life. The temporal form of inheritance that I discussed in chapter one, with its manifestations as lineage and palimpsest, does not give way to embeddedness, but in the context of Pompeii, embeddedness becomes a significant form by which travel writers organized time. I consider different methods through which nineteenth-century British travelers engaged with Pompeii, a site that, I argue, amplified tensions between predominant picturesque modes of viewing travel.
destinations subjectively and abstractly and more detailed modes that try to account for
the intricate depth of antiquities stratified in Pompeii’s volcanic ash. These latter modes, I
show, contribute to new historiographies that define and narrate antiquity minutely in
order to distinguish themselves from imaginative historical fiction. At Pompeii,
antiquaries attempted to establish cohesive disciplinary definitions of the past, of history,
and by extension, of time itself.

The divergence of scientific histories and imaginative history, however, does not
mark an insurmountable barrier for travel writers. From my examination of (often
conflicting) articulations of the past that emerge from, and intersect in, southern Italy, in
section two I move to a specific analysis of embeddedness in Charles Dickens’s Italian
travel narrative, *Pictures from Italy* (1846). Specifically, I argue, Dickens refines the kind
of embeddedness we can read in accounts of Pompeii into a more precise form of small-
scale density: fractals. As I explain further in section two, fractals refer to a self-similar
structure that repeats at increasingly fine scales. I contend that Dickens uses
contemporaneous discourses on the nature of time to navigate the tensions between
dominating traditions of touring in Italy and the present scenes he encounters there. In
addition to conflicts among competing empires, Dickens experiences an excess of
historical detail still present in Italian landscapes that overwhelms its sense of time, place,
and history. The narrative he produces organizes space, time, and history according to a
fractal temporal form, whereby infinite past moments are nested within infinite material
presents. Just as visitors to Pompeii consider embeddedness in history based on
embeddedness manifest in landscape, so too does Dickens organize both space and time
according to fractal form. Through embeddedness generally and fractals specifically, I
examine in section three how configurations of physical and temporal material beget an embedded conception of history not as a record of objectively significant events but as a selection and arrangement of temporal artifacts.

Pompeii was a historical site of interest to antiquaries of many nationalities, but it was also constantly caught up in narratives of modernization because it essentially offered the nineteenth-century traveler material from the past unadulterated by intervening years and lives. Pompeii revealed the banal lives usually subsumed in History (in the official sense of a master narrative), and it laid bare the subjectivity of historical curation’s exceptional heroes and events. Here was a site potentially more authentic because it had not been carefully depicted and re-arranged according to centuries of religious, political, and popular mandates but suddenly removed from ordinary Roman life. It was, conceptually, a tantalizing direct connection to the ancient Roman Empire at a moment when time itself radically expanded and made the earliest human histories seem not quite so antique. But excavation at Pompeii was inextricable from the turmoil of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imperial collisions in and around nearby Naples. Embeddedness, predictably, is especially salient in accounts of Pompeii as British travelers, quite suddenly after Napoleon’s fall, found that they could encounter tangible remnants of ancient Roman life. An international political framework enclosed antiquarianism as it developed in and through Pompeii. I will examine this framework as it affected Pompeii in three ways: 1) by granting and restricting access based on nationality; 2) by motivating travelers to go, to record (both the actual site and their subjective impressions while there), and to excavate in the name of national and cultural
superiority; and 3) by reshaping historical narratives (in content and in form) through which the present relates to shifting conceptions of time.

Because of Bourbon and French restrictions of the site, British antiquaries and travelers arrived very late to Pompeii. Excavations began around the Bay of Naples in 1738 (leading, initially, to the rediscovery of Herculaneum, which was more mined for antiquities than excavated). When these excavations began, Charles VII carefully guarded the discoveries, and travelers had to provide appropriate letters of introduction to be admitted. There was a ban on drawing and on publishing any accounts of Herculaneum, although, as Alden R. Gordon’s “Subverting the Secret” details, excavations around the Bay of Naples led to “conscious archaeological espionage” (45). Official French excavations and publications had blossomed under Napoleon, who regarded professional antiquarian activity at the site as an investment in Western culture and, therefore, in French imperialism. With the end of Napoleon’s reign came the end of government-funded excavations at Pompeii. Both scholarly and imaginative pursuits at Pompeii were demonstrably tied to contemporary European politics. When British travelers returned to Pompeii in 1815, it was to an underfunded site in disarray and suffering from all the tensions that nationalistic prejudices could produce. Many antiquaries were distrustful or dismissive of the work produced by any but their own countrymen. For Britons, then, Gell’s first accounts of Pompeii, which came from his travels in 1819, and were subsequently reworked into the much-heralded *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices, and Ornaments of Pompeii* (1832), were the first reliable source of information about the site in English by a British professional. For the British especially, Herculaneum and Pompeii played perfectly into the nationalist stories the British Empire wanted to tell,
such as rescuing Western heritage from the French, as I discussed in chapter one with Hemans’s *Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*, as well as preserving the past from time’s decay.

**Seeing Pompeii**

At Pompeii, unlike at Athens or Rome, the geographic site largely adhered to travelers’ preconceptions of it, both because it was largely new to British travelers and because it was not simultaneously a present city in the same sense as other Mediterranean destinations. Dickens and Blessington illustrate a kind of nineteenth-century historiography through which, as Ingrid Rowland claims, “Antiquity always remained magically idealized” (155). This type of imaginative historiography was especially salient at Pompeii because the space remained largely antique, distinct from the present moment. “Pompeii,” therefore, “was easier to bear than Naples itself, not least because [travelers] could reshape the ancient city in [their] own imagination” (Rowland 161). At Pompeii, present existence did not occlude the tourist’s view, whereas elsewhere distance was often necessary to achieve the view the traveler sought. However, Pompeii provided a rare instance in which the physical site problematized not space but time. Unlike Lord Byron’s disappointment and even disgust with foreign life in Greece, for example, those “on the spot” in Pompeii could match the site easily to literary depictions of it. They could not, though, match their perceptions of classical history to the history manifest in the details of antiquity manifest in the site. Throughout her travel journals, Blessington reiterates the value of distance for cultivating pleasant imaginative impressions. From a boat overlooking Salerno, for instance, she writes,
The whole scene from the distance was beautiful; so beautiful that it was difficult to imagine it could be the one whence we were only a few minutes previously driven by its intolerable atmosphere of tobacco and garlic, and its noise. One of our boatmen, on hearing me make the observation, philosophically remarked, that many of the scenes which looked fair from a distance, were found to be far from agreeable when reached: a truth that none of us were disposed to dispute. (88)

The distance allows competing impressions of the city to exist simultaneously: the scene is “beautiful” and, they know, “far from agreeable.” Blessington does not dwell on this contradiction, but she uses the difference in perspective to shift the scale of observation—the landscape from a boat in the bay rather than the city from the streets of Salerno—to generate a more pleasing impression.

An alternate, seemingly contradictory perspective focuses on the ruins as objects; it tends to concern itself with details and particulars of the scene at hand. It is intimate and deliberately minute. But these perspectives were not mutually exclusive, neither do accounts of Pompeii attest that one perspective gives rise to another. Lady Blessington articulates her own struggle vacillating between these perspectives: “Glad as I was to profit by the savoir of the antiquarian Sir William Gell … yet I could have wished to ramble alone through this City of the Dead, which appealed so forcibly to my imagination, conjuring up its departed inhabitants, instead of listening to the erudite details of their dwellings, and the uses of each article appertaining to them” (64). Though the ruins can be both imaginative and material, Blessington can only access the former by
occluding the latter. She needs distance, as when she composes Salerno into a beautiful landscape by getting far enough away from it that the “atmosphere of tobacco and garlic” fades into the overall scenic composition. In this instance, “erudite details” actually interfere with the experience that Blessington wishes to portray and that her readers likely expected—an expectation fostered in her mind via artistic and literary representations of Pompeii circulating in Europe. Direct access to the material of Pompeii thus creates a problem for Blessington’s method of travel and travel narration.

This tension between the “far from agreeable” details that one can see (or smell) up close and the “beautiful” panorama that one can achieve by introducing distance between the viewing subject and the object of her gaze has a temporal analog as well—one that, I will show, becomes equally relevant at Pompeii. As Macaulay explains in his description of history’s “two rulers,” notably via an analogy of portrait painting, “History has its foreground and its background: and it is principally in the management of its perspective, that one artist differs from another. Some events must be represented on a large scale, others diminished; the great majority will be lost in the dimness of the horizon” (338). What determines ideal perspective aesthetically in art similarly determines ideal scale in history. The site of Pompeii, however, preserved the individual and the insignificant matter of history instead of the usual chronicles of politics and wars. Pompeii’s aura of anachrony—the sense of timelessness arising from its imaginative representations as a “city of the dead”—in fact, creates the possibility of a different historical paradigm, animating different temporal forms, which Dickens develops narratively.70
Gell, who pestered Blessington with “erudite details,” was the most prominent British antiquary at Pompeii in the early nineteenth century. In this role, he took upon himself the task of guiding many notable travelers through the ruins, including an aging Sir Walter Scott. But Scott, Gell lamented, was unreceptive to precise details and learned context (Reminiscences 8). Instead, Gell gently complained, “I was sometimes enabled to call his attention to such objects as were the most worthy of remark. To these observations, however, he seemed generally nearly insensible, viewing the whole and not the parts, with the eye not of an antiquary but a poet, and exclaiming frequently ‘The City of the Dead,’ without any other remark” (Reminiscences 8, emphasis added). The irresolvable division (and frustration) Gell implies between the perspectives of the “antiquary” and the “poet” illustrates a historical and literary shift especially visible in depictions of Pompeii. Pompeii’s popular designation as “The City of the Dead,” therefore, became associated with a perspective of historical romance and with the figure of Walter Scott, though Scott’s journal doesn’t actually use the phrase (699-701).71 “The city of the dead” does appear in Blessington’s travel narrative The Idler in Italy (1839)—her poem “To Pompeii,” which opens, “Lonely City of the Dead!” was published Idler in Italy, but was written earlier, in the 1820s—as well as in Samuel Rogers’s earlier poem Italy (1830). Scott’s own account of Pompeii is, in fact, very bland.

Whether or not Gell is perfectly accurate in this recollection of Scott is less important to my study than is Gell’s obvious investment in constructing this dichotomy, and in clearly differentiating historical romance and historical science specifically at the popular site of Pompeii. The difference, for Gell as for Macaulay, centers on the scale and method of perception. According to Gell, the poet uses the ruins as an emotive or
imaginative catalyst, painting an abstracted landscape in words. In contrast, the antiquary focuses on the material details, studying, cataloguing, and hypothesizing from the facts gathered at historical sites. By illustrating Scott’s method of viewing the ruins as poetic and, therefore, fundamentally distinct from Gell’s own antiquarian history, Gell uses Pompeii as a site for reworking the scientific discipline of history as something distinct from literature’s representations of time and space; he participates in the construction of a disciplinary boundary between subjective seeing and objective examination.72

The burgeoning historical sciences, including archaeology and geology, changed how travel writers (and, hence, their readers) understood and represented time, and we can see shifts in historiography reflecting shifts in temporal understanding. The historical sciences emphasized new ways of analyzing antique and sacred places that focused on detailed cataloging, excavation, and preservation of ruins. These new methods suggested different ways of understanding and using time—both as a grand-scale measure in geology and in the small-scale registers of artifacts attesting to the daily lives and habits of past civilizations.73 As Zimmerman points out, the seemingly insignificant detail can, on multiplication, become an overwhelming force, the individual moment or action could have sway even in the widest expanses of time. The potential for the individual to matter was a point for increasingly serious consideration after Charles Lyell published his *Principles of Geology* (1830-33).

As Macaulay identifies range and scale with history, I read the same structural awareness in considerations of time more broadly. Lyell’s expansive three-volume treatise popularized geology as a new discipline, but its effects on scholarly and popular conceptions of time resounded far more widely. *Principles of Geology*, which was based
on Lyell’s travels with his new wife, Mary Horner, in southern Italy and Switzerland, is both a treatise and a travel narrative that radically altered the scope of time. John May and Nigel Thrift’s study of temporalities asserts that “the message of geology was of the earth’s great antiquity,” which “encouraged people to think in great expanses of time … at precisely the moment at which people were also beginning to pay attention to ever smaller fractions of time,” for instance, through industrialism’s organization of days into hours, minutes, and seconds (12). Lyell identifies the longstanding miscalculation of the scope of time as the foundational stumbling block to the advancement of geology and historical sciences. In fact, ignorance about “the quantity of time” proves a “fatal … error” in scientific innovation generally (1:78). But it is an error that can only be overcome by acknowledging not a correct length of time but one’s inability to conceive the earth’s true age and origin. It’s a surrender to time’s ultimate unknowability. “The more attentively we study the European continent,” Lyell concludes, “the greater we find the extension of the whole series of geological formations. No sooner does the calendar appear to be completed, and the signs of a succession of physical events arranged in chronological order, than we are called upon to intercalculate, as it were, some new periods of vast duration” (1:87). Lyell’s reconception of the calendar from thousands to millions of years profoundly affected relative designations such as “antique.” In the antique lands of the Mediterranean region, Lyell redefined antiquity, rewriting what it meant for a land to be antique in relation to the history of human civilization.

After Lyell, travel writers across genres had to shift both how they depicted time and how they practiced historiography in relation to geological deep time. The emergence of scientific historiographies to deal with the new opportunities for investigation and
detailed material excavation at Pompeii contrasted with popular Romantic depictions of “the past” as antique lands. Scholars such as Ian Hesketh have noted the explicit movement of nineteenth-century historians to establish a science of history that follows models of empirical investigation rather than literary construction; I examine this emerging disciplinary fracture in Italy and especially Pompeii, where history, new sciences (including geology and archaeology), tourism, and narrative intersected. Travel in and around Pompeii—and especially narrations of that travel—connects the texts that I assemble here from different genres. As I have already argued, travel causes travelers to challenge their perceptions about time and space, and narrating their journeys forces them to organize and reorganize their conceptions of Travel is crucial for the scientific reconceptualization of time and for breaking out of traditional (and incorrect) systems of thought. It expands one’s perceptions beyond the narrow bounds of individual experience. “A geologist, whose observations have been confined to England,” Lyell insists in Principles, “is accustomed to consider the superior and newer groups of marine strata in our island as modern, and such they are, comparatively speaking; but when he has traveled through the Italian peninsula and in Sicily, and has seen strata of more recent origin forming mountains several thousand feet high, and has marked a long series both of volcanic and submarine operations, all is newer than any of the regular strata which enter largely into the physical structure of Great Britain, he returns with more exalted conceptions of the antiquity of some of those modern deposits, than he before entertained of the oldest of the British series” (87-8). According to Lyell, travel is as necessary for developing one’s temporal as it is for developing one’s spatial horizons.
Tension pervades accounts of Pompeii: on the one hand, the disaster of Vesuvius and the “City of the Dead” was titillating. Like Blessington, travelers could relish the sublime experience because the event of destruction was located it in the safe distance of the “fearful past” in contrast to the “calm and smiling present.” As travelers were not only visiting Pompeii but also returning, however, the everyday destruction marked on the ruins by time was inescapable, capturing even the travelers themselves in a present that was not consistently “calm and smiling.” When Blessington describes “intruding unbidden” into “the secret recesses” of the past’s “domestic privacy,” she clearly distinguishes between “the fearful past” where “Destruction had been” and “the calm and smiling present.” Blessington’s account evinces the widespread characterization of Pompeii as “the City of the Dead.” This depiction connotes a unity, stability, and grandness to the site that is by no means ubiquitous, but it is a depiction that nevertheless persists even today. But as Shelley Hales and Joanna Paul note, “[H]owever much we might like to believe that Pompeii is a portal to the past, the physical experience of being on site is, and always has been, fraught with obstacles to that past. We have never been afforded a glimpse of a pristine, still less a stable, view of the ancient city, but it has always been in flux. Its physical appearance changed as more and more was exposed, but this was no unmitigated process towards a ‘whole’ Pompeii; as she appeared to be reborn, she was at the same time dying a second death, as her much-discussed deterioration began” (6). I want to complicate the perspective of a complete, cohesive, comprehensible site of antiquity by showing how nineteenth-century travelers themselves wrestled with an unstable—and therefore problematic—historical site.
The question of Pompeii’s governing silence, emptiness, and mystique as the “city of the dead” relates crucially to its appearance in art as well as in narrative. The temporal form of embeddedness proves portable, applicable across media. Representations of Pompeii circulated widely and influenced how travelers imagined the site, what they remembered reading, and what they anticipated seeing. Travelers arrived at Pompeii fixated on anachrony and timelessness, prepared to access the everyday life of the average inhabitant rather than the heroes whose tales encapsulated Roman imperial might. Palimpsestic images of Pompeii—that simultaneously emerging, frozen, crumbling “city of the dead”—can collapse the imaginative past, the present ruin, and the potential for future excavation into a single scene, a simultaneous artistic tableau, as Byron does poetically in Greece. A similar effect is rendered visually in illustrations that break down distinct temporalities or that depict blatant anachronisms, offering a striking meditation on Pompeii’s (a)temporality. Before 1815, many travel accounts, paintings, and sketches circulated through Europe, usually in illicit and bootleg versions. In keeping with the feeling of mystery and anachronism at Pompeii, Francesco Piranesi etched the unpublished work of his father, G. B. Piranesi, with imaginative additions of Roman figures peopling the ruins.
Figure 2: Francesco Piranesi, etching of Pompeii.
Lucio Fino’s *Herculaneum and Pompeii in the 18th and 19th Centuries* calls these figures “trivial” and “even ridiculous,” but such problematic temporal compositions are not unique to Piranesi or to visual art (70). Rather than dismissing the images as ludicrous, I argue that we can see in them a depiction of how completely travelers felt this site to jar time—and especially to jar a sense of linear temporality as natural and *a priori*. Piranesi, like Byron, collapses events from a historical sequence into a single plane of simultaneity.

The difference between Piranesi’s images and the many narrative and artistic accounts of Pompeii in circulation across Europe is only the unapologetic nature of his anachrony. While Piranesi tries to capture on one plane what the traveler sees (ruin) and what she or her imagines (ancient Roman life), other accounts imagined a pre-eruption,
restored Pompeii. Even Gell’s scientific Pompeiana, as Zimmerman notes, “depicts original Pompeians alongside nineteenth-century visitors” (112-3). Gell, though, keeps these figures on different planes, maintaining the image’s realism by portraying the Pompeian only in murals and thus preserving a sense of temporal unity. Gell communicates an effect of anachrony while keeping his image securely in the nineteenth century. Many other accounts also sought to achieve a temporal unity by setting their accounts completely during the Roman Empire and letting anachrony occur through the nineteenth-century reader. Between Scott’s 1832 visit and Dickens’s Italian tours, Pompeii was best known to Britons through Rogers’s Italy and Edward Bulwer’s (later Bulwer-Lytton’s) historical romance, The Last Days of Pompeii (1834). Though I am not going to discuss Bulwer’s historical romance in detail here, its reception history does illustrate the fervor for Pompeii and sensationalized history. William St. Clair and Annika Bautz argue that it was Bulwer who “put individuals into the ruins and thereby animated them” (366). Before Bulwer’s novel, they argue, “the general impression [of Pompeii] was of silence, solitude, and repose. Until the Last Days, Pompeii was a ‘City of the Dead’” (366). Goldhill, in fact, credits Last Days with launching an entire “genre of toga fiction” (93). Though Last Days peopled the ruins, it worked best in places like London, away from Pompeii itself, where the material remnants of the past could not interfere with the fiction. Bulwer’s historical romance inspired literary tourism to southern Italy, creating anachrony in the the metalepses of tourists who searched the city for, for instance, Glaucus’ house. And while Last Days employs some of the same techniques as travel narratives to establish authenticity—like Byron, , for instance, the narrator claims to write “on the spot”—the story, complete with Glaucus’ “nineteenth-century Anglican”
Christianity is fiction, a historical romance unfettered from Gell’s “erudite details” (St. Clair and Bautz 361 and 364).  

Antiquarians like Gell sought to distinguish their work—professional scholarship in line with earlier (eighteenth-century) methods of empirical inquiry—from the history-telling that perpetuated the story of the “City of the Dead” “frozen in time.” That is not to say, though, that “Reason” and “Imagination” produced utter conflict between antiquarians and travel writers. In fact, just as he had Scott and Blessington, Gell guided Bulwer around Pompeii, and Bulwer, in turn, dedicated his novel to Gell. Additionally, as Goldhill describes, Bulwer’s friend John Auldjo, “a fellow of the Geological Society and the Royal Society and a member of the Royal Geographical Society … a well-respected man of science … whose reputation depended on empirical and accurate observation,” lent Bulwer’s novel his expertise on Vesuvius (he also later gifted Bulwer two human skulls that had been excavated at Pompeii, which he had labeled with the names of characters from Last Days) (“A Writer’s Things,” 93 and 96).  

Instead, Gell’s effort to differentiate between imaginative history and and antiquarianism is an effort to bring material detail and material observation into a developing historiographic discipline that had been primarily textual and therefore limited to the lives of classical heroes preserved by Pliny and Herodotus. In looking at Pompeii’s well-preserved ruins one could access physical remnants of quotidian antiquity.  

Along with this material classicism, though, came the constant reminder that destruction was not unique to the first century AD. Sustained excavation and observations of the site attested that Pompeii was far from frozen and, thus, that not even ruin was a stable state. By 1832, Gell had seen enough of the decay of the ruins to lament in his
preface to *Pompeiana*, “[M]uch has been removed, and much has perished; so that these ruins no longer retain the aspect which they originally presented” (xxiii). Certainly, Pompeii proves mutable. Emphasizing the ephemeral nature of ruins in time—as living, and therefore, as dying—Gell asserts the responsibility of the present to “hand down to posterity whatever can be saved of these crumbling relics of antiquity” (xiv-xv). His overwhelming concern is for the ruins in time; for him, Pompeii is not frozen but actively decaying, aided in its mutability by visitors, collectors, and excavators alike. The term “originally,” then, creates a rich temporal ambiguity: at what historical point can ruins be “original”? What has been lost, and from when? Issues of sequence, preservation, and temporal perspective surface seemingly as the byproducts of interactions with the traces of slowly fading antiquity. The ruins insist that the small steady grinding of ordinary decay over time destroys as perfectly as the flash of the disastrous event, which as Zimmerman points out, was likewise one of the fraught lessons of early geology. For subjective travelers, Pompeii attests to a cataclysmic destruction well in the past; for objective travelers, destruction lies ahead, inescapably in the future—not as a grand event but as a slow but inevitable slipping into annihilation.

Differing perspectives of imaginative distance and material analysis can coexist and claim simultaneous authenticity because they express shifts in scale not changes in substance. Just as Blessington depended on some material referent to launch her associative flights, Gell was well aware of the intellectual necessity of imagination. For all his emphasis on a distinctly scientific antiquarianism and on distancing himself from Scott’s poetic and romantic history, Gell’s *Pomeiana* includes both imaginative reconstructions of pre-eruption Pompeii and illustrations that purport to be objective and
scientific representations of the site and its artifacts. It’s a shift in perspective that comes from scientific reworkings of time’s expanse and effects. As Gell’s reconstructions demonstrate, imagination allows travelers to rethink their relationship with the past by enlarging on remnant details.

Although depictions of Pompeii look different across the developing disciplinary boundary, they are similar in their shared tendency to integrate the material and the imaginative, the present and the past. Consider, for example, the frontispiece Gell’s *Pompeiana.*
This image, located at the front of volume one, bears the careful straight lines and symmetry for which Gell’s work was known. But Gell’s description of this image, which doesn’t occur until the back of volume two, explains, “The frontispiece of this work is composed of an union of many architectural and capricious ornaments, found in different parts of Pompeii, collected and exhibited in such a manner as to give an idea of several objects which could not be represented in detail” (2:51). The first illustration Gell offers,
then, doesn’t actually exist. Like all histories, it’s a composite, “an union” to “give an idea”—in short, it’s an imaginative rendering of a formal whole. Gell thus produces a figure in accordance with what Macaulay describes as a historical picture that “exhibit[s] such parts of the truth as most nearly produce the effect of the whole” (338). Gell’s composite mirrors methods of recreating a sense of the past from material parts in geology. H. S. Torrens, for example, identifies a “new ‘paleoecology movement’ in 1830 with Henry De la Beche’s *Duria Antiquior—A More Ancient Dorset*, which used Mary Anning’s fossil discoveries “provided a novel way of looking at the fossils found in rocks and of interpreting how they had lived and interacted together whilst they were alive at any one ‘period’. In an archaeological sense, geology could now reveal the ‘culture’ of fossils,” which “gave an exciting second dimension to the study of the past” (51-2).

Both models work by animating extant material traces of life that is no longer observable in time. In other words, both Gell and De La Beche do temporally what Blessington

![Figure 5: Henry De la Beche (10 February 1796 – 13 April 1855)](image-url)
demonstrates spatially; namely, they project their imaginative reconstructions into the distance between themselves as observing subjects the objects they observe.

For Lyell, rearticulating the past is not only imagining a particular moment but also redefining the categories of time and space that frame those moments on global scales. Lyell begins and ends the first volume of *Principles*, published in 1830, with the so-called Temple of Serapis—a ruin in Pozzuoli (near Naples and Pompeii), which at that time was popularly associated with the Cult of Serapis.
Lyell argued that the mollusk borings in the upper parts of the columns indicated that the columns had been submerged, not as a result of rising and ebbing waters but because of sinking and rising land. According to Lyell’s system, the Temple of Serapis proves that “the land rather than the sea is subject alternately to rise and fall” (1:459). This assertion is fairly radical conceptually because it requires the geologist to reject the empirical evidence of his senses—that land is stable—and to and trust instead to evidence written
in landscape—that land, not sea, is fluid. However, it is not, as Lyell recognizes, a
foreign concept in poetry. Lyell quotes an earlier Mediterranean travel narrative, Lord
Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. “[O]ur modern poet,” he explains, addresses the sea
at the end of canto IV:

—Their decay

Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves’ play:
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

(canto IV.clxxxii; qtd. in Lyell 1:459)

Both Zimmerman and Adelene Buckland remark on Byron’s somewhat startling
appearance at the end of *Principles of Geology*, noting Lyell’s own poetic inclinations. I
argue, though, that it’s also important to recognize that Lyell is integrating a conceptual
heritage for his “new science” wherever he can find it. For Lyell, antiquarianism,
geopolitics, poetry, and scientific innovation are not mutually exclusive but in fact
overlap and even facilitate each other. For Lyell, Byron’s image conveys the stability of
the sea and the relative instability of rocks and landmass (or, for Lyell, “igneous
processes”). This image thus becomes a way also to expand the sense of time as far as
possible through what we know about the long durations of empires, and then to expand
the time-scale of the world significantly beyond humanity. No matter how far back
antiquarians can trace human civilizations and their ruins, the earth’s seas and rocks are older—so old that any attempt to determine an origin is hopeless.

Scientific history, from archaeology to geology, imagines ruins and fossils back into moving time. It’s this sense of ruins in time, interacting with the present, that Dickens explores in *Pictures from Italy*, both at Pompeii and throughout his Mediterranean travels. Dickens weaves together different scales of perception with historical romance’s fascination with the individual and antiquarianism’s focus on the past’s material detail in the present. The result is a narrative exploration of circulating discourses on time and the practical applications of time as a form organizing both experience and historical representation. *Pictures from Italy*, which depicts some of Dickens’s travel experiences during the seven months he spent in France and Italy in 1844, is largely organized according to location, though the narrative’s sequence does not always conform to Dickens’s actual travel itinerary. Notably for my analysis of temporality, *Pictures from Italy* reflects on its own time and speed of motion in relation to other differing speeds. Dickens describes both villages, whose pace is pure torpor, and dream-like flights through cities that are rapid and jumbled. While the narrative sequence performs one level of temporal duration as the traveler moves through space, Dickens describes other temporalities, embedded in different places, that he sees when he examines the landscape at different scales.

Dickens intertwines the contradicting modes of historical understanding and applies this hybrid historicity broadly. He combines romance and science to rethink time, to examine not only time’s effects on civilizations but also to reconsider how time itself works. In the “City of the Dead,” he writes, you
lose all count of time, and heed of other things, in the strange and melancholy
sensation of seeing the Destroyed and the Destroyer making this quiet picture in
the sun. Then, ramble on, and see, at every turn, the little familiar tokens of
human habitation and every-day pursuits; the chafing of the bucket-rope in the
stone rim of the exhausted well; the track of carriage-wheels in the pavement of
the street; the marks of drinking-vessels on the stone counter of the wine-shop;
the amphorae in private cellars stored away so many hundred years ago, and
undisturbed to this hour—all rendering the solitude and deadly lonesomeness of
the place, ten thousand times more solemn, than if the volcano, in its fury, had
swept the city from the earth, and sunk it in the bottom of the sea. (169)

It is the details—the quotidian and material—that characterize Dickens’s reveries at
Pompeii rather than, as with Blessington’s, interrupting them. In fact, his focus on the
“parts” includes a long list of Pompeiian objects, ending with “little household bells, yet
musical with their old domestic tones” (171). Dickens recognizes that differing scalar
perceptions are, in fact, connected, and he capitalizes on that connection as an
opportunity to reorganize time and history instead of categorizing his narrative according
to the contradiction between sweeping vistas and minute observation. In the parts,
Dickens observes the whole scene of destruction.

Dickens demonstrates the potentially overwhelming realization that what one has
learned to see as finite can become infinite by shifting the scale of observation to
consider not only whole edifices but also the fragments of which they consist. In
Pompeii, he both depicts the landscape with broad strokes, with Vesuvius as “the genius of the scene” that is “biding its terrible time, and a contemplates the details through the many tokens of human life, the “little household bells, yet musical” (171). Zimmerman points out that the focus on the significance of the insignificant becomes important for making the individual matter in the face of deep geological time (19), and she notes how Pompeii became a site of interest in this vein for many Victorian writers, including Dickens (106-36). Even the ashes, Dickens shows, are powerfully destructive, infiltrating the crevices and eventually overwhelming the ancient city completely and effectively. Rather than folding together static points on a diachronic line, Pompeian representations allow for the contemplation of synchronic existence, as though Pompeii had paused in its colossal destruction only to commence decaying again, second by second, at the speed of the travelers themselves.

Dickensian Dimensions of Time

By the 1840s, time itself was becoming a historicizable concept as procedures of measuring and determining time came into conflict. As Jonathan Grossman and Ruth Livesey have both noted, with the expansion and increasing precision of rail technology, the question of standardized time engrossed the nineteenth century; additionally, as Ronald Thomas points out, Great Britain adopted Greenwich Mean Time as the rail standard in 1847, but rail companies had begun petitioning Parliament for a standardized time since at least the early 1840s. But the question of which time reigned supreme—the cathedral’s bells, the clock tower’s face, the railway’s timetable, the sun’s rays, the ship’s chronometer, the traveler’s pocket watch, etc.—became increasingly frenetic as the
pope, the Italians, and various European empires (including the British) vied for influence and control over the yet-to-be-unified Italian states. *Pictures from Italy* engages with these widespread discussions about the possibilities and implications of time’s shape that grew alongside debates about space in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Italy’s historic landscapes, I argue, Dickens examines temporality as both a political and a natural force. Dickens’s narrative sequence enacts one kind of temporal duration as the traveler moves through space. But it also describes other temporalities, embedded in different places, that Dickens sees when he examines the landscape at different scales. Time, in *Pictures from Italy*, is not a single, steady stream but is made up of many integrated dimensions and functions. Dickens’s narrative endeavors to tell these various kinds of time at multiple levels simultaneously. Ultimately, the different narrative timepieces in this text renegotiate the individual’s position within shifting geological and historical timescales, complicating master narratives of official history.

Dickens’s travel text experiments with time and historiography, I argue, through contemporaneous explorations of non-Euclidean geometry and the irregular patterns of self-similarity now termed “fractals.” Literary scholars have only recently begun to write about fractals; two such notable instances occur in Wai Chee Dimock’s consideration of American literature in deep time and Jonathan Taylor’s readings of non-linear history in the development of narrative omniscience. Dickens’s own interest in narrative time, of course, has been well established. Kate Flint notes in her introduction to *Pictures from Italy* that time and the entanglements of then and now occupy much of Dickens’s travel narrative; I examine how the history of fractals specifically develops alongside literature and manifests in Dickens’s Italian travel narrative (xxvi–xxvii). Dickens shows how the
ability to reorient time’s form gives the narrative or historical interlocutor a power of curation rivalling that of political factions. A democratic historiography emerges even as, in this case, foreign empires clash among Rome’s ancient ruins for interpretive authority. When historicizing time through *Pictures from Italy*, then, we can see something that had been—and might still be—marketed as natural or objective manifesting its political roots. Dickens’s narrative explorations of space, time, and material thus enable us to analyze time as a formal choice organizing both present and past.

How Britons conceived time and history in Italy, I will argue, helped shape scientific innovation, contouring their self-perception as successors in a lineage of great empires. My aim here is to consider how temporal structures of experience develop alongside and through narrative sequences of historically and politically overwrought places. Barri J. Gold’s analysis of the “mutual influence” between poetics and thermodynamics provides an exemplary model for this kind of interdisciplinarity (35). Recently, scholars such as Kuskey have begun to consider the relation among mathematical innovation, economics, and literature, but overall literary analysis and interdisciplinarity have been slow to cross the outer boundaries of the humanities. Through fractals, I explore the interdisciplinary history of self-similarity as a concept in order to examine how Dickens adjusts the scale of his travel narrative both spatially and temporally. Just as I have shown with the divergent accounts of history in Pompeii, individual experiences of time and individual memories clash with competing political histories. Dickens’s Mediterranean travels in particular, I argue, demonstrate an urgency to reconfigure time domestically and internationally in the face of imperial, commercial, and religious struggles for power.
In the already-familiar material of the Italian landscape, Dickens finds an analogy that captures the diversity of lived time beyond recorded history. Gazing out over the Appian Way, he describes a “desert of decay, sombre and desolate beyond all expression; and with a history in every stone that strews the ground” (118). This description seems self-contradictory, comprising desolation and excess, the two clauses joined by “and” rather than by any rhetorical acknowledgement of the contradiction. This space is simultaneously empty and brimming with history; the finite spatial borders of the scene—a historic landscape—contain potentially infinite temporal dimensions beneath the feet of a present traveler. In *Pictures from Italy*, Dickens recognizes a mass of detail within the material landscape and probes it to discover minute histories. For Dickens, history proves dense upon examination, the past’s detail exceeding its official narrative; other latent histories are ever-present but only become visible when travelers scale down their observations. Travelers who perceive the Appian Way rather than the countless stones and pebbles that compose it thus subsume detail into an imagined unity—a unity crafted and reproduced by the well-trodden tourist maps and guidebooks that Dickens’s narrative ridicules. The sense of cohesion in which such a traveler participates, as in Blessington’s description of Salerno from the bay, requires the traveler to look from a distance.

Just as the Appian Way corresponds to a particular cultural depiction of the past, so too does each stone contained in the site attest to its own history. The form through which material becomes invested with heritage is repeatable at increasingly minute scales. This structure describes what twentieth-century scientists have termed a “fractal,” an irregular geometric form of infinite, self-similar repetitions. Dickens explores self-
similar form and dense, intricate detail as patterns of the physical world and as organizational structures of broad history and daily-lived time. The material that the traveler encounters abroad provides a stable, enduring component so that the rigid timeline can unhinge and allow for exchanges between past and present.

In *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, Benoit B. Mandelbrot observes, “Clouds are not spheres, mountains are not cones, coastlines are not circles, and bark is not smooth, nor does lightning travel in a straight line” (1). Mandelbrot’s statement was certainly not an epiphany at the time, and yet it changed the way that mathematicians and subsequently programmers understood geometric calculations and material relationships. Of significance to my argument is the somewhat radical point—radical even though others had been making it for nearly two hundred years prior to Mandelbrot—that the regular lines and shapes forming the basis of Euclidean geometry do not necessarily reflect the specificities of natural shapes. The recognition of a division or a potential inapplicability between mathematics and nature was especially troubling to Romantic and Victorian thinkers interested in totalizing conceptions of the world. Here, I will consider the applications and observations of mathematical speculation as an interface between the world and human experiences of it—especially as regards time.

The difference Mandelbrot highlights between traditional geometric shapes and natural objects can perhaps be perceived most dramatically by picturing a small segment of a Euclidean shape, such as a circle, amplified (Figure 7).
Figure 7: A circle, a simple Euclidean shape with a segment amplified.

Viewed at a fine enough scale, segments of Euclidean shapes approach linearity. Not so for fractals. The characteristics of self-similarity at fine scales mean that amplifying a segment of the shape reproduces the overall structure, as illustrated in Niels Fabian Helge von Koch’s (1870–1924) well-known “snowflake” (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Koch snowflake (1904). Instead of a line, fractal shapes amplified reveal a repetition of the shape’s intricate structure.
Mandelbrot argues that because some shapes or objects are so irregular at fine scales, traditional mathematics cannot account for their detail in a meaningful way (1–5). A mountain, for example, is not a perfect cone with straight edges; the smaller the unit of measurement, the more microscopic details of its irregular lines can be expressed in the calculation of its height. Thus, Mandelbrot coined the term “fractal” to identify “a family of shapes” that cannot be represented precisely with Euclidean geometry, acknowledging that he was proposing “solutions … to a host of concrete problems, including very old ones, with the help of mathematics that is, in part, likewise very old” (1, 5). Though it is not my aim here to discuss Mandelbrot’s fractal mathematics in contemporary applications of computational geometry, I will use the term, as Mandelbrot did, to bring together concepts about irregular forms and self-similarity that had been in circulation throughout Europe since at least the end of the eighteenth century. Mandelbrot’s terminology provides a useful, if etymologically anachronistic, shorthand for theories of form that had long intrigued thinkers across disciplines.

The concepts of self-similarity and fine structure that Mandelbrot united under the definition “fractal” in the twentieth century had been circulating in European literature and science throughout the nineteenth century alongside speculations concerning a non-Euclidean geometry. Helge Kragh, whose histories of science primarily trace the development of non-Euclidean geometry through cosmology, dates “[t]he discovery of non-Euclidean geometries—where parallel lines do not remain parallel and the sum of angles in a triangle differs from 180°” to the 1830s (Conceptions of Cosmos 126). But he also notes that development in non-Euclidean geometry remained largely dormant until the 1870s (“Geometry and Astronomy” 7). These theories benefitted from
Romanticism’s “speculative physics” and natural philosophy (Kragh, *Higher Speculations* 26–32).

What is missing from these accounts of the meandering history of non-Euclidean geometry is, if course, narrative. Writers of literature are not generally included in contemporary lineages of fractal theory (with the notable exception of Mandelbrot’s own), though scholars across disciplines have registered how William Blake’s poetry offers a ready epigraph for such works. For instance, the anthology *Classics on Fractals* begins with a Blakean inspiration in a short poem entitled “Blake and Fractals” by physicist J.D. Memory (Edgar 1). Memory writes,

Models for this claim we’ve got
In the work of Mandelbrot:
Fractal diagrams partake
Of the essence sensed by Blake.

…
Finer than the finest hair
Blake’s infinity is there,
Rich in structure all the way—
Just as the mystic poets say. (lines 5–8, 17–20).

But Memory’s opening rendezvous with Blake is the extent of the anthology’s indulgence in influences outside expressly mathematical essays, though speculative science and mathematical philosophy thrived (unofficially) in literary exploration. The hiatus in
development that Kragh identifies appears far less expansive if one looks not only at science as it declares itself within nascent disciplines but also at how it manifests in and through narrative explorations of the individual in relation to the increasingly broad expanses of time and redefinitions of space that characterized nineteenth-century thought.

In the past, literary scholars, too, have largely eschewed discussing the interrelated speculations between abstract science or mathematics and literature. Recently, however, works such as Dimock’s analysis of nonlinearity in Blake’s poetry, as well as Gold’s and Jessica Kuskey’s recent analyses of thermodynamics and Victorian literature, have begun to analyze these overlapping discourses. Scholarship on natural science and literature has also set a notable precedent for this kind of interdisciplinary work. Adelene Buckland locates Dickens’s works, including *Pictures from Italy*, within a broader conversation of geology (261), and Gillian Beer details how evolutionary and literary narratives developed together, mutually informing one another. But many of the early Victorian speculations about time emerged, as Kragh shows, in mathematics rather than in observational science (*Conceptions of Cosmos* 125). In these fields, there was some reluctance to challenge accepted philosophies. Though many mathematicians developed theories of non-Euclidean geometry, for instance, they avoided publishing their innovations, instead circulating them in private papers or burying them in appendices.⁹¹ Victorian mathematician Augustus De Morgan, who Mandelbrot cites, proclaimed against what he saw as the dangerous harnessing and censoring of the sciences by social stigma, several times resigning his university positions.⁹² In the overlap of disciplines, however, thinkers could test the possibilities of non-Euclidean geometry. What Mandelbrot eventually inherited, then, was a truly interdisciplinary
cluster of ideas as it had formed among philosophies, observational sciences, theoretical mathematics, and (as I am arguing) literature.

Although historians of science generally date proto-fractal thought to discussions of non-Euclidean geometry that began circulating in Europe in the 1830s, literature offers a different—and, I argue, an integrated—genealogy—one that Mandelbrot traces through De Morgan and others (402). I agree with Taylor, who recounts the interwoven development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophy and science, including its literary lineage. Jonathan Swift’s *On Poetry: A Rhapsody* (1733), as Mandelbrot notes, depicts self-similarity in relation to author history:

So, Nat’ralists observe, a Flea

Hath smaller Fleas that on him prey,
And these have smaller Fleas to bite ’em,
And so proceed ad infinitum. (402)

De Morgan’s *A Budget of Paradoxes* (1872) parodies Swift’s lines to satirize a theory of self-similarity (Nicholas Odgers’s 1863 *The Mystery of Being; Or Are Ultimate Atoms Inhabited Worlds?): “Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite ’em, / And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so ad infinitum (377, emphasis original). In alluding to Swift, De Morgan simultaneously refutes Odgers’s theory of facsimile little worlds and reinforces the possibility of self-similar repetition as a structural characteristic (Swift’s fleas being metaphors for the world of literary production). In 1922, Swift’s concept of
self-similarity ad infinitum appears in the work of the climatologist Lewis Fry Richardson, translated into a description of turbulence:

Big whorls have little whorls,
Which feed on their velocity,
And little whorls have lesser whorls,
And so on to viscosity. (402)

This self-similarity is more a description of form or structure than of content. Mandelbrot, as Taylor acknowledges, insists, “[S]elf-similarity is an old idea” (Taylor 37). Taylor points out rightly that “Mandelbrot might have found many precursors amongst the Romantics, who so often stand with William Blake in desiring ‘to see a World in a Grain of Sand’” (37). This interdisciplinary history attests to a longstanding convergence of literature and scientific innovation. Like Taylor, I see in nineteenth-century literature the development of self-similarity across scales. However, in texts such as Dickens’s that are inherently concerned with narrative sequence and movement, the experimentation with self-similarity at fine scales becomes a matter of temporal rather than just physical structure.

Dickens’s narrative depicts intricate coexistent systems that measure time at different levels based on how he observes the relationship between history and the embedded material of historic spaces. The units that make up events become increasingly miniscule the more intimately one observes them; in short, they mimic the stones that make up ruins, landmarks, and great edifices. Both small units—stones and seconds—
spill out as the subject examines the object ever more closely. In *Pictures from Italy*, this overflow is not only a function of material landscapes, such as the “desert of decay” spilling innumerable stones and histories beyond the cohesive Appian Way, but it is also true of temporal markers, such as events, that serve to orient and characterize a period or epoch.

The urgent question that arises with nineteenth-century geology’s extension of time is whether the small, quotidian, or individual life has significance in this newly expansive world. For Dickens, the answer is yes: small units of time—seconds, minutes, hours—contain activity that, when examined, can undermine the limits of grand events and can alter the historical narrative. As Jane Stabler explains, Robert Browning confessed about *Pictures from Italy* that he “felt that Dickens ‘seems to have expended his power on the least interesting places’” (89). The “least interesting places,” however, and not sites heralded by *Murray’s Handbook*, were precisely the most poignant for Dickens’s explorations of time and history. Fractal form in Dickens reacts against the distancing so highly valued in travel writing aesthetics and lauds the infinite in the banal. On a collective scale, the daily motions of each individual, for example, form and reform the environments in which they participate, rendering physical edifices that act as paragons of identity susceptible to change. By focusing on the significance of the insignificant, or of the everyday occurrence despite the expanses of geological deep time, it becomes possible for Dickens to consider the fragments (of time and of experience, as well as of materials) layered within the distant sweeping vistas valued in travelers’ guides. It is necessary to scale down or in (microscopically) with fractals because, as Dimock observes, “[I]t is only when the scale gets smaller and the details get finer that
previously hidden dimensions can come swirling out” (*Through Other Continents* 77).

When Dickens narrates his travel with attention to the dimensions embedded within miniscule details, he is demonstrating multiple kinds of vision that privilege different levels of perspective. As he narrates historically overdetermined spaces, he moves freely along a continuum of magnification, illustrating a fractal structure with physical space and then probing it further by considering the possibilities of fractal time.

For Dickens, observing detail exposes even more embedded detail. To edit the diverse and integrated histories of spaces requires distance from which the subject can create an acceptable pattern and impose it on the material present, filtering out conflicts. The results can be aesthetically pleasing in a way that coincides with the presentation of knowledge that Emily Heady reads in Dickens’s earlier *American Notes* (1842): “[I]t is distance and arrangement—managed carefully and strategically—that creates the capacity for original, meaningful communication” (111). Perception is a question of the scale of examination, both in terms of physical and temporal distance. For instance, when Dickens travels from France into Italy, he confides that “[m]uch of the romance of the beautiful towns and villages on this beautiful road, disappears when they are entered, for many of them are very miserable” (60). But an inverse danger attends distant and surface observation, he discovers, because aesthetic abstraction can create such complete generality that it disorients the traveler or obviates the purpose of traveling to unique sites. As Dickens approaches Rome from a distance, he confesses, 

*[W]hen, after another mile or two, the Eternal City appeared, at length, in the distance; it looked like—I am half afraid to write the word—like*
LONDON!!! There it lay, under a thick cloud, with innumerable towers, and steeples, and roofs of houses, rising up into the sky, and high above them all, one Dome. I swear, that keenly as I felt the seeming absurdity of the comparison, it was so like London, at that distance, that if you could have shown it me, in a glass, I should have taken it for nothing else. (115)

More than just an instance of touristic projection, this moment exemplifies the how the distant perspective we see in Blessington’s account of Salerno negates its own authenticity as an account written “on the spot.” Ultimately, the sense that travel produces on the traveler moving from distance into the often-overwhelming detail of a city is that aesthetic effect is largely a question of the observer’s perspective relative to the object of observation. The “beautiful towns” are thus simultaneously “miserable”; the particular details of Rome meld into a view indistinguishable from London not because the details are no longer present but because they are no longer visible from the traveler’s vantage point.

Dickens presents a corollary shifting of perspective from abstract to detail in time as well as in space. Just as the perspective of travelers in motion fluctuates according to their distances from the things viewed, so too can the perspective of travelers at rest fluctuate according to the time elapsed during observation. Or, to put it another way, the longer observers look at something, the more their opinions of it are liable to change as more details manifest. This appears perhaps most dramatically in Dickens’s account of Genoa coming into focus over time: “In the course of two months,” he explains, “the flitting shapes and shadows of my dismal entering reverie gradually resolved themselves
into familiar forms and substances; and I already began to think that when the time should come, a year hence, for closing the long holiday and turning back to England, I might part from Genoa with anything but a glad heart. It is a place that ‘grows upon you’ every day” (38). The ethereal, abstract “flitting shapes and shadows” that occlude the traveler’s vision on his first encounter with the unfamiliar place give way after “two months” to “familiar forms and substances.” The traveler’s habits synch with the rhythms of Genoa over time, and as he perceives the city more intimately, over repeated hours and days rather than the single abstract moment of the first impression, a different Genoa comes into focus.

In *Pictures from Italy*, travel disrupts a sense of regular duration, while travel writing attempts to reconstruct a coherent sequence within a fairly rigid set of conventions. At the start of the phantasmagoria chapter dubbed “Italian Dream,” Dickens recollects, “I had that incoherent but delightful jumble in my brain, which travelers are apt to have, and are indolently willing to encourage. Every shake of the coach in which I sat, half dozing in the dark, appeared to jerk some new recollection out of its place, and to jerk some other new recollection into it; and in this state, I fell asleep” (77). He notes specifically, “I took but little heed of time, and had but little understanding of its flight” (83). This dissociation from naturalized time in the journey’s sequence reconfigures its map. Instead of picturesque descriptions of scenery and well-known Italian landmarks, Dickens maps “Italian Dream” within his individual consciousness; in fact, the highly imaginative scenery does not resolve definitively into “VENICE”—with all its attendant associations for British readers—until the final word of the chapter (85). Travel for Dickens creates a temporal “jumble” out of which which he can rearticulate and reorder
space and his cultural associations with it. Heady points out in American Notes a correlation between narrative structures and the methods by which British writers organized experiential knowledge abroad (102). In Pictures from Italy, I argue, Dickens has the additional concern of organizing experiential with long-held cultural knowledge. Not only does he see mid-1840s pre-unification Italy as it fluctuates according to international and domestic politics, but he also cannot help seeing the Italy he has long known as a source of Western culture. When these dual temporal visions converge on one object, landmark, or scene, he must negotiate between the coexisting past and present, as well as try to account for all the intervening legacies and overlapping traditions to which the material present attests.

Dickens reports the inescapability of the English travel legacy that engulfs him while in Italy. When he visits Bologna, for instance, he remarks on a waiter who “was a man of one idea in connexion with the English; and the subject of this harmless monomania, was Lord Byron” (72). Detailing amusedly the waiter’s obsession with “Milor Beeron”—a subject arising in reference to everything from the floor matting to the milk to the road—Dickens escapes the waiter and the throngs of tourists to visit Ferrara, only to quote Byron himself while imagining “Parisina and her lover … beheaded in the dead of night” (72, 75). He thus participates in a tradition of visiting not only sites relevant to foreign history but also places important to his own recent national history. In Italy, it is impossible to escape English literature. Because multiple, even conflicting histories can be nested into the same tourist site, the meaning of the place or landmark can vary depending on the viewing subject’s perspective and allegiance. In Rome, Dickens presents a fairly standard, idealized vista: “From one part of the city,
looking out beyond the walls, a squat and stunted pyramid (the burial-place of Caius Cestius) makes an opaque triangle in the moonlight” (151). He continues, however, to note that “to an English traveler, it serves to mark the grave of Shelley too, whose ashes lie beneath a little garden near it. Nearer still, almost within its shadow, lie the bones of Keats, ‘whose name is writ in water,’ that shines brightly in the landscape of a calm Italian night” (151). The landscape and its histories simultaneously prove significant to the British traveler as both Roman and English, ancient and modern.

Dickens’s travel episodes and historical musings are not merely a punctuated sequence of pasts as they occur to the traveler; they are also an effect of temporal harmony, as nested pasts emerge and blend at once in the traveler’s experience of place. In fact, at Ferrara, Dickens depicts a sense of the past so powerful that it provokes a bodily reaction although he cannot conceive of that past logically. This place suggests a structure of time in which the present traveler can touch the past that is embedded within the landscape by aligning himself in the same space as a murdered forbear. Walking at twilight, he describes a landscape that, though admittedly simple and even generic, arrests his movement through an interplay of imagination and memory. “If I had been murdered there, in some former life,” Dickens writes, “I could not have seemed to remember the place more thoroughly, or with a more emphatic chilling of the blood; and the mere remembrance of it acquired in that minute, is so strengthened by the imaginary recollection, that I hardly think I could forget it” (74). He acknowledges that the memory is not real, and yet the experience of remembering what he imagined elicits a bodily and emotional response. It is a flash, a “minute,” but one that seems to contain an entire (generally inaccessible) “former life” within it. He can only access it briefly, as part of
time in motion, but in that flash, the imagined memory instantaneously forms part of his actual memory (one that he cannot forget). Memory, imagination, experience, and affect sync as one indivisible moment.

**Fractal Temporality and the Shape of History**

For Dickens, historic destinations are physical and temporal fractals, embedding coexistent microhistories within themselves. Fractal theory offers a schema by which we can conceptualize the different histories Dickens reads as etched into the landscape at different levels. The concept of fractal time, circulating largely in phenomenology, centres on the subjective experience of time and an awareness of multiple, simultaneous timescales. Susie Vrobel, the director of the Institute for Fractal Research, posits, “The Now is … not a point which divides the past from the future, but an extended field, which hosts a structure of temporally nested events—a fractal” (*Simultaneity* 4). “Every Now,” Vrobel explains, “embeds the preceding one, including its differentiated structure of retentions and protentions …. This leads to a nesting cascade of Nows …. The current Now forms the framework time into which all previous and expected events are embedded, thus generating a fractal structure” (*Simultaneity* 5). Vrobel illustrates fractal time with the “nested timescales” of Prague’s fifteenth-century astronomical clock, which she describes as the “oldest fractal clock” (*Simultaneity* 7–8).
The Prague Orloj (fig. 3) nests seasons, religious hours, astronomical occurrences, daytime hours, etc. within its outer zodiac ring, illustrating how a person experiences time as nested *nows*—a particular moment that registers differently but simultaneously within multiple, perhaps even competing, timescales. Dickens, I argue, creates a narrative interpretation of the fractal clock, with similarly embedded timescales existing within the landscapes he visits. But for Dickens, timescales are both internal to the traveler’s experience and imposed from various external political powers.

The fractal clock that layers timepieces in its nested faces takes on new symbolism in *Pictures from Italy*, where the metal and wooden symbols of various ruling astronomical, religious, and political bodies give way to physical bodies literally enclosed in the dominant clockwork. At the famed basilica in Bologna—significant for
astronomical calculations in the eighteenth century—Dickens describes “the great
Meridian on the pavement of the church of San Petronio, where the sunbeams mark the
time among the kneeling people” (72). Properly speaking, the meridian is a calendar,
ot a clock, hearkening from the days when the pope definitively owned the calculation
of days and hours. But through Dickens’s narrative, the meridian of San Petronio
becomes part of a living sundial, with “kneeling people” serving as temporary parts
within a dynamic timepiece. The form of repetition ad infinitum not only nests
moments within moments and histories within histories, but it also nests individuals
within governing bodies as the living elements of time.

Temporal coexistence permeates Pictures from Italy. Because different
temporalities can be nested within a single space, the narrative can compress the temporal
distance between past and present, creating access points for various histories. Dickens
describes this access early in his account while touring some of the rooms of the
Inquisition at Avignon, carefully marking smaller registers of daily time within the grand
historical moment:

A few steps brought us to the Cachots, in which the prisoners of the
Inquisition were confined for forty-eight hours after their capture, without
food or drink, that their constancy might be shaken, even before they were
confronted with their gloomy judges. The day has not got in there yet.
They are still small cells, shut in by four unyielding, close, hard walls; still
profoundly dark; still massively doored and fastened, as of old …. The
place where the tribunal sat, was plain. The platform might have been
removed but yesterday. Conceive the parable of the Good Samaritan
having been painted on the wall of one of these Inquisition chambers! But
it was, and may be traced there yet …. Many of [the accused] had been
brought out of the very cell we had just looked into, so awfully; along the
same stone passage. We had trodden in their very footsteps. I am gazing
round me, with the horror that the place inspires. (21–22, emphasis added)

Daily time exceeds the container of the historical event, eventually overwhelming the
traveler in a shared tense. By compressing temporal distance in this place, Dickens
recreates his sense of nearness to the Inquisition, such that his traveler’s experience is not
sublime but filled with “horror.” By relating how the prisoners’ physical “constancy” is
shaken, he implies that their sense of location in time is shaken as well: they are kept
specifically for “forty-eight hours”—a period that they are prevented from marking
through regular rituals of eating and drinking, bodily rhythms, or the progress of days.
Likewise, the traveler’s sense of time becomes uncertain. The sentence “The day has not
got in there yet” applies both literally to the smaller measures of time (the daylight hours
that govern the traveler’s habits) and metaphorically to the grander sweep of history
(progress has not corrected the dark period of the Inquisition). This short sentence,
conspicuous in a paragraph of drawn-out sentences, brings the wandering clauses of the
passage to an abrupt halt. In fact, the proclamation that “The day has not got in there yet”
gives the sense of protracted anticipation that the repetition of “still” draws out in
agonizing endurance. The sense that “[t]he platform might have been removed but
yesterday” strikes too close, appears too connected to the individual’s present life.
As Dickens demonstrates, the traveler’s quest to describe famous scenes while “on the spot” conveys a sense of authority and authenticity (6). But when Dickens’s narrative participates in this travel trope while remaining open to nonlinear temporal possibilities, it produces interactions with the past that overwhelm the present. Much of the horror that moves this passage from sustained past tense to present (“inspires”) and present progressive (“am gazing”) comes from the realization of the speaker’s position in a specific, enduring place. Where the traveler stands is the “very cell,” the “same stone passage,” and so “we had trodden in their very footsteps.” Here, the traveler identifies with the victims of the Inquisition such that temporal coexistence dominates this passage. This past has not truly passed but remains embedded in the landscape, available should the traveler shift the timescale in which he experiences the space.

The physical re-enactment of retracing the victims’ “very footsteps” creates an intimacy with history, overcoming temporal distances in a way that proves horrifying as Dickens imagines the minute rhythms of daily life in the Inquisition chambers. This sense escalates as his guide, the “Goblin of Avignon,” describes the mechanized routines of torture: “Mash, mash, mash! An endless routine of heavy hammers. Mash, mash, mash! upon the sufferer’s limbs” (16, 22–23). The Goblin’s grotesque sensory description of the past heightens, building toward the exhibition of “a steep, dark, lofty tower: very dismal, very dark, very cold,” in which, she says, “The Executioner of the Inquisition … flung those who were past all further torturing …. see the black stains on the wall? …. Blood!” (23). The Goblin’s historical narrative structures the past through sensory and emotive connections to individual actions and routine. Visitors experience this past bodily by meditating on its physical residue “still” extant in the present. Dickens thus describes a
shift from sympathy for the victims’ distant, contained suffering to a kind of horrific empathy in which the historical seeps into the traveler’s present, causing him to fear the possibility of his own torture.

As the Goblin’s horrific tour crescendos, Dickens sharply pulls the narrative back into comforting historical specificity. “In October, 1791,” he interrupts, taking over the narration from the Goblin,

when the Revolution was at its height here, sixty persons: men and women (“and priests,” says Goblin, “priests”): were murdered, and hurled, the dying and the dead, into this dreadful pit, where a quantity of quick-lime was tumbled down upon their bodies. Those ghastly tokens of the massacre were soon no more; but while one stone of the strong building in which the deed was done, remains upon another, there they will lie in the memories of men, as plain to see as the splashing of their blood upon the wall is now. (23)

The problem, though, is that the terror is not confined to the “memories of men”; like so much of the past brought to life through travel, this horrific knowledge presents itself bodily. It changes from an abstract historical knowledge to a personal memory—one that has been anachronously felt and experienced in some echoing way by the traveler. The switch from narrating the horror through the Goblin tour-guide’s gothic emphasis on individual bodies and the movements of the individual torture machines to the narrator’s historicizing tone, signaled by the date “October, 1791,” indicates an attempt on the
narrator’s part to re-establish normal temporal distance, to limit this horror to a point on a timeline, to scale back and abstract the massacre so that he can moralize and sympathize, but so that it no longer bleeds into the present.

For the historian seeking a moral and a sense of closure in the past, the virtue of collapsing ruins testifies to historical discontinuity and fits into narratives of modernization and progress. Theoretically, the traveler who visits Avignon can both access the past and contain it at a distance—however unconvincingly. Dickens tries to do this:

My blood ran cold, as I looked from Goblin, down into the vaults, where those forgotten creatures, with recollections of the world outside: of wives, friends, children, brothers: starved to death, and made the stones ring with their unavailing groans. But, the thrill I felt on seeing the accursed wall below, decayed and broken through, and the sun shining in through its gaping wounds, was like a sense of victory and triumph. I felt exalted with the proud delight of living in these degenerate times, to see it. As if I were the hero of some high achievement! (24)

The claims of triumph and progress, though explicit, cannot overcome the level of sensory detail that vividly depicts for the reader the reaches of historical horror. The “proud delight” does not fully neutralize the “unavailing groans,” although linear history triumphs over the narrative for the moment.
The question of what, if anything, truly passes from existence puzzled nineteenth-century thinkers across disciplines.\textsuperscript{101} For example, Charles Babbage’s \textit{Ninth Bridgewater Treatise} (1837), which considers “the air we breathe” to be “the never-failing historian” (113), specifically explores sound permanence. Babbage’s \textit{Treatise} posits that “pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they give rise” (109). Babbage continues, “[W]hat a strange chaos is this wide atmosphere we breathe! Every atom impressed with good and with ill, retains at once the motions which philosophers and sages have imparted to it, mixed and combined in ten thousand ways with all that is worthless and base. The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said” (111–12). Dickens, scholars have ascertained, owned a copy of Babbage’s \textit{Treatise} and was intrigued by the idea of atmospheric sound permanence.\textsuperscript{102} In \textit{Pictures from Italy}, however, Dickens explores this permanence beyond just the potentially eternal echoes of the human voice; when he depicts infinite moments embedded within the present, he is reconfiguring time’s structure—a narrative construction that takes on added significance because it depicts a British traveler’s movement’s through a space of dually cultural and imperial import.

At the Coliseum, just as at Avignon, Dickens depicts excess in the material remnants of the past; at the Coliseum, just as at Avignon, the narrative uncovers uncertainty in this depth and thus hastily retreats into abstraction. Dickens first describes the ruins coming to life through the details still accessible in the present: “It is no fiction, but plain, sober, honest Truth, to say: so suggestive and distinct is it at this hour: that, for a moment—actually in passing in—they who will, may have the whole great pile before
them, as it used to be, with thousands of eager faces staring down into the arena, and such a whirl of strife, and blood, and dust going on there, as no language can describe” (117). This engagement is both fleeting and real as the traveler physically enters the historic space and accesses an embedded historical moment that takes over a description of the Coliseum’s present appearance. He accesses the “whirl” only briefly, however, and then tries to restore temporal distance:

To see it crumbling there, an inch a year … is to see the ghost of old Rome, wicked wonderful old city, haunting the very ground on which its people trod. It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight, conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart, as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. GOD be thanked: a ruin! (117–18)

As with the crumbling, blood-stained walls at Avignon, Dickens translates the physical decay of the landmarks into a progressive trajectory, an abstraction that bespeaks comforting change. But he confesses when looking closely at the present “Italian face … as the visitor approaches the city” that “there is scarcely one countenance in a hundred, among the common people in the streets, that would not be at home and happy in a renovated Coliseum to-morrow” (118). The repetition suggests historical change here is only a political realignment, the result of the fallen Roman Empire rather than an improvement in human nature. The lack of true distance between then and now threatens
to undermine the narratives of modernization and progress Dickens tries to read in the ruins—narratives that traditionally justify imperial expansion.

Amid the “miles of ruin” around Rome, Dickens declares, “[T]he broken hour-glass of Time is but a heap of idle dust!” (149). But he neither leaves dust idle nor horology broken. He reveals alternative temporalities nested into the landscape. If time seems “broken” or “idle,” the question becomes “whose time?” Italy saw various imperial powers claim sovereignty and even redistrict kingdoms between the Napoleonic Wars and the 1861 unification. Moreover, competing concerns of commercial, rail, and naval time standards were increasingly drowning out the previously authoritative church bells. The question of who would ultimately decide which timepiece reigned supreme in this space—and what would be the effects of that temporal sovereignty on notions of history and modernity—suffuses Dickens’s travel narrative and makes this individual account of a journey resonate with questions of imperialism and dominance.

Fractal time allows for historical depth. One can access not just the horrific groans of individual suffering inevitably encapsulated in history’s events (wars and traumas); a different tint of history is always available by shifting the observer’s perspective. History, then, like the temporalities of lived experience, becomes multidimensional. In Florence, near the end of the travel narrative, Dickens describes “innumerable spots of interest, all glowing in a landscape of surpassing beauty …. Returning from so much brightness, how solemn and how grand the streets again, with their great, dark, mournful palaces, and many legends: not of siege, and war, and might, and Iron Hand alone, but of the triumphant growth of peaceful Arts and Sciences” (186). This is a more nuanced past than the master narratives of official history, filled with individual pain and individual
genius that echo forward to affect the traveler. But perhaps more importantly, it is a past born out of the traveler’s experience of fractal time in this overdetermined, over-contested space—and one that asserts the present’s responsibility in its continuation.

“Here,” Dickens concludes at Florence,

the imperishable part of the noble mind survives …. The fire within the stern streets, and among the massive Palaces and Towers, kindled by rays from Heaven, is still burning brightly, when the flickering of war is extinguished and the household fires of generations have decayed; as thousands upon thousands of faces, rigid with the strife and passion of the hour, have faded out of the old Squares and public haunts, while the nameless Florentine Lady, preserved from oblivion by a Painter’s hand, yet lives on, in enduring grace and youth. (186–87)

The “strife and passion” recorded as historical narrative prove to be fleeting or “of the hour”—repeatable, as Dickens well knows, but still comprising only one strand of the historical narrative. A different narrative emerges when one perceives Florentine history from the perspective of its present life beyond the guidebook, which reminds the traveler that the history he learns and carries with him does not grow organically from the daily-lived experience of the individual inhabitant. Dickens indicates that the official history does not automatically represent the biggest moments. Instead, it is a perspective curated according to a present political form. Whereas the Coliseum seems to overwhelm Dickens at first, he is able to resolve it into a linear progress narrative. It is the numerous
histories available in stones that truly overwhelm him and prove that what seems finite and insignificant is potentially infinite when the scale shifts. Indeed, “every fragment of [Italy’s] fallen Temples, and every stone of her deserted palaces and prisons” instills a hopeful resolution for Italy’s political unrest (187).

Despite his critiques of Italian cruelty at Rome, his anti-Catholicism, and his disgust at what he perceives to be a disregard for present human life, Dickens concludes for his British readers that

[y]ears of neglect, oppression, and misrule, have been at work, to change [Italians’] nature and reduce their spirit; miserable jealousies, fomented by petty Princes to whom union was destruction, and division strength, have been a canker at their root of nationality, and have barbarized their language; but the good that was in them ever, is in them yet, and a noble people may be, one day, raised up from the ashes. (187)

A much more positive depiction of Italian nature than the image of the bloodthirsty modern gladiators at Rome warns and hopes on the brink of the Risorgimento. The phoenix metaphor of rising “from the ashes” is significant, too, in its sense of creation from the past’s ruins; Dickens envisages not a birth but a re-birth. His historical meanderings through over-wrought landscapes thus resonate politically for the British Empire in the Mediterranean, presenting Italy as a significant space for both the past and the future. National, cultural, or imperial history parades as a master narrative, highlighting politically significant events, such as wars, along a timeline while other
details fade into the background. But for Dickens, history is much richer. Rather than a single master narrative depicting a lineage of empires abstracted, history is a library—and potentially an infinite one.
CHAPTER 3: PROFANING TIME AND SPACE IN GENRE AND GEOGRAPHY

When Harriet Martineau traveled to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1846, she was, like many Europeans before her, in part looking for the past. But how exactly that past looked had itself become a point of contention that travelers tried to resolve using literature, antiquarianism, and emergent science. These destinations in the eastern Mediterranean had entranced British travelers as “antique lands,” but they were also spaces of religious origins and, therefore, potentially more sacred—or at least more delicate—than other heritage spaces in places like Italy. In nineteenth-century travel writing, a palpable tension emerges between the desires of travelers to access eastern Mediterranean geographies as present places and as antique and holy landscapes. If Greece was “consecrated” and “holy” in Byron’s account, Holy Land destinations such as Palestine and Egypt were even more so for a general English Christian readership. Martineau illustrates this conflict in *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (1848); in Egypt, she reveres the landscape, but she adheres to an emerging sense of deep time that threatens to become sacrilege:

For our first glimpse into ancient Egyptian life we must go back upon the track of Time far further than we have been accustomed to suppose that track to extend. People who had believed all their lives that the globe and man were created together, were startled when the new science of geology revealed to them the great fact that man is a comparatively new creation on the earth, whose oceans and swamps and jungles were aforetime inhabited by monsters never seen by human eye but in their fossil remains. People who enter Egypt with the belief that
the human race has existed only six thousand years, and that at that date, the
world was uninhabited by men, except within a small circuit in Asia, must
undergo a somewhat similar revolution of ideas. All new research operates to
remove further back the date of the formation of the Egyptian empire. The
differences between the dates given by legendary records and by modern research
(with the help of contemporary history) are very great: but the one agrees as little
as the other with the popular notion that the human race is only six thousand years
old.103

By extending the past, Martineau advances “new science” so that her historical
retrospection and scientific progression are mutually constitutive. As Martineau
discovers, to theorize and illustrate Egypt’s “present and past” is to take up the problem
of the shape of time and humanity’s relation to it.

Eastern Mediterranean travel accounts were exceedingly popular in England but
their publication was also exceedingly fraught. Martineau’s *Eastern Life*, although not
my primary focus, provides necessary insight into the publishing climate for eastern
Mediterranean travel writing at this time. *Eastern Life*, which was supposed to be
published by John Murray, was infamously rejected immediately due to circulating
rumors about the manuscript’s “challenge to Christian ascendency” (qtd. in Logan
188).104 Martineau records the publishing circumstances of the travel narrative in her
*Autobiography* (1877): “Mr. Murray was alarmed by being told,—what he then gave
forth as his plea for breach of contract,—that the book was a ‘conspiracy against Moses’”
(534). Instead, Martineau published the book with Edward Moxon to mixed reviews.105
Many of the leading periodicals damned the work’s departure from “picture-writing,”
regretting “that Miss Martineau should so utterly have mistaken the department best suited to the exercise of her abilities … if she had confined herself to the proper object of a book of travels, and not ventured beyond the sphere of her own knowledge and experience, she might have produced a work second to none of its class in interest and value” (qtd. in Logan, 188). According to Deborah Logan, “The ‘proper object’ is descriptive writing, quaint anecdotes, and the picturesque; here, her intellectual ability is called into question by charges that she exceeded the boundaries of her proper feminine sphere by discussing such ‘masculine’ topics as theology and history. Offering a striking example of gender-and-genre-bending, soothing ‘picture-writing’ is appropriate for women travelers; ‘muscular’ historical and theological analyses that challenge intellectual complacency are not” (188). Martineau’s gender might challenge the genre, and the reviews quoted in Logan’s analysis certainly convey a hefty dose of sexism, but I would argue that Martineau’s material would be condemned regardless of gender. The fact that she was a deaf middle-aged woman merely provided an easy excuse for the reviewers to dismiss her. Not even William Thackeray or Anthony Trollope, as I shall show, could get away with such blatant heterodoxy.

One of my objectives in this chapter is to examine in more detail the claims regarding “the proper object of a book of travels,” particularly in reference to the mid-Victorian eastern Mediterranean. Specifically, I aim to examine genre and fictionality in travel writing, asking how presentism operates as a temporal form across textual boundaries. Travel writing capitalizes on (and struggles through) rich ambiguities and exchanges between a real place and abstractions. Realist fiction set in real places potentially disrupts the generic distinction between nonfiction and fiction with serious
consequences for nineteenth-century readers and writers. Fact and imagination collide with even more force when the real places are sacred to the author’s historical imaginary. The eastern Mediterranean in the 1840s and 1850s was just such a problem, particularly given the abundance of accounts detailing what one should see and how one should feel. Jerusalem especially, but also Palestine and many areas of the sacred Levant were exhaustively detailed spaces for English readers. Coleman notes, “During the 1830s, the Holy Land was the theme of some 40 travel books a year” (334). But this incessant imaginative cataloguing of the space for Western readers “also, of course, provided an important geopolitical and economic link between Britain and the Indian sub-continent” (334). These dual concerns, I argue, represent dual tensions expressed in the temporal focalizations through which visitors engage with the spaces of the eastern Mediterranean. Simon Goldhill calculates that “[m]ore European descriptions of journeying in the Holy Land were published in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century than in the previous fifteen hundred years put together—at least 2,000 extended essays or books; or two a month for seventy-five years. Nor did the outpouring stop until well into the twentieth century when books on the politics of the region took over as the dominant form. This genre is fully self-conscious and creates a horizon of expectation” (“Jerusalem” 72). The traveler’s memory—personal, communal, and sacred—of a place like Jerusalem clashed with the scenes and impressions present when she or he reported “on the spot.” Add to this growing British investment in the technological developments in Near Eastern locales (such as Suez) and the landscape becomes a temporal cacophony.

I will focus here on how temporal perspectives, or “focalizations,” shade narrative. In particular, I will examine how differing temporalities (or different temporal
investments in historicization or presentism) can shift a place’s identity. That is, I will analyze the specifically temporal focalizations in Thackeray’s *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo by Way of Lisbon, Athens, Constantinople, and Jerusalem* (1846) and Trollope’s *The Bertrams* (1859) I will look at how narrative in the explicitly fictional novel and the explicitly nonfictional travelogue both grapple with past and present priorities in the eastern Mediterranean. In section one, I will argue that Thackeray’s *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* exploits the conventions of travel writing to satirize British culture and politics abroad. Scholars generally have read this text alongside other travel narratives, regarding it as a straightforward nonfictional account of British imperialism. This chapter, however, integrates literary analysis and cultural study, focusing specifically on Thackeray’s manipulation of narrative elements such as time to satirize Britain’s traditional literary-based geopolitics in the Mediterranean. I read *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* together with Thackeray’s contemporaneous humor series “Punch in the East,” as well as his private papers and correspondence, to analyze the criticisms embedded in the narrative structure of the popular Mediterranean travel narrative. These writings together reveal an extremely pointed—and partially excised—rebuke of contradictory British orthodoxy as it manifests geopolitically and aesthetically in travel accounts. In the second section, I argue that Anthony Trollope’s novel *The Bertrams* uses character perspective to transform the Levant’s heritage landscapes, such as Alexandria, into modern foreign spaces where imperial modernization could develop unchecked by concerns of preservation. Thackeray’s narrator feigns reverence but in so doing produces ludicrous reflections on Britons abroad. Trollope’s characters re-enact the problems of profaning the ideal or the holy through contact with the sundry concerns of
present bodies in antique spaces. The narrator of *The Bertrams* compromises by parceling out the ancient Eastern geography into the sacred historical (Jerusalem), the charmingly exotic and quaintly antique (Cairo), and the rotting urban corpse that is not only available for, but also in dire need of, British remodel (Alexandria).

Travel brings individuals into spaces where their memories of expectation collide with their experiences and with how they anticipate remembering their journeys. In the eastern Mediterranean, these conflicts of subjective memory and anticipation increase on two registers beyond the individual: the sacred and the imperial. Of memory as resistance in colonized spaces, Mieke Bal explains how histories conflict:

Memory is an act of ‘vision’ of the past but, as an act, situated in the present of the memory … Memory is also the joint between time and space. Especially in stories set in former colonies, the memory evokes a past in which people were dislodged from their space by colonizers who occupied it, but also, a past in which they did not yield. Going back—in retroversion—to the time in which the place was a different kind of space is a way of countering the effects of colonizing acts of focalization that can be called mapping. Mastering, looking from above, dividing up and controlling is an approach to space that ignores time as well as the density of its lived-in quality. In opposition to such ways of seeing space, providing a landscape with a history is a way of spatializing memory that undoes the killing of space as lived. (146, 147-8)

Bal describes memory as an act of resistance to empire through narrative technique; in the Mediterranean, however, we must also consider how memory *facilitates* imperialism.
through narrative technique—both formally, as with colonialism, and informally, as with commerce and culture. “[C]olonizing acts of focalization,” I argue, become visible in the narratives of collective memory that motivate British travelers to journey to lands they would otherwise colonize. In chapter two I analyzed how methods of reading embeddedness in landscape produced considerations of depth in time and history; here, I examine what happens when British travel writers across genres reject temporal depth as an evaluative framework and, instead, focus on the temporal surface of the present. Both Thackeray and Trollope, I show, explore current and even potential uses for hitherto “antique lands.”

The Satirist Abroad: Thackeray, Temporality, and Genre

On 19 August 1844, William Makepeace Thackeray was dining in a London club when he accepted an invitation to travel the Mediterranean with the Peninsular and Oriental Company. ¹⁰⁸ This, at least, is the story he writes to his mother, laying out the terms of his journey: “I’m to write a book for 200£ for C[hapman] & H[all]. on the East … or that Cockney part w’h I shall see.”¹⁰⁹ And this is the tale of the “East” that he expands in Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo, published under his pseudonym, Michael Angelo Titmarsh. This “Eastern book,” as Thackeray dubs it in his private papers, adds a skeptical voice to a market already teeming with Mediterranean travel accounts.¹¹⁰ Combining the humor for which he was gaining fame with the tropes of leisure-class travel narratives, Thackeray writes a tale that satirizes British attitudes of superiority and dominance abroad and at home. The narrative’s chronological structure and temporal shifts within the narrator’s consciousness reveal and complicate self-
perpetuating travel traditions. Formal elements of time in *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* create an indeterminate generic space wherein Thackeray can lampoon tradition without supplanting it with an alternative manifesto or resolving it cohesively into picturesque description. Instead, *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* mocks how persistent methods of portraying “Eastern” travel problematically subsume geopolitics into idealized representations.

This text’s satire renders its political position maddeningly indeterminate, but that satire ultimately targets the contradictory and mutually dependent relationship between British geopolitics and literature. Scholars generally only read *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* as a travelogue—as Thackeray’s first-hand account of his Mediterranean rambles. I argue, however, that the satire refuses cohesive resolution through narrative authority or recourse to Thackeray’s literal experiences. The text is a carefully crafted narrative of a journey inspired by and parallel to—but not depicting—Thackeray’s travels. The tension between experience and representation occupies much of travel writing, especially *Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, which illustrates how the conventions structuring both British geopolitics and travel emerge from a common literary core. Tradition regulates not only how individuals see and represent overdetermined Mediterranean spaces but also how Britain manages its empire through these largely uncolonized locales. Yet, for Thackeray, imperialism’s conventions often contradict the activities they are used to justify. In the sections that follow, I analyze how Thackeray uses travel writing’s spatial and temporal tropes of credibility to satirize the quest narrative’s authenticity and authority. Thackeray reveals that inauthenticity is itself an unacknowledged trope of travel writing, whether that writing proclaims its fictionality or not.
The conjunction of humor’s levity and travel writing’s gravity in *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* shifts the biting satire so that the critical Western gaze, which initially seems to flow from the narrative outward onto foreign scenes, turns inward, encompassing the satirist himself. In 1846, Thackeray was known primarily as a rising author of periodical humor. British travel narratives of the East, conversely, established authority through tropes of authenticity, offering picturesque reflections on oft-delineated landscapes. Thackeray enfolds the satiric barbs of his humor writing into the conventions of the travel genre, producing a text that is at once more subtly satiric than *Punch* while also critical of British foreign relations. *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* begins with a joke about dates that, I will show, links this book directly to the self-referential satire of Thackeray’s earlier *Punch* contributions.

I propose that we examine the imperialist intricacies of Thackeray’s travel narrative with the same attention that scholarship has given his novels, interjecting a literary perspective into conversations about travel and empire that have been primarily cultural and historical. Travel writing can, as Edward Said points out, capture global divisions of imperial power, exploitation, and racism. But I argue that it can also harness those structures of dominance narratively in ways that are not simply complicit. Even in its indeterminacy, humor—especially satire—can be a compelling and dangerous political force. Robert E. Lougy claims, for instance, “Although Thackeray would later create in the character of Jo[s] Sedley in *Vanity Fair* a devastating satirical portrait of the English presence in India, a reader of *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* could have little doubt that Thackeray subscribed to many of the beliefs and prejudices of his age” (59). But *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* cannot so easily be separated from either
Thackeray’s fiction or his political humor. Departing from Lougy’s perspective of the travel book as Thackeray’s genuine self-expression, I contend that, just like *Vanity Fair*, *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* does provide “a devastating satirical portrait” of “English presence” abroad—perhaps even more effectively because it is not presented as fiction. Though Thackeray certainly “subscribed to many of the beliefs and prejudices of his age,” this did not prevent him from understanding and representing the absurdity of both that cultural hegemony and his own involvement in it. Thackeray, in fact, takes advantage of imaginative travel traditions to ridicule how Britain engages with a contradictory East largely of its own construction.

*Cornhill to Grand Cairo*’s satire is part of a narrative tradition of representation that inheres within nineteenth-century British geopolitics in the Mediterranean. Authority in this tradition often arises from the narrator’s ability to see the correct scene in the correct way—or at least to report an experience so that it aligns with standards of taste or picturesqueness. Yet as James Buzard indicates, “[P]icturesqueness, much celebrated as a mark of culturally valuable ‘authenticity,’” shifted so that “by about mid-century … the picturesque and pictoral were signs of a superficial and imitative (‘touristic’) attitude” (*The Beaten Track* 192). Still, tropes of credibility, such as the organization of one’s experience according to a recognizable sequence and duration, allow this literature to operate across the divisions of textual representation and experience. Travel books concerning the Mediterranean crowded the British market, with their authors generally emphasizing authenticity by mimicking dominant aesthetic standards while “on the spot” in foreign lands. Thackeray thus participates in a tradition simultaneously textual and performative; he juxtaposes literary representations
of a journey with actual travel in and among these spaces. But travel writing also generates a mode of “anti-tourism,” as Buzard explains, which purports to elevate the educated traveler beyond the masses of tourists who take advantage of advances in cheap transportation technologies to go abroad (The Beaten Track 6–12 and 31–2). Thackeray’s narrative persona, Titmarsh, overtly critiques British tourism, seeming to take part in this antitouristic mode by rendering the speaker as a comparatively superior traveler. However, even as a traveler disdainful of tourism, Titmarsh is himself part of the satire, enlarging the text’s critique of mass tourism to encompass educated travel. In fact, Cornhill to Grand Cairo’s humor often emerges at the expense of Titmarsh’s professed authenticity, and the text refuses any stable plane of superiority.

Cornhill to Grand Cairo participates in travel writing’s tropes of credibility by mapping out precise routes and schedules. The book begins with a dedication to Captain Samuel Lewis of the P&O Company (signed by Thackeray, though the title page lists Titmarsh as the author), professing the journey’s authenticity by naming an authoritative witness likely in possession of an official maritime logbook. Immediately following this dedication, Thackeray opens the preface with a temporally specific authority, asserting, “On the 24th of July, 1844, the writer of this little book went to dine at the —— Club, quite unconscious of the wonderful events which Fate had in store for him … and on the 26th of July, the Lady Mary Wood was sailing from Southampton” (xi–xiii). The text, then, immediately offers an exact date, followed by an acknowledgment that a retrospective narrative voice—the voice of the writer who does know what “wonderful events” will take place—guides the sequence. Titmarsh, indeed, traverses the Mediterranean from Cornhill to Cairo as the title promises, ending with a reiteration of
the map and date range: “In the interval, between the 23rd of July and the 27th of October, we may boast of having seen more men and cities than most travellers have seen in such a time:—Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malta, Athens, Smyrna, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo” (299). The geographic and temporal orientations on which the text insists, as the preface claims, are “important statements … made partly to convince some incredulous friends—who insist still that the writer never went abroad at all, and wrote the following pages, out of pure fancy, in retirement at Putney” (xiii). The narrative explicitly attempts to produce authenticity. Titmarsh offers a verifiable sequence through a verifiable map in line with other generic accounts of the same space, navigating exoticism and verisimilitude through tropes of credibility.

However, these dates—which set temporal limits around the spatial map, indicate the traveler’s pace, and orient the journey’s calendar—are incorrect. As Titmarsh indicates repeatedly, the trip lasts about two months—give or take a Maltese quarantine (241 and 299). Titmarsh’s “interval” is roughly a month too long. The very elements that ought to authenticate Titmarsh’s journey and prove that he is not simply writing from “Putney” undercut his credibility. The narrative’s formal conventions—title, dedication, and preface, for example—satirize this production, including its grandiose narrator. Far from being under Titmarsh’s control, the text fosters suspicion around its directive voice, subjecting Titmarsh to the same satiric reflection he casts on inauthenticity in foreign spaces. Anchoring a travel narrative to a geography and sequence performs a kind of verisimilitude mid-nineteenth-century readers had come to expect. Thackeray, though, uses those same literary devices of credibility to remind his readers—or those who get the
joke—that travel writing is very much a genre of curated experiences and studied representations that, above all, must adhere to narrow aesthetic standards.

The error in the date sequence, moreover, is not random. The explicit spatial and temporal range of the journey that Titmarsh maps out (from “Cornhill to Grand Cairo,” between the 23rd of July and the 27th of October”) not only alerts the reader to Titmarsh’s fallibility but also annexes Thackeray’s contemporaneous humor essays, which continued to appear in *Punch* as “Punch in the East” during the author’s Mediterranean travels. As Thackeray’s diary indicates, 23 July 1844 marks “the beginning of the tour of the fat Contributor” to *Punch*. By expanding the travel narrative’s temporal limits to this earlier date, Thackeray expands the spatial range of the journey so that Dover and Ostend, the fat contributor’s first two Western destinations, are also part of Titmarsh’s map, subject to the same satirical voice that narrates the “Cockney” East. As Gordon N. Ray notes, “It need hardly be said that Thackeray’s target [in “Punch in the East”] is the pretensions of the English abroad, not the short-comings of the lands that they visit” (352). The same is true of *Cornhill to Grand Cairo*. When Thackeray pulls the travel narrative back to the fat contributor’s embarkation, he links it to an explicitly Anglo-centric indictment; while Titmarsh judges the “short-comings” of foreign lands according to popular aesthetic standards, the text implicates him within an exposé of English travel pretentions. Thackeray’s repeated temporal mistake, I argue, explicitly bridges space and genre, annexing the fat contributor through a shared chronotope. Thackeray thus uses genre and temporality to expose British national character to the same satire with which Titmarsh evaluates foreigners and uncouth tourists.
Cornhill to Grand Cairo self-reflexively questions how dominant aesthetic traditions predetermine Mediterranean journeys, despite what travelers encounter. Its temporal forms satirize Titmarsh’s interplay between a stubborn romanticism and a condescending insistence on verisimilitude. When the fictional lives of overdetermined Eastern destinations clash with what Titmarsh finds abroad, Thackeray capitalizes on that indeterminacy to scrutinize Western textual authority. Titmarsh sustains a dialogue between what he dubs “mere physical beauty” and “the truth,” sometimes ugly or bland, throughout the travel narrative, but he often finds himself implicated in his own critique (66). At every destination, Titmarsh struggles to distill space, time, and empirical experience into some vestige of the same picturesque concepts of place that he reveals to be subjective constructions. Thus, his focal adjustments themselves become fodder for a broader satire that de-romanticizes both Thackeray’s own contemporary political structures and the historicized landscapes he visits. To comprehend this de-romanticization, though, it becomes necessary to consider in greater depth the division—typically overlooked—between Thackeray and Titmarsh.

The narrative sequence depicts Titmarsh embarking on a journey in anticipation of finding the material referents of the East he has long imagined through Western literature; Thackeray, conversely, recognizes from the start that his journey will take him only to a “Cockney” East. Though Thackeray smoothes the seams between himself and his character—not least through the book’s first-person narration—Titmarsh remains a distinct persona.121 Though Titmarsh’s satiric voice echoes Thackeray’s, Titmarsh is often himself the punchline. For instance, he tries and fails to imagine Gibraltar as a worthy destination, to harmonize the place with his ideal of it: “[A]t evening … the place
becomes quite romantic” because “it is too dark to see the dust on the dried leaves; the cannonballs do not intrude too much, but have subsided into the shade” (47). Only once it becomes “too dark to see” and “[y]ou … deliver yourself up entirely to romance” can one perceive the landscape as picturesque (48). In painting this picture, Titmarsh calls attention to the necessary suppression of sensory experience—what Buzard calls the “tactile” (Beaten Track 192). Titmarsh catalogs the very minute, offensive details that the darkness purportedly occludes (such as “the dust,” “dried leaves,” and “cannonballs”). By naming what he cannot and does not want to see, Titmarsh inscribes it into his account, undercutting his attempt to prove his authority as a man of taste by romanticizing Gibraltar. He tries to construct a picturesque scene rather express his own experience. But in so doing, he catalogs precisely the things the narrative is supposed to conceal, producing irony between what we are told is romantic and the details that prove otherwise.

Thackeray repeatedly reminds us of the literariness of travel narratives in which the speaker can never quite compromise what he sees, hears, or smells with the story he wants to tell. Titmarsh’s empirical experience on the ground in Gibraltar, for example, occurs between two abstract contemplations that try to resolve the physical details of the place with, on one hand, his anticipation of observing Britain’s geopolitical dominance and, on the other, the retrospection through which he weighs his impressions against his disappointed expectations. Initially, Titmarsh narratively maps a dominant British empire in the Mediterranean that stretches from Gibraltar, “the very image of an enormous lion, crouched between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean,” to the “next British lion” at Malta, “four days further on in the midland sea, and ready to spring upon Egypt or
pounce upon Syria, or roar so as to be heard at Marseilles in case of need” (28). But after
he experiences “the dust” of Gibraltar, Gibraltar becomes “this famous rock—this great
blunderbuss—which we seized out of the hands of the natural owners a hundred and forty
years ago, and which we have kept ever since tremendously loaded and cleaned and
ready for use” (51–2). “[R]eady for use” but never used, Gibraltar testifies to Britain’s
longstanding perfidy. Giving way to irony, Titmarsh soliloquizes, “To seize and have it is
doubtless a gallant thing; it is like one of those tests of courage which one reads of in the
chivalrous romances, when, for instance, Sir Huon, of Bordeaux, is called to prove his
knighthood by going to Babylon and pulling out the Sultan’s beard and front teeth in the
midst of his court there. But, after all, justice must confess it was rather hard on the poor
Sultan … At all events, right or wrong, whatever may be our title to the property, there is
no Englishman but must think with pride of the manner in which his countrymen have
kept it” (52). Titmarsh can only rescue his nationalism by abstracting it through the moral
structures provided by “chivalrous romances.” The possession of Gibraltar, an important
base for British maritime control, is justified through a tradition of chivalrous romance.
Here, Titmarsh’s voice seems to align closely with Thackeray’s overall satiric project so
that one might read the protagonist as the straightforward projection of the author’s past
self. But a dissonance arises between the acknowledgment of injustice against the
“natural owners” and the absolute insistence on the Englishman’s “pride.”

Part of this paradoxical polyphony comes from the retrospective telling of the
travel sequence, in which the passage of time splits the present narrating perspective from
the past perspective it narrates. Titmarsh’s repeated cycles of imaginative anticipation,
disillusionment, and contemplative retrospection are typical of travel literature’s
temporality. Paul de Man explains the split between the narrator and the narrated self, which he reads through William Wordsworth’s poetry, as “two stages of consciousness” in which “[t]he stance of the speaker, who exists in the ‘now,’ is … a stance of wisdom” (224). Titmarsh tries to enact this narrative strategy to verify his own comparative wisdom and authenticity. When he reveals what literature and nationalism have led him to expect in Gibraltar, he does so in full realization of his own past self’s absurdity, the knowledge of which he narrates as an effect of travel. Titmarsh’s trajectory of selfhood provides one level of irony in which the narrative voice depicts impressions and emotions that his enlightened self no longer feels. Irony is thus, to use de Man’s phrase, a “rhetoric of temporality,” here produced through an instance of dual selfhood. To create the stance of wisdom, as de Man explains, “The mere falling of others does not suffice; [the enlightened being] has to go down himself. The ironic, twofold self that the writer or philosopher constitutes by his language seems able to come into being only at the expense of his empirical self, falling (or rising) from a stage of mystified adjustment into the knowledge of his mystification” (214). The speaker’s shift from past “mystification” to present “wisdom” emerges from narrative sequences that juxtapose imagination with reality, anticipation with retrospection, creating a distinctively temporal irony around claims of authenticity. The structure of wisdom, though, can only be constructed by splitting the present narrative voice from the tale he supposedly tells “on the spot.”

The narrative arc, by which the traveler achieves wisdom through experience, is certainly a staple of travel writing. However, for Thackeray, the enlightened, reflective being is somewhat of a straw man that the narrative structure undermines. Thackeray enlarges the division inherent in retrospective travel tales that differentiate between a
present speaker and his earlier self. Whereas, for a Wordsworthian speaker, wisdom may actually be achieved and then reflected in the poetic structure, Thackeray stretches the temporal irony across genres, well beyond Titmarsh’s self-assured enlightenment.

Titmarsh recognizes the foolishness around him and even in his past perspectives, but he can neither perceive his present foolishness nor contain it to himself. As de Man notes, “[T]o know inauthenticity is not the same as to be authentic” (214). Thackeray does not contain absurdity to Titmarsh as an effigy of folly, though. The irony apparent in the narration hints at the possibility of present mystification.

Even in retrospection, *Cornhill to Grand Cairo*’s narrator destabilizes rather than synthesizes and directs. Just as in *Punch*, Thackeray proclaims inauthenticity in the British perspectives abroad that orient the imperial apparatus. When Titmarsh reaches Cairo, for example, his quest for the authentic East—the landscape he has imagined and experienced through literature—proves, of course, to be yet another European invention that he can only access by reestablishing distance between himself and dissonant reality. He initially marvels at the oriental apartments of an English expatriate and fantasizes about the “most beautiful … black eyes in the world,” which he sees behind a lattice (285). Finally, he discovers the East that the English traveler wants. But, of course, Titmarsh’s awe fades as he begins to acknowledge the details that differentiate this space from his imagination—the “black eyes,” for instance, belong not to one of the wives in the harem he imagines from a distance but to the “black cook, who has done the pilaff,” and quotidian domesticity replaces oriental sexual adventure (291). Titmarsh discovers what Thackeray already knows: Cairo is anything but grand.
While letting temporal irony play out through his travel narrative, Thackeray implicates the enlightenment myth in a broader critique of the structures that govern individual perspectives. He produces a capacious skepticism that by its very nature bridges ideas of reality and representation, resonating into geopolitics and literature more broadly. Judith L. Fisher recognizes in Thackeray’s novels a consistently skeptical narrative voice, the product of an author for whom “language was a system of conventions that depended upon an interpretive community for any stable meanings” (2). I argue that this skepticism, as well as the satire for which Thackeray has been lauded in and since *Vanity Fair*—a consistently canonical English novel since its publication—developed outside England and the novel. The “interpretive community” in which Fisher locates Thackeray’s system of conventions includes and expands beyond this text, with its temporal forms directing readers to geopolitical humor more broadly. The impossibility for any inherently existing stable meanings appears even more forcefully through Thackeray’s intergeneric condemnation of the interpretive community’s inauthenticity. By regarding this text as bridging generic divisions of fiction, satire, memoir, and guide, we can see an irresolvable contradiction between global perspectives that emerge from literary and historical imaginations and the complicated geopolitical exchanges that they nevertheless continue to govern. Instead of simply a “document that provides us with glimpses into the nature and origin of the imperialistic imagination,” we have a self-referential travel book that both proclaims its own inauthenticity and satirizes Britain’s traditions of negotiating travel experiences to adhere to—and reinforce—ideals of authenticity (Lougy 57). To clarify, I am not arguing that Thackeray touts a kind of global equality; rather, his critique culminates in revealing
the absurdities of the British imperial imagination. The foundation of Britain’s geopolitical engagement in the Mediterranean region, Thackeray shows, is built from a fervently upheld set of traditions that, through repeated invocation, develops the veneer of authenticity.

As Titmarsh moves from Gibraltar to the even more historicized Greece, he indicts Britain’s persistent romanticization of this landscape. Educated British travelers in Athens, for example, traditionally draw on a sense of a place that emerges from an ideal classical history in the British imaginary rather than from modern Athens, peopled with modern Greeks, as I have shown in chapter one. Titmarsh accuses the British philhellenes openly, asserting, “What call have ladies to consider Greece ‘romantic,’ they who get their notions of mythology from the well-known pages of ‘Tooke’s Pantheon?’ What is the reason that blundering Yorkshire squires, young dandies from Corfu regiments, jolly sailors from ships in the harbour, and yellow old Indians returning from Bundelcund, should think proper to be enthusiastic about a country of which they know nothing?” (65–6). British representatives, here, exceed geographical England, asserting the empire’s reach from Yorkshire to Corfu to India; yet, according to Titmarsh, all these representatives maintain the same irrelevant perspective. The “jolly sailors” and “young dandies” serving in “Corfu regiments,” and thus constituting the British imperial presence in the Ionian Islands, are as ignorant of modern Greece as the “blundering Yorkshire squires” and ladies who “consider Greece ‘romantic’” without justification. This cohesive Greece reduced from “classical education” and “Tooke’s Pantheon” does not align with the modern country, but it equally orients political figures abroad and fanciful philhellenes at home (67). Titmarsh’s insistence that the empire’s broad scope directly
correlates to the broad scope of imperial ignorance intensifies when the imaginary encounters what it is believed to represent.

As even Titmarsh sees, Britain can never truly master political strife in Greece because Britons insist on working from fanciful perceptions of its culture. With the physical landscape immediately before him, the geographical distance rendered moot through the power of steam, Titmarsh changes his complaint from one of inherently insurmountable difference to one of similarity. Moving from the “What call?” question pertaining to his distant compatriots, he focuses on his fellow travelers, asking, “What have these people in common with Pericles? … Of the race of Englishmen who come wondering about the tomb of Socrates, do you think the majority would not have voted to hemlock him? Yes; for the very same superstition which leads men by the nose now, drove them onward in the days when the lowly husband of Xantippe died for daring to think simply and to speak the truth” (66). Titmarsh rejects an idealized heritage shared by the heroes of Greek mythology and modern Britons, substituting one in which the prejudiced masses of ancient Greece and the equally prejudiced masses of modern Britain both hate “the truth” and form a despotic public. The inheritance from the days of Socrates is a collective violent reaction against dissenting voices—even, or perhaps especially, satiric voices. Through Titmarsh’s observations in Greece, Thackeray disdains the same public for which he writes: the public that maintains well-educated Britons should go to Greece sees the land according to an established standard and represents it according to an accepted literary tradition.

This public—for Thackeray, one largely formed by literary and artistic traditions—governs the ideal preferences and opinions with which the educated middle-
class man who is aware of his reputation must conform when he goes abroad. If he does not, he forsakes the public at his own risk. In Greece, Titmarsh recognizes the inauthenticity of this model of conformity, explicitly soliloquizing the legacy of British tourism through Lord Byron in a typically humorous fashion:

No; give me a fresh, dewy, healthy rose out of Somersetshire; not one of those superb, tawdry, unwholesome exotics, which are only good to make poems about. Lord Byron wrote more cant of this sort than any poet I know of … Think of “filling high a cup of Samian wine;” small beer is nectar compared to it, and Byron himself always drank gin. That man never wrote from his heart. He got up rapture and enthusiasm with an eye to the public;—but this is dangerous ground, even more dangerous than to look Athens full in the face and say that your eyes are not dazzled by its beauty. The Great Public admires Greece and Byron; the public knows best. Murrays “Guide Book” calls the latter “our native bard.” Our native bard! Mon Dieu! He Shakespeare’s, Milton’s, Keats’s, Scott’s native bard! Well, woe be to the man who denies the public gods! (75–6)

As I indicate in chapter one, nineteenth-century travelers to Greece could not avoid Byron’s legacy, especially Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, and Thackeray here uses that legacy to illustrate the textual permeability between fiction and the purportedly nonfiction “Guide Book.” Beyond the edge of Titmarsh’s satiric reflection, though, Thackeray implies that Titmarsh’s “rose out of Somersetshire” is just as absurdly rapturous as Byron’s “unwholesome exotics.” Both abstract an ideal, but, because the
“Great Public” idolizes Byron’s aesthetic, Titmarsh is only aware of his resistance to a faulty standard, not of his own romanticization of something absent. Titmarsh ridicules the English tradition of worshipping an exotic East, constructing an antitouristic rhetoric of superiority over tourists trailing in Byron’s wake. But as soon as Titmarsh assumes this plane of superiority, he falls victim to his own critique. He, too, rhapsodizes hyperbolically, and, as in Byron’s account, the objects of his praise are spatially and temporally distant. Titmarsh, though staunchly nationalist in his choice to exoticize his homeland, proves equally inauthentic.

Beyond the scope of Titmarsh’s enlightened retrospection, Thackeray reveals both British perspectives—the orientalist and the nationalist—are irrelevant because each exists only in the subject’s mind in direct contrast to what is materially present. Thus Titmarsh, a self-aware antitourist deliberately trying to resist hackneyed impressions, still merely fills in the blanks of a trite generic structure—one that is so persistent it governs diverse foreign exchanges. When Titmarsh describes a “night scene” at Cairo, for instance, “very striking for its vastness and loneliness,” he demonstrates the dominant travel aesthetic whereby travelers enact their literary models (291). As at Gibraltar, in Cairo, the inescapable living present intrudes into the picturesque: “As you pass the madhouse, there is one poor fellow still talking to the moon—no sleep for him” (292). Yet Titmarsh resolves the madman into his determined romanticization of Cairo, claiming, “He howls and sings there all night—quite cheerfully, however … [H]e is a Prince in spite of the bars and the straw” (292). Just like Titmarsh, this “poor fellow” demonstrates a truly powerful imagination that can replace the material present; just like this madman, Titmarsh, too, is awake and “still talking to the moon … quite cheerfully.” Lougy
identifies Titmarsh completely with Thackeray, asserts this “image of the mad ‘Prince’
singing happily … stands in sharp and expressive contrast to Thackeray’s own voice,
eminently sane and exceedingly lonely, born of separation or isolation and telling a story
that remains singularly free of celebration or of song” (77). However, the explicit
mention of the “bars and the straw” in Titmarsh’s story signals Thackeray’s distance
from his narrator and aligns Titmarsh’s description with the madman’s song. Titmarsh
cannot comment retrospectively on this scene because he never perceives his own illogic.

In mocking his fellow Britons abroad, Titmarsh falls into the very trap he
uncovers. In fact, any attempt at composition in the celebrated sites of Western culture is
sacrilege to the point of absurdity. Satire emerges as the only recourse for the travel
writer within an imperial network that superimposes its own cultural heritage onto
concrete foreign spaces. British informal empire, in other words, gains authority in these
overdetermined but not colonized places through the tradition of writing, reading, and
thinking about them according to a strict standard. Titmarsh demonstrates the complex
spatial breadth and temporal depth of this network through his description of the traveling
party at the bay of Glaucus. He begins by parodying his stock English friend, “Jones,” a
parody that gives way to ludicrous transports:

O, Jones! friend of my heart! would you not like to be a white-robed Greek,
lolling languidly on the cool beaches here, and pouring compliments (in the
Ionian dialect) into the rosy ears of Neæra? Instead of Jones, your name should be
Ionides … Yonder, in the mountain, they would carve a Doric cave temple, to
receive your urn when all was done … The caves of the dead are empty now,
however, and their place knows them not any more among the festal haunts of the
living. But, by way of supplying the choric melodies, sung here in old time, one
of our companions mounted on the scene and spouted,

“My name is Norval.” (159–60)

Titmarsh mocks the traveler’s reveries steeped in classical lore, contrasting his hyperbolic
fantasies with his nameless companion’s clichéd recitation. Essentially, “My name is
Norval”—an oft-cited reference to John Home’s tragedy _Douglas_ (1756) and connoting,
in the nineteenth century, schoolroom memorization—epitomizes his companion’s
literary effluence. He effectively transforms this landscape of mythological grandeur into
a domestic space appropriate to sitting room recitation, with the imperialist traveler
performing the role of schoolboy. The recitation comically falls flat as Titmarsh both
ridicules and enacts a longstanding tradition wherein Greece serves English travelers as a
poetic catalyst. Titmarsh reveals the absurdity of British cultural claims to Greece by
dramatizing them in a present Greece rather than filling this section with effusions of rote
poetry, as the would-be Norval does so ineffectually. The _Douglas_ recitation’s artistic
impotence, as well as its speaker’s inability to grasp his own irrelevance in this
overdetermined landscape, amuses; however, Titmarsh’s commentary cannot avoid
participating in this performance. He can perceive the situation as absurd, but, in telling
his joke, he, too, cannot escape spouting self-important words for the domestic
amusements of Jones’s sitting room.

The necessity for this satire’s indeterminacy becomes clearer when we consider
the cultural sanctity of Mediterranean landscapes in nineteenth-century travel writing—a
genre that is both the market for Thackeray’s “Eastern book” and at least partially the object of his scorn. Athens inspires Titmarsh to denounce the “public gods” openly, but the Holy Land—and the sacred traditions through which Britons imagine it—proves a more complicated landscape when juxtaposed with contemporary Levantine geography. Eitan Bar-Yosef argues, that “[a]s a metaphor, the ‘Holy Land’ was much more accessible, and endlessly more useful, than the geographical place itself” (45).

Representing Jerusalem according to popular standards, for example, becomes exceedingly difficult when one is “on the spot” in Jerusalem. But Thackeray’s technique of layering competing yet equally absurd subjective impressions in revered space falters in Jerusalem, which proves too sacred, and thus too dangerous, for even his genre-mediated satire. Thackeray confesses in a letter to his mother on 26 July 1845, “I have only just found time to finish my book … But I am gravelled with Jerusalem, not wishing to offend the public by a needless exhibition of heterodoxy: nor daring to be a hypocrite.”¹²⁹ A week later, he again writes to her: “I’m sure your advice is quite right—I’m not going to preach heterodoxy: I can’t be hypocritical however, w⁰ surely is a much greater sin against God. We don’t know what orthodoxy is indeed. Your orthodoxy is not your neighbour’s—Your opinion is personal to you as much as your eyes or your nose or the tone of your voice. Objects in nature make quite a different impression upon you to what they do upon any other individual. Why be unhappy about the state of another’s opinion? … And it seems to me hence almost blasphemous: that any blind prejudiced sinful mortal being should dare to be unhappy about the belief of another.”¹³⁰ At least in this letter, Thackeray does “preach heterodoxy”; he likens diverse opinions to diverse physical characteristics and parallels subjective “belief” with subjective responses to
“[o]bjects in nature.” Despite these apologies for the chapter, however, Thackeray decides “to cancel it and begin afresh.” It would be fruitless to guess what this cancelled chapter entailed, except to note that Thackeray wrote to Chapman and Hall to request a copy of William Henry Bartlett’s *Walks around the City and Environs of Jerusalem* (1844) to “look at with the greatest care” and “fill up one or two blanks in my chapter.”

Whereas Britain’s longstanding cultural relationship with the Mediterranean influences travelers to replace what they see with a tradition detailing what they ought to see and feel, its commercial relationship requires attention to the present. However, these two perspectives—the historical and the commercial—are temporally incompatible. The historical perspective of the East demands nostalgic reverence for things past; the commercial perspective focuses on the present exchange of commodities—one in which both members of the exchange share a common moment. Thackeray tries to compromise between heterodoxy and hypocrisy by describing commerce stretching across the Mediterranean. He portrays, for instance, a shared international temporality of “the fig season” as seen from the eastern side of the Mediterranean: “[W]hile the figs and leaves are drying, large white worms crawl out of them, and swarm over the decks of the ships which carry them to Europe and to England, where small children eat them with pleasure—I mean the figs, not the worms” (88). Thackeray manipulates the uncertainties of the pronouns here, flavoring Titmarsh’s figs with repulsion, and yet it is this commercial exchange that generates present East-West interaction. In fact, the shared fig season, if it is to succeed, requires participants to inhabit a shared time and space, regardless of the traditions that might insist there is something to fight for in maintaining
a particular historicized perspective. In other words, to co-inhabit a moment like the fig season—necessary for exchange—requires temporal coexistence.

England might participate in the agricultural temporality peculiar to Smyrna by getting figs, but a trip to the place of origin disabuses the Westerner of the East for which he regards the fig as metonymy. Thackeray illustrates the contradiction between an East that is figured as the West’s living past and an East that provides for the West’s present consumption. The rhetorical confusion of worms and figs signals Titmarsh’s incapacity to control language completely when confronted with the reality of worms. He cannot resolve the grotesque truth of the worm with the ideal of the fig, but to neglect this truth is to embrace a state of mystification. The implied bigger picture is how British control of the sea and the shipping industry has produced a situation in which “small children” in England participate with the East in a shared present, an international “fig season” abstracted and perfected from the “large white worms” that the producers know and accept as part of the truth of figs—a figgy “mere physical beauty” that they cannot comprehend. Thackeray stabilizes the moment here—“the fig season”—so that Titmarsh can project his imaginative powers westward, describing a different perspective on the same agricultural moment.

Even the figs remaining in the East are snatched up by Western travelers in pursuit of the experience they imagine to be authentic. But the expanse of the market, made possible by the speed of travel, that brings masses of tourists to Smyrna in search of the Holy Land (and the estimable fig) undercuts the authenticity of the material place. “Is it not hard to think,” Titmarsh asks, “that silks bought of a man in a lamb’s-wool cap, in a caravanserai, brought thither on the backs of camels, should have been manufactured
after all at Lyons? Others of our party bought carpets, for which the town is famous; and there was one who absolutely laid in a stock of real Smyrna figs … so strong was his passion for the genuine article” (90–1). Thackeray, though, already has undermined any sense of the “real” East for which this “genuine article” stands as physical evidence and has illustrated how the same figs one gets in the East are consumed in England. The “genuine article,” which can only be procured locally, is not unique in substance, but it allows the purchaser to recast the East as a kind of living past, outside the West’s present—a perspective incompatible with the shared temporality of international commerce. 

Titmarsh’s satire of the inauthenticity within what is labeled as genuine culminates in “Grand Cairo.” At Cairo, Titmarsh acknowledges Britain’s ludicrous engagement with the East, specifically juxtaposing the absurd and the aesthetic: “We were acting a farce, with the Pyramids for the scene. There they rose up enormous under our eyes, and the most absurd, trivial things were going on under their shadow. The sublime had disappeared, vast as they were” (296). Even the pyramids have been stripped of their claim to sublimity by the literary travel apparatus. Titmarsh finds it impossible once he arrives at “Grand Cairo” to maintain his romantic notion of Egypt’s sublimity—not because of the material destination but because of how the travel mechanism insists he engage with it. He describes each traveler being bundled up the pyramids and then triumphantly back down: “He can say now and for ever, he has been up the Pyramid. There is nothing sublime in it” (297). The thrill for each tourist is clearly in telling the story later when each of the party is far enough away temporally and spatially to rekindle an aura of sublimity around this event. The thrill has little to do with the location itself
and much to do with the traveler’s reenactment of the long-imagined travel sequence. But Titmarsh, although he does tell the tale, still insists, “The ascent is not the least romantic, or difficult, or sublime … And this is all you have to tell about the Pyramids? O! for shame! … Try, man, and build up a monument of words as lofty as they are—they, whom … the flight of ages, have not been able to destroy!—No: be that work for great geniuses, great painters, great poets! This quill was never made to take such flights” (298). Thackeray’s account of the “ascent” refuses to conform to the accepted formal characteristics of British travel writers. Egypt is compelling but only in Titmarsh’s memory insofar as he can imagine away what is actually there. In fact, he argues that one in search of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s impressions of the East—by far superior to any existing Eastern destination—would do better to stay home and read Shelley (293).

Whereas Titmarsh demurs to render the landmarks more absurd, Thackeray’s *Punch* essays revel in this absurdity. “Punch at the Pyramids,” published 1 February 1845, satirizes a sublime account that specifically acknowledges the traveler’s equation of his own experience with shared historical events. Here, *Punch*’s fat contributor (a “great genius” foolish enough to be worthy of the descriptive task) reorients the pyramids—ancient landmarks of international significance—to celebrate the triumph of levity. The work begins with a comically hyperbolic chronicling:

The 19th day of October, 1844 (the seventh day of the month Hudjmudj, and the 1229th year of the Mohammedan Hejira, corresponding with the 16,769th anniversary of the 48th incarnation of Veeshnoo), is a day that ought hereafter to be considered eternally famous in the climes of the East and West. I forget what
was the day of General Bonaparte’s battle of the Pyramids … But I say the 19th Day of October, 1844, is the most important era in the modern world’s history. It unites the modern with the ancient civilisation … On the 19th of October, 1844, I pasted the great placard of Punch on the Pyramid of Cheops … I wonder were there any signs or omens in London when that event occurred? Did an earthquake take place? Did Stocks or the Barometer preternaturally rise or fall? It matters little. Let it suffice that the thing has been done, and forms an event in History by the side of those other facts to which these prodigious monuments bear testimony.  

The fat contributor’s ascent brings together competing calculations of time to signify an event on of global importance. The dates support the fat contributor’s dilettante comprehension of multiple calendrical systems that might hold authority in this cosmopolitan space, although, notably, he claims ignorance of the significant event for Europe in this place (Napoleon’s battle). “Punch at the Pyramids” emphasizes that events—and the histories they make up for the cultures they orient—are subjective rather than objective. When he asks, “[W]ere there any signs or omens in London?” he facetiously mocks the self-importance of that imperial center and of the traveler who regards his own journey as an international epoch. But he also implicitly challenges the kind of directive history that controls the individual’s movements in and perspectives of traditional locales. The premise with which he begins his Punchean history—of uniting East and West, ancient and modern, in his individual summit of the pyramids—is precisely what Titmarsh attempts in Cornhill to Grand Cairo.
Cornhill to Grand Cairo extends Punch’s humor, directing it inward in self-satire and acknowledging the impossibility of regulating individual, cultural, and geopolitical exchanges according to a common set of narrative conventions. At Gibraltar, Titmarsh narrates his geopolitical reverie in conversation with traditions of chivalric romance; in Greece, he criticizes the persistent presence of Byron, Norval, and “Tooke’s Pantheon” to the exclusion of relevant modern Greek politics; in Smyrna, he weighs the authenticity of figs; at Cairo, he concedes that the English traveler cannot access sublimity at the pyramids. He thus describes foreign spaces significant to nineteenth-century geopolitics in sharp contrast to their persistent representations in the British cultural imaginary. The fraught interplay between expectation and experience across time and space forms a significant foundation to this account, in which the identity of the protagonist enables levels of ironic self-reflection that echo into broader critiques of British imperial exchange in the Mediterranean. Cornhill to Grand Cairo’s temporal forms complicate a mutually constructed, often contradictory, past and present in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the text shows how competing empires with competing sacred and historical claims interact in the same spaces. Despite its frivolity, Cornhill to Grand Cairo generates skepticism about the ideology it engenders. It reveals a system of inauthenticity and unravels the plausibility of a textual authority abroad. Thackeray does not just satirize English tourism; he also exposes the literary roots of Britain’s geopolitical perspectives and opens sacred traditions to evaluation as longstanding, but still imaginary, constructions.

Anthony Trollope’s Narrative Temporalities and the Emergence of the Middle East
The “Mediterranean” and the “Middle East” likely connote very different spaces for Westerners. But the ideological separation of spaces like Egypt from those like Greece arose only in the recent past, largely from the British Empire’s renegotiation of eastern Mediterranean relations in the nineteenth century. At the turn of the twentieth century, inclusive geographical terms for the eastern Mediterranean, such as the “Levant” and, even more capaciously, the “East”—areas teeming with historic and sacred connotations for Britain—shift in terminology to become a “Middle East.” The British Empire’s geographic boundary drawing, though, was only possible after dissociating over-determined eastern Mediterranean spaces from Western heritage. This section examines how that re-interpretive work operates through mid-nineteenth-century descriptions of travel and temporality. In particular, I analyze how *The Bertrams* re-temporalizes Palestine and Egypt to isolate distinct sections of the Levant according to how the expanding British Empire determined their value.

Trollope narratively constructs a unique geographic identity for each place by depicting how Britons experience time and history while traveling in them. For example, the narrator’s disillusionment with the Egyptian city of Alexandria in *The Bertrams* clears the space traveled of its history and, thus, dispels the reverence afforded it as a famed destination:

Oh, Alexandria! mother of sciences! once the favored seat of the earth’s learning! oh, Alexandria! beloved by the kings! It is of no use. No man who has seen the Alexandria of the present day can keep a seat on a high horse when he speaks of that most detestable of cities. How may it fitly be described? May we not say that
it has all the filth of the East, without any of that picturesque beauty with which
the East abounds; and that it has also the eternal, grasping, solemn love of lucre
which pervades our western marts, but wholly unredeemed by the society, the
science, and civilizations of the West? (556)

Trollope’s narrator depicts a division between Alexandria, the splendid ancient Egyptian
city famous in Western mythology, and Alexandria, the squalid Egyptian metropolis
present to travelers in the mid-nineteenth century. Disappointment and narrative
complaining are, of course, common tropes in travel writings—the anticipation and
suspense of journeying inevitably tend that way, as I have examined in chapters one and
two. But as I shall show, the deromanticization and dehistoricization that Trollope’s
cantankerous narrator applies to Alexandria demonstrates a disappointment that, by
shifting the viewpoint from the past to the future, can be productive for the British empire
as a way of re-appropriating formerly sacred spaces. The narrator’s disillusionment
empties the vista as seen from “a high horse,” indicates potential, and calls to Britons
specifically to develop that potential. Here, Trollope shifts the conceptual geography,
redistricting some sections of the holistic “Levant” to what will become known as the
“Middle East.”

The Levant held dual—and even competing—interests for the expanding British
Empire; it was culturally valuable as a historic space and commercially strategic as an
access point between British naval and commercial ships in the Mediterranean Sea and
British colonies in Asia. But over the course of the nineteenth century, it was also an
almost constant imperial contact zone among the Ottomans, the French, the Russians, and
the British. Scholars generally locate the emergence of the “Middle East” as a category around the turn of the twentieth century coincident with the formal British occupation of Egypt in 1882 or with World War I-era international politics and the subsequent British control of Palestine.\textsuperscript{137} My contention, however, is that the germs of this geographical shift are temporal, and that they appear in \textit{The Bertrams}, which renegotiates the region’s relationship with Western tourism. I argue that the emergence of the term “Middle East” as a rhetorical division of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt from the other Levantine countries was not a sudden geographic result of formal imperial occupation; rather, it was the long, complicated geographical effect of changing temporalization in lands that British culture had long designated as historic or sacred. \textit{The Bertrams} combines the novel’s temporal possibilities of narrative sequence with travel literature’s tropes of anticipation and remembrance. By analyzing how travel writing engages with the coherence of time and space, I work slightly outside the assumed usage boundaries of the term “Middle East” in order to evaluate its circulation as a politically charged nascent concept. I will be looking at eastern Mediterranean spaces in Trollope’s novel that, at the time of its publication, were not part of the formal British Empire but that held military and commercial value as eastern gateways and occupied important spaces in the British cultural imaginary.

Trollope contributes to this shift through \textit{The Bertrams}, in which he brings his experiences as the traveling agent of the British Empire directly to bear on the novel’s professional and domestic plots.

\textit{The Bertrams} is simultaneously a novel and a travel narrative. Trollope records in his \textit{Autobiography} that \textit{The Bertrams} “was written under very vagrant circumstances—at Alexandria, Malta, Gibraltar, Glasgow, then at sea, and at last finished in Jamaica” (109).
He describes beginning the novel while negotiating a treaty that concerned, among other things, how quickly the British mail could cross Egypt. The *Autobiography* depicts this negotiation with the Egyptian deputy Nubar Bey, who advances his case by exploiting Western stereotypes of Eastern inefficiency. “I was desirous,” Trollope says, “that the mails should be carried through Egypt in twenty-four hours, and [Nubar Bey] thought that forty-eight hours should be allowed … I made this mistake, [Nubar Bey] said,—that I supposed that a rate of travelling which would be easy and secure in England could be attained with safety in Egypt” (108). After several days’ disagreement, “[a]t last [Nubar Bey] gave way … I must confess, however, that my persistency was not the result of any courage specially personal to myself. While the matter was being debated, it had been whispered to me that the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company had conceived that forty-eight hours would suit the purposes of their traffic better than twenty-four … That it came from an English heart and an English hand I was always sure” (108-9). Trollope demonstrates British intra-imperial powers negotiating through native agents, who deploy established cultural connotations for political and economic ends. When *The Bertrams* explores how British culture imagines the East geographically and historically, it does so with an awareness of how those cultural representations can affect politics and commerce. British presence and British progress in the eastern Mediterranean, Trollope’s novel illustrates, intertwine with British history and culture, dictating how travelers behave and write about their experiences in these lands. Though Jerusalem, Cairo, and Alexandria hold significance in Western narratives of modernization, *The Bertrams* ultimately produces a different use for each by narrating how traveling Britons relate to these spaces temporally.
Much of the novel isolates the characters in stereotypically English spaces (Oxford, London, the manor house, the country parsonage); the travel sections, by contrast, depict eastern Mediterranean tours in which the characters try out various temporal perspectives. The narrator categorizes these Levantine geographies according to specific sub-regions based on each place’s utility to the expanding British Empire: the sacred, historical Jerusalem is for past-looking zealots and individual religious awakenings; the charmingly exotic, aesthetic, and quaintly antique Cairo is for present-focused leisure travelers and convalescents; and Alexandria, the deteriorating urban space that desperately needs British remodeling, is for innovative imperialists. By shifting the focus away from Alexandria’s legendary past, the novel re-appropriates the formerly sacred space that, in its deterioration, appears in the novel as a site for development. Ilham Khuri-Makdisi points out that Alexandria’s booming cosmopolitanism in the nineteenth century sparked concern because it was a specifically “working-class cosmopolitanism,” and she shows how the city’s strategic location garnered imperial attention as well because it functioned as a hub of radicalism (161). The same infrastructure that made the port city transnationally relevant in the nineteenth century also lent itself to the circulation of anti-imperialist ideas and to the mobility of migrant workers. Alexandria, Trollope argues, is overcome by a Western “love of lucre” but lacks the moral guidance of Western culture. It differs from the cultural and historical repositories of Jerusalem and Cairo—and so requires reconceptualization.

Through Trollope’s novel, I argue, we can examine Egypt’s and the Holy Land’s geographic and temporal connotations in the British cultural imaginary and register how they fluctuated according to geopolitics in the context of the Mediterranean as a
contiguous space. *The Bertrams* not only integrates travel writing and fiction but also, to use Lauren M. E. Goodlad’s phrase describing realist fiction, “operates as an enlivening geopolitical aesthetic” (66). In the eastern Mediterranean, the rhetoric of travel intersects with the rhetoric of empire as both emerge from and jostle with British narratives of cultural superiority. Through Trollope, we can analyze the slow conceptual work abroad and at home that uses temporality to redistrict the Levant into sections of holy antiquity (such as Jerusalem) and sections of historically empty proto-modernity in need of British development (such as Alexandria). Many have documented how Egypt became an important imperial stage for Britain after formal occupation in 1882. I am arguing that we look at the less formal cultural work of shifting the dominant timescape in this space so that Britain could use it in ways that were not possible in Palestine, for instance, until the twentieth century.¹⁴¹ Trollope performs this ideological work of empire by integrating travel narratives of these sites into his novel and linking them to a story that is otherwise very English.

In *The Bertrams*, we can see the beginning of the geographic concept that will culminate in the “Middle East,” a term popular in Britain around the turn of the twentieth century. According to the OED, “Middle East” indicates “The area extending from Egypt to Iran … an area perceived as lying between the Near East and the Far East.” This is a somewhat misleading definition since the Middle East does not fall between the geographical Near East (the eastern Mediterranean) and Far East; instead, the “Middle East” as a term arises as a way to define the same space of the Near East differently from the Mediterranean region as more distanced from the West and regionally coterminous with the East.¹⁴² Eyal Zisser describes how “[t]he term ‘Middle East,’ or more precisely,
‘Near East,’ originated in London and in British strategic thinking of the nineteenth century” (135). The geographical terminology designating the Holy Land had long been nebulous—Eitan Bar-Yosef notes that “Holy Land,” “Palestine,” and “Syria” were fairly interchangeable in Britain during the nineteenth century because they referred to “a land whose boundaries were not so much geographical as emotional” (17). The term “Levant,” conversely, could depict the geographical space of the eastern Mediterranean without necessarily implying specifically or exclusively sacred geography, antique lands, or political boundaries (which, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, constantly fluctuated).143 But it also included some spaces regarded by authors like Trollope as European, as well as the Holy Land.144 The term “Middle East,” though, shifts much of that same space eastward ideologically, severing Syria and Palestine, for example, from the Mediterranean world and suturing them to an Orient divided by abstract distances from the west (“Near East,” “Far East”). Moreover, “Levant” implied a regional connection between Greece and the Mediterranean islands with the Ottoman-ruled countries of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine; “Middle East,” however, rhetorically divided the Christian lands under European rule from their Muslim neighbors.145

The Holy Land certainly represented an excessively textualized, over-determined space. As Bar-Yosef argues, though, “[T]he same elements which made the Holy Land so familiar also complicated its construction as a ‘colonizable’ space” (92). The Bertrams illustrates how certain spaces, such as the religious sites in Palestine, cannot be de-historicized, despite proofs of their inauthenticity or the irreverence of leisure travelers whose present bodily desires inevitably conquer their capacities for higher contemplation. The narrator indicates that places one wishes to keep sacred should remain at a distance,
that contact inevitably profanes. Trollope’s representation of Palestine as an uncolonizable space, of course, did not hold true indefinitely. But as Simon Goldhill argues, eventual colonization in Palestine had to be justified by ostensible concerns with biblical antiquities: “From the 1840s until the First World War, Jerusalem became a microcosm of European diplomatic tensions . . . The search for biblical truth remained a powerful motivation, but discovering the biblical past functioned as a demonstration of a heritage, which became a claim of justified possession” (81). Trollope depicts an irresolvable contradiction for travelers who want to see the Bible mapped out before them but who are constantly stymied by the details of present life or the concerns of present bodies. In the Holy Land, then, the traveler’s best hope is to find a natural landscape, such as the Mount of Olives, and fill the scene imaginatively with historical figures. For a more lucrative landscape, he shifts focus to destinations that are not held so sacred by Westerners—places that seem to need British governance and that might offer the Empire a tangible repayment to offset the economic decline of the landed aristocracy at home.\textsuperscript{146}

Whereas Trollope separates the Holy Land from the Levant as a distinct sacred place of pastness, he designates Egypt as the necessary conduit of British expansion. \textit{The Bertrams’}’s Egypt is an exoticized space certainly—and even, in Cairo, an ancient one—but it is not sacred. Alexandria and Suez connect the British navy to its Indian colonies (557). Trollope’s Alexandria represents an early British instantiation of a Middle East—a geography crafted for British imperial and commercial interests.\textsuperscript{147} Egypt is figured as ripe for improvement and travelers here can imagine the progress that might result from steadily working toward a future-oriented cause rather than fruitlessly pining for an idealized antiquity.
The Bertrams’s depiction of Alexandria thus shifts the temporal perspective through which Westerners understand the city. The formal function of the narrative’s time extends beyond the text, engaging ongoing geopolitics. Because the narrator sees “the Alexandria of the present day,” the city is focalized, or rendered visible, through his present perspective. The way that perspectives, or “focalizations,” shade narrative will be my focus here, in particular how differing temporalities can shift the way the world appears. Temporal focalization sorts the details that make up a story or history and casts them more cohesively around a central idea that can either reinforce or challenge a place’s identity. Constructions of focalization in Trollope’s novel depend on time elements that describe both the focalizer and the landscape she or he perceives. The temporal perspective through which the characters or narrator see the same space determines where that character’s gaze is fixed temporally—is she or he prophetic and anticipatory? Nostalgic? Temporally myopic? Different temporal focalizations powerfully recast the narrative and shift interpretations of content. Because The Bertrams is a novel, its narrator can vocalize these flexible temporal focalizations; he can comment on discrepancies, redirect or project disenchantment, and even assign differing perspectives to different characters to highlight contrast. For example, in one of the domestic sections of the novel, the narrator describes a perspectival shift in how the promising young barrister Henry Harcourt evaluates his fiancé Caroline, seeing her “[n]ot exactly with his present eyesight” but “with the eyesight of his memory” (431). Harcourt’s past-centric focalization refigures how he sees Caroline and, in fact, paints his own mental construction over her present figure. This same type of focalization, wherein memory or anticipation occludes the present, heightens the novel’s geopolitical stakes
when transported to international locales of cultural significance—a scale shift the novel achieves by incorporating sustained sections of travel writing.

Trollope revises eastern Mediterranean spaces by shifting how his characters organize their travel experiences according to different temporal priorities. Travel, especially, brings individuals into spaces where their expectations collide with their actual experiences and where their actual experiences are colored by how they anticipate remembering their journeys. Anticipation involves forward thinking but the anticipation of remembering indicates a yearning to achieve the state of retrospective wisdom and accomplishment that I examined in Thackeray’s travel writing. Mieke Bal writes that “[m]astering, looking from above, dividing up and controlling is an approach to space that ignores time as well as the density of its lived-in quality” (147). However, she says, “Memory is an act of ‘vision’ of the past but, as an act, situated in the present of the memory … Memory is also the joint between time and space” (147). As Trollope illustrates, the eastern Mediterranean was problematically a space of memory in the British cultural imaginary and simultaneously a space in need of “[m]astering.” The cultural weight of these landscapes, therefore, required a nuanced strategy of re-imagining before they could be emptied of history. In Trollope’s novel, geographic labeling defines the space by focalizing it through a specific temporal perspective. This is a kind of proto-colonization, an imperializing of history and a narrative antecedent to the formal and/or informal control of space. By putting the “mastering” effect of narrative focalization into an imperial political context, its temporal function becomes clearer. In some places, such as the eastern Mediterranean, I would argue that “[m]astering” is not possible by “ignor[ing] time” because, as Trollope demonstrates, the “density of its lived-
in quality” intertwines with the history of the would-be masters. Only through a shift in
temporal focalization can the space be re-districted and subsequently controlled. This, I
argue, is what The Bertrams’s travel sections orchestrate.

The boundaries between fiction and nonfiction in The Bertrams are porous,
which, given the novel’s sweep, allows the author to experiment with telling the past,
present, and future through a rich variety of temporal orientations. The Bertrams’s
temporal and spatial settings orient the story and provide a nonfiction scaffold for the
fictional plot.149 As a novel, though, The Bertrams is both representative of and distinct
from Trollope’s other fiction. It is a close historical retrospection set in the 1840s and,
like many of Trollope’s novels, oriented through English political history, dating itself
most concretely around the 1846 repeal of the Corn Laws. However, unlike many of
Trollope’s other novels, its accounts of eastern Mediterranean travel also situate that
English political history firmly within a global context.150 Goodlad identifies in
Trollope’s works a “two-part foreign policy discourse,” consisting of the novels’
“rootedness” and the travel writings’ “cosmopolitanism” (67, 68). Whereas Goodlad
positions these genres alongside (but separate from) one another, I want to consider
Trollope’s rare overlap of travel and domestic writing in The Bertrams, particularly
because the story takes place in the 1840s, at a watershed moment for free trade in
Britain. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins’s economic history details this moment, showing
how global commerce, imperialism, and aristocratic ethos converge through free trade
into a “gentlemanly capitalism” that structures the relationship between the City of
London and Britain’s informal empire in the eastern Mediterranean (1:125 and 104).
Trollope links the aristocracy plot to a new imperial schematic wherein the landed gentry
can no longer sustain an insular prosperity but require capital and occupations outside their ancestral manors. Travel thus appears generative and symbiotic, as younger sons or nephews in need of professions expand the British Empire martially and commercially to increase wealth at home while justifying their endeavors in places like Alexandria through narratives of modernization.

_The Bertrams_ depicts two journeys to the eastern Mediterranean that are nevertheless very different. In the first, young George Bertram, fresh from success at Oxford, voyages to the Holy Land to meet his long-absent father, the military man Sir Lionel. While in Jerusalem, George moves through the sacred landscape with a cohort of fellow English tourists, among them, the enchanting Caroline and the indomitable spinster socialite Miss Todd. In the second trip, George accompanies his convalescent friend, Arthur Wilkinson, to pass the winter in Egypt. These two destinations, despite their physical proximity, do not appear close in Trollope’s novel, either in the ways the characters focalize them temporally or in the ways the novel depicts their ideological and physical distances from England. Essentially, the Holy Land proves to be a space for looking back, despite George’s efforts to decide his future course while traveling there. Egypt, however, is important to the development of British global commerce. It proves more available for reinterpretation and, thus, for development. Whereas Jerusalem is a retrospective space in _The Bertrams_, Egypt is a prospective one.\(^{151}\)

Both treks, though, are momentous to the individuals whose lives intersect through George’s elderly uncle, also named George Bertram, who grows increasingly immobile in his Hadley manor. The domestic events of the novel—the marriage and inheritance plots—occupy most of the three volumes, but these plots depend on the
novel’s travel sections to set them in motion. As old Mr. Bertram sits—generally in the same room—those connected through him encounter one another abroad: young George embarks to “catch” Sir Lionel in the far reaches of the British empire, “at Teheran,” “[a]t Hong Kong,” or perhaps “at Panama”—important locations for imperial expansion in the early 1840s (42). Sir Lionel’s potential whereabouts signal the breadth of active British imperial and commercial expansion, reinforcing the internationality of British nationalism. George, however, arranges to meet his father in Jerusalem, where “nobody comes … except the pilgrims, and those who like to look after the pilgrims” (111). This is a relatively quiet location given the expanse of possible military hotbeds. Sir Lionel, ever genial as he steadily siphons a leisurely subsistence from his friends and relatives, is the ultimate consumer untethered from the landed gentry’s values or “rootedness” in Goodlad’s terminology. Military and political travelers, such as Sir Lionel, travel according to present and future concerns. They are forward-looking, their professions built on imperial expansion. Sir Lionel’s elder brother, old George Bertram, maintains his manor in a miserly fashion, oblivious to the growing necessity of transnational awareness, despite his City connections. Like his nephew, he lacks the ability to perceive the future clearly, changing his will as often as young George changes his profession. Old George scoffs at his nephew’s Near Eastern travel plans, insisting, “You’ll see more in London in three months than you will there in twelve” (85). When young George goes abroad with his father, the family’s misaligned temporal focalizations collide, resonating beyond the concerns of their individual stories. The dissonance between young George’s and Sir Lionel’s travel objectives in Jerusalem—the former looking for a British idealized past, the latter employed in affecting the future growth and strength of the British
empire—dramatizes the tension between imperial priorities and the history that largely justifies them in eastern Mediterranean spaces.

George, who builds up his hopes about the Holy Land and his father, is of course thoroughly disappointed on both counts. Many travelers who visited the Mediterranean recorded similar disappointments about what they experienced abroad. They set out in possession of a basic classical education, a sense of the Bible and its history, and a fresh knowledge of contemporary travel accounts (perhaps with a couple Murray’s guidebooks in their luggage and several lines of Romantic poetry committed to memory). But such cultural preparation for travel in and among these antique, sacred, and famous lands fostered a myth of cohesion in these travelers’ minds. Like George, they went to Cairo or to Jerusalem with an idea of each place’s unified, Western identity. What they found and what inevitably disappointed them were lands overflowing with difference. The landmarks were smaller than they had imagined and were filled with foreign people; non-picturesque decay, offensive smells, and the thoroughly modern din of everyday life constituted the traveler’s empirical experience, radically assaulting his or her conception of what ought to be here. Thus Trollope’s narrator also complains when he rails against “the Alexandria of the present day.”

Disappointment is a multifaceted temporal phenomenon that manifests differently in differently temporalized spaces. The narrator expresses George’s Holy Land disappointment as complexly temporal. The structures of disappointment here, though, are distinct from those that overcome the traveler in Egypt. In The Bertrams’s first travel section, Trollope crowds the past-tense structure and third-person narration with
George’s contrasting perspectives of Jerusalem at different points in his memory.

Remembering George’s anticipation, the narrator remarks,

George Bertram had promised himself that the moment in which he first saw Jerusalem should be one of intense mental interest; and when, riding away from the orange gardens at Jaffa, he had endeavoured to urge his Arab steed into that enduring gallop which was to carry him up to the city of the sepulchre, his heart was ready to melt into ecstatic pathos as soon as that gallop should have been achieved. But the time for ecstatic pathos had altogether passed away before he rode in at that portal. He was then swearing vehemently at his floundering jade. (90, emphasis added)

The narrative’s acrobatics with tense structure here characterize the space as inherently historic but disappointingly marked by modernity. Beginning from the narrator’s present, this section reaches back to when George imagined entering Jerusalem. His “heart was ready to melt … as soon as that gallop should have been achieved,” anticipating a cohesive “moment” that will occur once the more immediate imagined future (the gallop) is in the past. However, “the time for ecstatic pathos had altogether passed away before he rode in”; George’s anticipation of a triumphant gallop crescendoing to a final moment of suspense at the instant of arrival is dashed by the physical trial of the actual journey. Instead, George asks, “Is this a street?” (90), inquiring after the indefinite identity of the noun rather than the specific detail of the location, and indicating a shift in his priorities from arriving triumphantly at a particular holy destination to a present commentary on
the practical inadequacy of his movement through that space. The narrator answers George’s question for the reader, reiterating the protagonist’s romanticized intentions: “It was the main street in Jerusalem. The first, or among the first in grandeur of those sacred ways which he had intended hardly to venture to pass with shoes on his feet” (90). The temporal structure here contrasts George’s present reality sharply with the narrative he hoped to have told, and despite his grand intentions, he succumbs to his individual, present discomforts.

Much of George’s disappointment arises from the irresolvable tension between an imagined grand past and a lived banal present. Try as he might, he can neither isolate nor harmonize these dual temporal planes in this space. The intention of aligning his personal entrance with the grandeur of Western tradition inevitably fails. George does not arrive triumphantly but overcome by the physical journey to the extent that even the narrator shifts from his past-tense tale to a conditional future and finally to a present-tense intrusion. From somewhere in the future, the narrator intervenes to play tour guide, insisting that present concerns cannot be sacrificed to noble history; indeed, he explains, “Our finer emotions should always be encouraged with a stomach moderately full … At Jerusalem, as elsewhere, these after all are the traveller’s first main questions. When is the table d’hôte? Where is the cathedral? At what hour does the train start tomorrow morning? It will be some years yet, but not very many, before the latter question is asked at Jerusalem” (90-1). Travel brings into focus daily rhythms that can pass largely unnoticed in domestic space. But away from home what had been habitual and thoughtless easily escalates into crisis. In a whirlwind of temporalities, the narrator moves from George’s past imaginations of how he will eventually tell the experience he
hasn’t yet had, to a past-tense narration of disappointed memory, to a conditional future to the narrator’s present, to a future-tense anticipation of a time span—“some years yet, but not very many”—that sounds specific but cannot be quantified because it exceeds even the narrator’s temporal omniscience.\textsuperscript{154} The scene is temporally dizzying.

Like the narrator when he speaks of Alexandria, George, who expects to ride into this place of his memory and imagination in a triumph of recognition, cannot, as the narrator says of Alexandria, “keep a seat on a high horse.” He finds himself disoriented, clinging to a Turkish saddle while his “floundering jade” limps through a strange, dirty, crowded lane. After his initial two days in Jerusalem, George resolves his disappointments into complaints against inauthenticity. He tells Sir Lionel, “I would not mind the dirt if the place were but true” (111). In fact, the dirt is real, and because it is real, it cannot align with what he believes is “true.” On a material level, the dirt testifies that George is not in the Jerusalem of his imagination. This dirt, bespeaking ongoing modern life in a place his mind had conceived as ancient forces him into the uncomfortable realization that, perhaps, the idea is not true. At the level of intimacy with which George must engage the city, the details of dirt offend him. Because of his proximity to the current place, his ideas of it as sacred cannot hold up. They require distance from the contradictory material. Nostalgia, George demonstrates, is incompatible with access, while the narrator shows us that progress is incompatible with nostalgia.

Disappointment is especially keen in lands that travelers know intimately as idealized concepts before they confront the physical places. But for lands considered sacred, disappointment had to be expressed carefully to navigate sacrilege. Any questionable use of eastern Mediterranean space risked condemnation unless it could be
separated ideologically from sacred associations. This is precisely the fate Trollope writes for George, who returns to England disillusioned and publishes tracts that result in his censure from the “orthodox quarters” at Oxford (269, 282). When George goes to the Holy Land, he goes with a predetermined expectation of what he will see in what he considers an originary religious place, but he is perplexed to find competing traditions crowding the surface of this antique land. To navigate disappointment here, the descriptions of the landscape are also textually deep: Trollope superimposes biblical accounts of the landscape onto his text’s depictions of 1840s Jerusalem so that the novel participates in what Coleman describes in travel accounts as “a certain kind of looking, which revitalised a sense of being part of the biblical narrative whilst editing out the inappropriate and the dissonant” (335). The Bertrams’s narrative descriptions, although not marked by a specific character’s point of view, are focalized through a Christian, past-centric perspective. The narrator takes over as tour guide almost imperceptibly at first. George, sitting on the Mount of Olives, reflects on the sanctity of the landscape below him. The very next paragraph begins,

'Twas here that Jesus “sat upon the mount, over against the temple.” There is no possibility of mistaking the place. “And as he went, one of the disciples saith unto him, ‘Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.’ And Jesus answering, said unto him, ‘Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.’” There are the stones, the very stones, thrown down indeed from the temple, but now standing erect as a wall, supporting Omar’s mosque. (105)
This palimpsest of biblical quotation and narrative mapping could easily be a moment of free indirect discourse, focalizing the view through George’s perspective. However, the narrator continues, “‘And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.’ Yes, walk up from Bethany, my reader, and thou, too, shalt behold it, even yet; a matter to be wept over, even now” (105). The direct appeal to “my reader” is clearly not spoken through George’s mind but the narrator’s, directing us “now” to see the space’s Christian history in defiance of a Muslim present. As Buzard points out, Trollope’s travel writing generally “stands opposed” to “proto-ethnographic” accounts wherein “divergence in custom (naturally?) exerts a magnetic force on the visitor’s attention” (7). George is not interested in exoticizing the foreign as he does later in Cairo. Here, the focus is on trying to realign the material space to fit the preconceived notion of what it ought to be, to sit on the mount and see the Bible mapped out below rather than the foreign life that actually fills the space.

Imperially significant and historically significant landscapes converge in the eastern Mediterranean; disentangling conflicting interpretations requires an imaginative exploration of what each space affords the British Empire. Cain and Hopkins lay out the economic motives for British imperialism in the Middle East, noting idiosyncrasies in foreign policy; I am arguing that the nineteenth-century British motives for informal control of eastern Mediterranean spaces were not all economic. Places like Jerusalem held a cultural relevance that generated a tourist economy that was not necessarily compatible with British interests in port cities like Alexandria. The Bertrams imagines the value of the sacred landscape according to a cultural framework that it declares no
longer valid in Egypt. Coleman argues, “The Holy Land is ... a land whose history is deeply implicated with that of the West ... The confidence of imperialist gaze—and one in which many of the local inhabitants are ignored or seen as debased in relation to biblical times—is disturbed, distorted ... by the imagined agency of a figure who inhabits the twin landscapes of both memory and belief” (338). This is the perspective *The Bertrams* portrays through both George and the narrator, with the touristic descriptions laid over New Testament quotations.

Details can be problematic in such a culturally invested place, especially for a transcendental traveler like George. Only when he leaves the city and ascends the mount alone can he imagine the Jerusalem he wants to see, unencumbered by the material details that disrupt his nostalgia or by the contradictory commentaries of his compatriots. From his seat on the mount, George is not even burdened by the narrator’s pathos regarding the Muslim presence in the city. He can see Jerusalem properly distanced; the intervening space hides the offending material details of present Palestinian life, and this abstraction allows him a sense of authenticity. Unlike the contested holy landmarks in the city, “There is no doubting there ... whether, in real truth, that was the hill over which Jesus walked” (101, emphasis mine). On the mount, the material space finally aligns with George’s pre-imagined idea of it. The natural landscape—and the mountains in particular—serves as a historical landmark in a way that the holy places of the city, immersed in all the religious and political fluctuations of humanity from biblical times to the nineteenth century, simply cannot. The longer George remains in the city, the more his disappointment weighs on him. However, when he gets beyond the city walls on the mount, mapping out the physical landscape in accordance to biblical history, he muses,
“These places are there, now as they were in his day, very credible—nay, more, impossible not to be believed. These are the true holy places of Jerusalem” (102). He determines authenticity by how closely the landscape mirrors his memory and imagination. The physical topography indefinitely attests to the sanctity of this place no matter how modern life overcomes the city itself. On the mount, George finds the space he had long imagined manifest concretely before him in “the very stones themselves,” but he also experiences a brief sense of temporal omniscience (103). From his present seat, he imagines the landscape’s past and, through the lens of nostalgia, tries to understand his own future. Past, present, and future seem to him temporarily coexistent, but only insofar as they coalesce in his individual person—he cannot, as the narrator does, perceive the area’s shifting potential on the broader scale of imperial expansion.

For travelers like George, the disillusionment reveals that it is precisely the geographical distance that has kept this land holy in the Western imagination. Travel can shift the temporal focalization of the antique space from the historical (which is necessarily broad) to the present (which is more limited—even to the travelers themselves). The Holy Land as a “Western metaphor” conflicts in the novel with banal present desires (such as eating, drinking, and flirting). This is dramatized more explicitly when the travelers gather, at the behest of the amiable Miss Todd, for a picnic on the tomb of St. James (142). In a space that draws these travelers specifically because it is of historical import—and so should inspire solemn retrospection and high feelings—the travelers neglect the historical for the present concerns of their repast. “I declare, these tombs are very nice tables, are they not?” asks Miss Todd, “Only, I suppose it’s very improper” (145). Miss Todd’s worry about impropriety even in passing suggests the
ultimate unavailability of this landscape for any large-scale “re-contextualisation,” to use Coleman’s term, as a space that can be reclaimed completely for present use (333). Even Miss Todd feels she has neglected due reverence when the picnic party escalates. The narrator agrees, “Here, in England, one would hardly inaugurate a picnic to Kensal Green, or the Highgate Cemetery, nor select the tombs of our departed great ones as a shelter under which to draw one’s corks” (127). He both explains Miss Todd’s hesitation and indicates her irreverence by transposing domestic rules onto foreign space because it is foreign space held sacred by domestic readers. The height of the narrator’s critique, though, comes through his description of the party’s exact location:

It has been said that the hampers were to be sent to the tomb of Zachariah; but they agreed to dine immediately opposite to that of St. James the Less. This is situated in the middle of the valley of Jehoshaphat, in the centre of myriads of Jewish tombs, directly opposite to the wall built with those huge temple stones, not many feet over the then dry water-course of the brook Cedron. Such was the spot chosen by Miss Todd for her cold chickens and champagne. (142)

The indictment of the British tourists’ behavior is apparent in this last line. However, the criticism in “[s]uch was the spot” has stakes beyond shaming Miss Todd and company for their frivolity; simply by listing the place names in detail, Trollope calls up sacred associations for his readers. These are places whose names alone can elicit a reverence that condemns the picnickers. The excess of present detail within the ancient space that
overwhelms George comes with an inverse problem for Miss Todd: an excess of ancient detail that overwhelms present- and future-oriented focalizers.

*The Bertrams* indicates that Jerusalem, at least, cannot be divested of its metaphorical baggage in British culture, but Trollope also illustrates a tension between reverence and the tourism that religious devotion and its attendant traditions of pilgrimage have inspired. As George traverses the city, the narrator lists the famous place names so that “[h]ence to his hotel every footstep was over ground sacred in some sense, but now desecrated by traditionary falsehoods … all but blasphemous. Some will say quite so. But, nevertheless, in passing by this way … forget not to mount to the top of Pilate’s house. It is now a Turkish barrack; whether it ever were Pilate’s house, or, rather, whether it stands on what was ever the site of Pilate’s house or no” (107-8). The narrator equivocates because he cannot say for certain which is more “blasphemous” in Jerusalem: to believe in sacred locales and “traditionary falsehoods” or to expose the sham. Rather than moralizing and risking heterodoxy, this narrator focuses on what will happen here: no matter how one feels about this space, religious tourism has claimed it and will win out, as it does here when the narrator deflects his commentary on the landmarks’ inauthenticity into a tour-guide moment, taking the reader “nevertheless” atop “Pilate’s house.” Religious tourism, although thoroughly acknowledged to be inauthentic in the city, triumphs.

Whereas in the Holy Land journey the narrator primarily focuses on the setting primarily through George’s experiences, disappointments, and reflections—contrasting them with Caroline’s and Sir Lionel’s temporal focalizations—in the Egypt journey the narrator actually takes over as protagonist for a sustained interlude to pronounce on
geopolitics in the eastern Mediterranean: “Alexandria is fast becoming a European city; but its Europeans are from Greece and the Levant! … Alexandria will become a place less detestable than at present. Fate and circumstances must Anglicize it in spite of the huge French consulate, in spite of legions of greedy Greeks; in spite even of sand, mosquitoes, bugs, and dirt, of winds from India, and of thieves from Cyprus” (556-7). These impressions display awareness of a future time, of a bigger temporal landscape beyond George’s impressions. As the narrator takes over, Trollope subtly re-maps the eastern Mediterranean space and its attendant temporalities. Alexandria is “fast becoming a European city”; it is not and has not been part of that landscape. Because he qualifies that its new “Europeans” are “from Greece and the Levant,” we can infer that he considers these regions as only an inferior part of Europe. Alexandria, though, remains distinct from all three—Greece, the Levant, and Europe. This separation of coastal Egypt from the Levant and from Europe dilutes its enduring significance to Western heritage. But the fate of this separation is a British future; as the narrator portends, “Fate and circumstances must Anglicize it.” Anglicization will triumph, despite competing imperial influences and natural deterrents.

The British tourists’ inability to overcome present discomfort and appreciate the wonder of Egypt as an antique land is, in Trollope’s novel, a legitimate critique of the space itself as in dire need of improvement. Despite his extreme disenchantment with Jerusalem, George glimpses the geography he has long desired to see. Whereas Alexandria and Suez are valuable to Britain as access points to India, Cairo holds value as a leisure space emptied of traditional gravity—a Littlebath of the East for convalescents sent to Egypt, which replaces “the south of Devonshire” as “the only air
capable of reinvigorating the English lungs” (555). Consequently, Cairo will provide what Jerusalem never quite can: a watering place, where English tourists can picnic on tombs without the least regret that they are profaning their own sacred history. Both Jerusalem and Cairo are focalized through the past (as decaying but perhaps curious heritage sites), and *The Bertrams* appraises each according to its most productive use for British travelers: the former for religious tourism, the latter for a kind of health and leisure tourism.

George’s opinions, disappointments, and failures of belief while in the Holy Land are not unique to his character; Trollopian figures in *Tales of All Countries* voice similar (and, at times, identical) opinions of the religious tourism around the eastern Mediterranean. I mention this not as a way to read Trollope’s biography onto his novel but as a way to understand an opinion that is not limited to a single fictional character, and to see the significance of the perspectival shifts and temporal focalizations in the two journeys. In the first journey, the narrator couches a critique in George’s past-centric perspective, and George is duly punished for publishing his heterodoxy at home. This is not the case on the second journey. When George goes to Egypt, the narrator can take over the description in his own dominant first-person voice, directly addressing the reader as “you” in guidebook fashion and neglecting even to mention much about the characters for half a chapter (555-61). Egypt is not—or is no longer—“holy” in the same sense, although significant to Old Testament archaeologists and historians. Cairo is, perhaps, too romanticized and orientalized to be of much use beyond leisure travel—the narrator describes it as a “beautiful old city” where nothing new is built “except on the Britannic soil” (566)—but Alexandria and Suez are depicted as lands in dire need of British
development. Moreover, by connecting London and the British navy in the Mediterranean to Persia and India, these cities hold promise geographically.

In retrospect, we can see how effective temporalization was in reconceiving eastern Mediterranean spaces even beyond Trollope’s novel. Trollope’s depiction of Cairo as an essentially ancient city, for example, is far from unique. In her study of “the precise means through which the East was figured as other,” Paula Sanders notes how, by the late nineteenth century especially, Victorians began to figure Cairo as a “medieval” space, thereby separating it from the modernity of the West (179, 188). Before anxieties about Cairo’s modernization elicited the medievalization that Sanders perceives, however, parts of the landscape had to become dissociated from their Old Testament significance and thus modernizable. This dissociation, I argue, was only possible once these lands were broken apart from one another and from the connotations inherent in the Levant—an effect Trollope achieves by re-casting each place’s temporality. *The Bertrams* thus redefines mid-nineteenth-century political space through its constructions of time.

The novel signals, chronologically, a change in how the British imaginary breaks down the Mediterranean region into more manageable sub-regions. By 1859, the British are not so much concerned with wars against the Egyptians, the Ottomans, or the Pasha, but with a technological race of massive commercial consequences, especially against the French. When Trollope writes of Alexandria that “Fate and circumstances must Anglicize it in spite of the huge French consulate,” then, he is not only prophesying but also levying a call to action in a way that wraps the time of publication, 1859, up in a hopeful future
through a story set in the past. Trollope, setting his story a decade earlier, retrospectively anticipates this commercial trend:

The P. and O. Company will yet be the lords of Egypt; either that or some other company or set of men banded together to make Egypt a highway. It is one stage on our road to the East; and the time will soon come when of all stages it will neither be the slowest nor the least comfortable. The railway from Alexandria to Suez is now all opened within ten miles; will be all opened before these pages can be printed. This railway belongs to the viceroy of Egypt; but his passengers are the Englishmen of India, and his paymaster is an English company. (557, emphasis added)

The narrator thus renders England as the ultimate master of an imperial commercial infrastructure by manipulating the temporality through which the landscape is focalized.156 Egypt is a “stage” to “the East.” It has been narratively excluded from geographies of the Holy Land, the Mediterranean, the Levant, and the East proper. It has become through the novel essentially a detached space in need of development and redefinition but connected to London’s commercial powers—in effect, if not yet in name, a Middle East.

Trollope indicates that Jerusalem will always be the Holy Land, whereas Egypt is becoming a part of the region that will be known as the Middle East, and he depicts the basis of this shift in 1840s geography. The time that it takes a traveler to move among sites changes how the distance is conceived, which, in turn, changes the traveler’s
attitudes toward a destination’s foreign value. *The Bertrams*’s narrator explains, “When a traveller in these railroad days takes leave of Florence, or Vienna, or Munich, or Lucerne, he does so without much of the bitterness of a farewell. The places are now comparatively so near that he expects to see them again” (174). Places once regarded as distant have become, through technologies such as rail and even steam, “near” to England. Indeed, for many travelers, these locations are frequent, almost prosaic stops. “But Jerusalem,” the narrator distinguishes, “is still distant from us no Sabbath-day’s journey. A man who, having seen it once, takes his leave, then sees it probably for the last time” (174-5). Even if a traveler wanted to return, this place remains so far removed from England that a visit to it qualifies as an epoch, even though the narrator predicts the railway will soon be completed from Jaffa. And it will remain conceptually distant as long as it is regarded as holy, its temporal distance recorded via the religious rhetoric of the “Sabbath-day.” The same ideology that decrees this space to be sacred seals it off from European development narratives as an antique land; the more it is distanced, the longer it remains revered.157

Trollope’s account of Jerusalem’s distance, however, does not match accounts of its increasing nearness. Traveling across the Mediterranean by steam fairly quickly instead of traversing the continent, George Bertram demonstrates that Jerusalem’s geographical distance is not what renders this Holy Land far while Egypt is close. In fact, Goldhill notes that “In 1839 Britain had been the first Western nation to have a permanent consular presence in Jerusalem … The combination of new political openness and the new steamship business brought Jerusalem into the arena of European jostling for power” (80). Steam power connects England to the Levant without requiring travelers to
cross Continental borders, creating a sense of uninhibited mobility between the Thames and the Mediterranean.158

The profound distance Trollope describes between Jerusalem and England is not a calculation of the time it takes a traveler to traverse the given space; it is a deliberate figurative divide between the modernity of England and the antiquity of Jerusalem relevant to England’s traditions. It may be useful for the individual traveler to make a pilgrimage there if she or he, like George, can imagine away the foreign material life and competing religious traditions that crowd this holy space, but it is more likely that travelers will be disillusioned and incapable of acting with due reverence, like Miss Todd. When the novel shifts its temporal focalization in Egypt, though, it illustrates a space of potential for Britain that is both ideologically distant—and becoming rhetorically more so—and temporally near. “It is of no use,” according to The Bertrams, to romanticize “the Alexandria of the present day” with its glorious ancient history. Instead, Trollope’s novel advocates a technological and political change that can only come about by severing the present landscape from its past currency in British myth. The complex negotiations of narrative temporality, then, intertwine deeply with the political efforts to divide and redefine the Levant. The historic and sacred spaces of coastal Egypt do not move, and yet they shift ideologically into the conceptual border space Britain builds between East and West.
CHAPTER 4: LIVING THE PAST IN THE TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK

As I have shown with Thackeray’s and Trollope’s depictions of the Levant, collective identity concepts like the nation, the empire, or even the West depend not only on present political actions but also on the heritage discourses that can make a place’s past matter. So far, I have primarily examined these heritage discourses through reflective genres: poetry, travel narratives, and fiction; in this final chapter, I will extend my study of heritage and geopolitics in literature and also explore guidebooks more explicitly as a genre of literature in which temporal forms attempt to organize both narrative and physical bodies moving through physical locations. As I examined in chapter three, Goodlad’s work on how foreign policy and literature can be mutually formative offers us the concept of a “Victorian geopolitical aesthetic” through which language, history, and nationality can be mutually formative. Intersecting work on imperialism explores how the British Empire produced a “network,” to use Levine’s term, that effectively stretches our concept of the social collective beyond political boundaries. Particular significance for Jane Stabler and Alison Chapman, though, is nineteenth-century Italy, which was variously ruled by the French, the Austrians, the dukes, the Pope, and various revolutionary factions. And while Italy was struggling to assert itself as a nation, Britain was riveted, eager to redefine liberty and revolution independently from French and Catholic associations.

In this chapter, I will examine Florence as a case study wherein explicit nation and heritage-making occurred in a condensed space, and I will argue that we should consider Florence as we formulate and define nationality (and nationalism) in the nineteenth century. Florence is a salient—but, especially in the Mediterranean, not a
singular—example of national identity crises playing out in a space of international historical significance. It is, in this collision of historical and political priorities, a poignant microcosm of nineteenth-century international and inter-imperial affairs. The high level of political and historical connectivity through Florence, I argue, provides a model for theorizing patterns of transnationalism and empire beyond the center-periphery dialogue. Rather than supplanting cartographical nations with spatial networks, I will develop an understanding of nineteenth-century European nation as both spatially and temporally networked. In Florence, I argue, we can see circulating persons, objects, and ideas performing the nation as a network beyond its own physical and political borders. Additionally, Florence demonstrates a corresponding temporal network through which the nation emerges by linking disparate moments across past and present.

What makes a nation? Who belongs—or does not belong? Chapman argues, “[A]lthough historians now accept that the Risorgimento movement was predicated upon community, overlooked is the fact that Italian nationhood was imagined through networks, and that the concept of the nation was inherently understood as networks with a performative power” (xxxv ). But, as Levine asks, how do we read networks of print and bodies across borders, especially when our canonical practices enforce a national reading of literature? A fluid, international network of family, friends, texts, and scholars stretched across the Mediterranean, where European imperial powers came together; this network was often at odds with the increasingly rigid political boundaries on the Continent between Italian unification and the ascendancy of nationalist movements in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Those for whom this network was home—exiles,
expatriates, and migrants—were peculiarly placed to reflect on history and nationality as mutually dependent ideas.

I will explore the theory of a networked nation and literature through Susan Horner’s anonymous *Isolina; or, The Actor’s Daughter* (1873), a novel that is biographically and thematically a story of the international network centered in Italy and especially in Florence. I will build on the idea of the spatial network to explore the temporal network, a form organizing the historical narratives through which political identity and national present life operate. I will analyze the temporal network as it manifests in two English guidebooks: Susan and Joanna Horner’s *Walks in Florence* and John Ruskin’s *Mornings in Florence*. In moving from Horner’s novel to her co-authored guidebook alongside Ruskin’s guide, I move from an ostensibly fictional text to explicitly nonfiction ones—and not only nonfiction but also a particular kind of nonfiction, the guidebook, that intends to direct the reader’s body through present physical space. The guidebook genre by nature collapses the moments of reading and experiencing (and perhaps re-reading, for eager travelers who first consume their guidebooks at home or en route), of narrating and authorship, and of history as it is told through and, presumably, on an exact spot or landmark. This collapse amplifies my discussion of *Pictures from Italy* in chapter two, in which I discuss how Dickens physically experiences history as he visits the rooms of the Inquisition at Avignon. Guidebooks, though, pull the reader into this experience as well, often directly through narrative moments like second-person address.

Victorian Florence was simultaneously the physical referent for the theoretical idea of Italy and a location of highly condensed internationalism. On the one hand,
Florence, the city of Dante, was revered as the heart of purest Italian language. The great novelist Alessandro Manzoni, for example, was not himself Tuscan but championed “the ordinary language of the educated middle classes at Florence” to the extent that he rewrote his great Italian novel, *i Promessi Sposi*, in the Tuscan dialect (qtd in Lepschy 19). Indeed, as Giulio Lepschy notes, Manzoni believed that “linguistic unity [would] … be the basis for the creation of an Italian nation-state” (19). On the other hand, Henry James called “Florentine society” “the most polyglot in the world” (qtd. in Hibbert 268).

Whatever it was in theory, in practice, the city was a space wherein nations, empires, races, and languages converged. Florence was regarded by the Victorians, both geographically and culturally, as central, the gateway between north and south and between east and west. It was the geographical link connecting what Katarina Gephardt has recently called the “European periphery”—the “polarized” sections of southern and eastern Europe—to the imperial powers of the north and west (263). It was also a space in which past and present, history and modernization collided, especially after 1865, when the newly unified Italian states moved the capital there from Turin. Even in a space both local and ideologically central, we can trace the transnational network in practice—a network that is not only spatial.

As we ask how patterns of mobility have helped shape how we divide and research literatures through space, we must also be aware of time. Susan Horner, a British author and artist, wrote of the affinity she felt for Florence’s energy, reflecting in her travel journal, “Florence is of itself so attaching—so soothing in its loveliness, and yet not the dead feeling of a country town in England—Life everywhere, in the sun, in the river, in the hills with their thousand villas—in the living present—in the living past.”

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The vibrancy of Florence extends to the past, which is not static or finished but “living” as much as the present. Through Florence, I will consider national networks, first emphasizing the spatial axis and then emphasizing the temporal, although, as will become clear, it is not possible to disentangle these forms completely. Though I see both spatial and temporal networks functioning simultaneously, I emphasize the spatial first and then the temporal because, as I explained in chapter two’s discussion of embeddedness in Pompeii, the temporal form is difficult to grasp without first establishing a spatial analog.

Florence became, between 1861 and 1871, a fulcrum for international—especially European—affairs. With the relocation of Italy’s capital from Turin to Florence in 1865, the city became a densely concentrated political community. Thus, in becoming Italian—in a formal political way—Florence paradoxically became more international. The city’s population, which had already surged to 114,000 according to the 1861 census, added between 20,000 and 30,000 “bureaucrats and office workers with their families from the north,” so that, along with improvements in the speed of transportation, “the opening up of the city and the construction of new housing became matters of extreme importance” (Hibbert 252). Conflicting with this sudden change in population and tempo was Florence’s international reputation as a small, leisurely town of religious art and history. It is fitting, then, that these abrupt changes to Florence’s pace and cityscape began with the new secular government’s demonstration of its sovereignty over time. Historian Christopher Hibbert tells the anecdote:

In the middle of the night of 15 March 1860, the minister of justice in the provisional government which had been established in Florence appeared
at a window of the Pitti Palace to make an announcement to the crowds standing expectantly in the piazza below. It was just after twelve o’clock but orders had been given to the bell-ringer not to sound his bell until the announcement … could be made, since it might be taken as a bad omen were the news to be released on a Friday. So, at a time later to be officially given as a quarter to twelve on Thursday night but in fact at five past on Friday morning, the minister began to speak. By an overwhelming majority, he declared, the people of Tuscany had voted for the unification of the former Grand Duchy with the constitutional monarchy of Victor Emmanuel II, King of Piedmont. (250)

It was the local “minister of justice,” not the pope or a foreign emperor or even the now-exiled duke who controlled both the bell and the official time record. This was the first of several changes in unified Florence.

Many lamented in retrospect the development of Florence as a bustling (even bursting) political center after unification. Repeatedly in *Mornings in Florence* (1875-77), for instance, Ruskin decries the corrupting and ruinous effects modern life has wrought on Florentine art and architecture. From the beginning, as Lucia Ducci notes, “[M]any disagreed” with the government’s move to Florence, including diplomats and Italian officials George Perkins Marsh, Ubaldino Peruzzi, and Bettino Ricasoli, because “[t]hey feared that the choice of the ancient capital of the grand duchy as seat of the government of the united Italy would profoundly change the city’s physiognomy and overshadow its centuries-old fame as a cultural and artistic center” (1). The city’s
residents, too, objected to the move, but for more practical reasons: local “[n]ewspapers … described the discomfort and discontent of the population, confronted with a complete transformation of the city’s characteristics and daily rhythms” (Ducci 1). And as Hibbert details, many locals could not afford the sharp cost-of-living increases that came with residence in a capital city short on housing (252). Here, as in the Mediterranean region more generally, was a conflict of priorities: to preserve a kind of universal Western history or to allow for modernization in service to present and future political development.

But the strategic centrality that made Florence the capital of the new Italy, in the process threatening “its fame as a cultural and artistic center,” was precisely what had made it historically an artistic center. As Ruskin himself argues, North and South regions were divided into the Dramatic and Contemplative schools of art respectively (both together being necessary for artistic development). The schools, Ruskin says, were not naturally integrated or even compatible; they would not have come together except that, he claims, “Central stood Etruscan Florence” (II). The city’s geographic situation as a border space allowed for regional arts to meet and influence one another: “You had the Etruscan stock in Florence—Christian, or at least semi-Christian; the statue of Mars still in its streets, but with its central temple still built for Baptism in the name of Christ. It was a race living by agriculture; gentle, thoughtful, and exquisitely fine in handiwork … You had then the Norman and Lombard races coming down on this: kings, and hunters—splendid in war—insatiable of action. You had the Greek and Arabian races flowing from the east, bringing with them the law of the City, and the dream of the Desert” (II).

According to Ruskin’s history, Florence’s unique artistic style was syncretic; its lauded
medieval and Renaissance art emerged as a result of the city’s transnationality and mobility, in which divergent methods and traditions clashed and then harmonized. To put it another way, art progressed specifically here precisely because it was hybrid and dynamic—the same qualities Ruskin sees and detests in nineteenth-century Florence. When he values these qualities historically, it is because he can narrate them from the temporal distance of centuries, with clarity instead of chaos, uncertainty, and inconvenience.

Art also flowed outward from Florence, and not just with the sweep of European Renaissance to the north and west—or at least, not always directly—along the trajectory Enlightenment histories describe. This disparity was not lost on Horner. In verifying material for her books, for example, she corresponded with Sir George Trevelyan, one of Gladstone’s ministers in India, to help verify a piece of Italian scholarship claiming that decorative stonework in India was of Florentine origin.163 Trevelyan writes to her, explaining, “The fruits and flowers included in these decorations leave no doubt as to their European origin, and behind the throne in the public hall of audience at Delhi … was a mosaic in this style representing Orpheus playing the violin to listening beasts. This was removed at the time of the mutiny and is now in the India Museum in London. The art is still practiced on a small scale by natives at Agra who have inherited the tradition from Florentine workmen.” This is a transnational history told through art that is institutionalized both in Delhi and in the British Museum; more importantly, it counters Enlightenment and European philosophical theories in which civilization develops from east to west. It also complicates narratives of otherness that divide cultures along political borders or locate the essence of political identity within a specific geography.
What happens to the nation when its capital is undeniably international—and not just at present but traditionally, from the point when it was first recognized as the apex of Western culture? I will consider the nation not as an entity or a stable identity but as a coincidence of multifaceted, interacting, and dynamic forms. It is both broad (spatially networked beyond national borders) and deep (temporally networked beyond the present). Florence encapsulated the temporal tensions for the British in the Mediterranean: it was highly significant as a Western heritage space, but it was also crowded, modernized, and international. In that sense, Florence presents a microcosm of the pull between heritage discourses and modernization—a rhetoric not only supporting imperial expansion outward from England but also threatening to launch social agitation at home as well. In Florence, the past and the present come together through landmarks and architecture, integrating aesthetics, history, and the political present. Ruskin has been regarded as a canonical Victorian figures; Horner, although well-known through the early twentieth century as an authority on Italian art, politics, and history, is virtually unknown within the context of Victorian writers. Horner and Ruskin helped define and standardize travel in Florence, and both used Italian travel to weave together aesthetic standards, political ideals, and transnational history. Together, they demonstrate the significance and depth of Britain’s relationship with Mediterranean places and ancient cultures; they ask how the present accesses and narrates the past, and the answers they produce generate a theory for how the traveler should perceive current affairs. And in this pull between heritage and modernization, both interrogate nationality as the point on which conflicting traditions and conflicting political interests balance.
Travel narratives attempt to map personal memories onto physical space, and Susan and Joanna Horner encourage their readers to apply this method to how they engage the city in the present as well. It is a kind of physically performed palimpsest, much like the one I read in Byron’s *Child Harold’s Pilgrimage*, except that it deliberately integrates present foreign life with the sense of the place historically. In practice, this conflation of personal and collective memory mimics how guidebooks help tourists locate “the exact spot” of historical significance and experience it personally, thus allowing the traveler a kind of reenactment or sensory experience of a famous locale. The notable difference is that the places perhaps most significant to a person who stays long enough to cultivate a habit of walking and mapping personal memory onto public space are not necessarily the places lauded in a Murrays itinerary. In a city like Florence, however, history converges onto the same space as an individual performance/experience of time (small-scale, daily rhythm)—and not just for a fleeting interaction but over a sustained period so that the individual’s time spins out, forging its own personal histories and memories in an over-historicized antique space.

Susan Horner demonstrates the convergence of the historically and individually significant when she weaves history, present life, and personal experience together in her travel journal of 1861-2. For example, she includes a pencil drawing in her entry for 1 Oct. with the caption “Porto Fino, Genoa from the Lanterna, 3 October 1861. Beyond these points—between them and Porto Fino lies the spot from whence Garibaldi and his thousand embarked for Sicily in 1860” (5). This is a preservation in her own book of a spot as she saw it and of its historical significance. But she goes further in the entry for 3 Oct: “On the opposite side of the road are the rocks from whence Garibaldi embarked for
Sicily on 5th May 1860. A single stone with a star marks the spot. We left the carriage and copied the simple inscription, and gathered a little sea plant, a sort of samphyre, almost the only thing which grows there” (5). In the next page, Horner has pressed this plant. She is making a personal account of public history, both experiencing the place and recording its historical significance overlaid with her personal experience of it. She continues on 4 Oct.: “We left Genoa, but stopped a few moments at Quarto for Papa and Mamma to see the spot from whence Garibaldi embarked.” Here, she interrupts the entry with a pencil drawing of Joanna sketching, repeating the date of the present trip. She then continues with an anecdote integrating the local into her personal present: “Just before returning to the carriage a gentleman came up to me and told me he was one of the thousand, offering at the same time to show me [h?]is medal. I shewed him the plant I had gathered to preserve as a memorial of the spot” (6). In her account, Horner adds an element of present life beyond her own to this moment, marking the significance of the local inhabitants both in public history and in personal memory. As I will show, the method she cultivates in her personal travel accounts manifests in *Walks in Florence* as well.

This journal, which narrates Horner’s second Italian journey with her father, mother, and younger sister Joanna, professes its authority as a present-tense, on-the-spot narration, but, as with published travel narratives, it was carefully curated in retrospect (likely with notes from the “notebooks” to which Horner occasionally refers). Horner indicates her omniscience over the journal’s story by indicating a knowledge of events before they occur. A striking instance of this occurs in the entry for 12 Oct., which includes a sketch of the family’s apartment in Florence, labeled in detail, down to the
placement of the furniture in the rooms and how it was used (9-10). Horner indicates not only “Mamma’s Room” but also the “long glass and chair where she dressed.” Tellingly, Horner captions the bottom of the page, “In this house we spent eight happy months ending in our greatest sorrow—and leaving a sweet but sad memory.” She refers here to her mother’s death in Florence that would occur later in May 1862.

**The Nation as Spatial Network**

Although Susan Horner (1816-1900) enjoyed a broad correspondence and popularity as an author, artist, and historian during her lifetime, she is virtually unknown today, except in scholarship (mostly historical work in Italian) on the nineteenth-century British community in Florence and its archives. Her father, the scientist and biographer Leonard Horner, was president of the Geological Society; her uncle, Francis Horner, was a politician and inspector under the Factory Act. At least twice, Leonard and Anne Horner traveled to Florence in the company of Susan and Joanna, journeys that Susan recorded in her travel diaries of 1847-8 and 1861-2. During these extended stays, Susan collected an array of political commentaries on Italy and Europe from diplomats and academics to confectioners and ribbon vendors. Many of these conversations were recorded in her travel journals; others manifest across her prolific correspondence, which spanned classes, professions, and nations. Horner was personally invested in transnational politics as a witness and as a migrant author, whose immediate family stretched across political tensions in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy and even, at times, literal battlefronts. Horner’s friendships and acquaintances stretched even more
broadly, including Hungarian and American politicians who were instrumental in shaping Horner’s career as an author.

Susan and Joanna traveled together and eventually took up residence in Florence, keeping up a diverse correspondence among prominent figures in politics, science, and the arts. Many members of Susan’s community, like herself, split their lives among countries. Some were American and European expatriates, like the Vermont-born neoclassical sculptor Hiram Powers, whose 1844 statue *The Greek Slave* resonated outward from a Florentine studio to exhibits across the U.S. and Europe (including the 1851 Great Exhibition in London). Other correspondents were bureaucrats, such as George Perkins and Caroline Crane Marsh, who had moved from Turin to Florence and then on to Rome with the capital, but who returned often to Florence. Susan herself often traveled among her relatives’ residences across Europe. When she returned home to Florence, she worked as an author and translator, but she also dedicated much of her later life to education efforts for women in Italy, working to set up schools and teacher training for women and girls without incomes. The international community in post-Risorgimento Florence was composed of many notable temporary and seasonal residents, including, as Elena Cini French remembers, a group of women who often stayed beyond the tourist season, “comprese le ragazze Horner, [Susan and Joanna], Mrs. [Caroline Crane] Marsh e la marchesa Lajatico” [“including the Horner sisters, Mrs. Marsh, and the Marquise Lajatico”], who often hosted a salon (qtd. in Panajia 41).¹⁷⁰ Susan also used the Vieuxseux, a reading room and library popular with international travelers that boasted a concentration of foreign language texts and periodicals (it also printed a sometimes-banned liberal newspaper).¹⁷¹ Horner cultivated political and historical perspectives from
her experiences traveling across Europe and from her extensive time spent in Italy, where she made a point of soliciting opinions from across classes—opinions she was not afraid to share. For example, her journal entry of February 3, 1862, records, “I had a political talk with the man serving. He said, We do not want to do away with the Pope—only he ought not to have the power of life and death.”

Horner wrote, privately circulated, and sometimes even illustrated books on a broad array of subjects (including a memoirs, a collection of literary and historical biographies, and even a *Water-Babies*-esque lyrical children’s book), but I have found no indication that she wrote and published any novels beyond *Isolina*. Together with Joanna, however, she did write a popular travel guide, *Walks in Florence*, which was popular through the turn of the twentieth century, going through several editions. In fact, Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy 11th ed.* instructs would-be tourists, “For the history and antiquities of Florence, consult that pleasant book, *Walks in Florence* by the Misses Horner” (1). As with Horner’s earlier sole-authored political histories *Hungary and its Revolutions* (like *Isolina*, published under the pseudonym E.O.S.) and *A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily*, *Walks in Florence* demonstrates a preoccupation with the relationship and balance between national history and current politics. Ostensibly about history, art, and architecture and tied to precise geographies and moments, all these works tell history in a way that demands present political action. Her book on Naples, for example, connects the historical “century” of with the present day as a universal human concern. The final pages, bringing the reader into the author’s present, explain, “Since the above was written … Another revolution is in progress” (*A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily* 222). Horner then distills a
transnational political argument based in a sense of shared history and an inevitably shared future:

The true nature of the struggle which has so long disturbed the peace of Europe daily reveals itself more clearly, by the sympathies enlisted on either side. It is not alone the resistance of any one oppressed nation against a despotic government, but the assertion of the principle of independence, justice, and a government formed by the many and for the many, against despotism, and legitimacy or right (miscalled divine) of the few. The cause does not belong to one, but to all European families. Its champions are the educated middle classes, and the most enlightened portion of the aristocracy, supported by the people, and led by monarchs who support the democratic principle; whilst opposed to them is a decayed system, propped up by superstition, soldiers, and police. Therefore the cause is that of humanity. (223)

Horner’s awareness of revolution as a “cause” “for all European families” pivots her history of local despotism into a broader geographical and temporal arena. Reform is a common cause—first, of “all European[s],” then of “humanity”—that depends on education and locates power in the “middle classes.”

Already a well-known authority on history, politics, and especially classical art, Horner decided to pursue the themes of European democracy and political identity in fiction. Horner wrote to George Perkins Marsh on 27 January 1867 for advice about the
publication of a novel she had written. Though Horner had already published in England on various topics of art, literature, history, and politics, she hoped that Marsh could help her find an American publisher “willing to bring out an edition in the States at the same time with my English publisher.” Horner explains that, in this novel, she “endeavor[s] to shew the difficulties besetting the path of a woman in England earning her livelihood.” There are many possible explanations for Horner’s wish to publish her novel simultaneously in the U.S. and England. The lack of copyright protections for foreign authors in America led to an excessive pirating that writers such as Dickens had bemoaned for years. By publishing with two presses simultaneously, Horner could have more control over the American distribution of her text and would double her audience. Additionally, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning discovered, American publishers might pay more for foreign material deemed of interest to their readership. Marsh also tells Horner how he circulates his own post bag from Italy to the U.S. via London to reduce costs. He encourages her to adopt a similar process for the publication of her book because “[u]nder the present arrangement of our tariff, books can be published in England so much cheaper than in America that American publishers have their books manufactured in England for the American market.” In fact, he claims one publisher saved more than 10% by outsourcing his manuscript. Low production costs would enable more profit, and Horner had good reason to believe that her novel would appeal to both American and English audiences. Horner’s novel, *Isolina; or the Actor’s Daughter* (1873), is not simply about “a woman in England earning her livelihood” but about an Anglo-Italian woman—Isolina (Michieli) Camelli—trying (and failing) to earn her livelihood in England’s nationalist, classist, and sexist social systems.
Barrett Browning’s commercial success with U.S. periodical publications in the 1860s indicated a transatlantic appetite for works dealing with Italian affairs (and especially with those that used Italian politics as a catalyst for exploring abstract concepts of nationalism, liberty, and justice). Horner herself briefly wrote (anonymously) for the New-York Tribune as one of their Italian correspondents. Unlike EBB, however, Horner reacted to the publishing trend too late. Her novel, likely written around 1865 or 1866 as the newly unified Italy grappled with the Austrian Empire for possession of Venice (granted in 1866), did not appear in print until 1873, well after unification was largely considered complete with the annexation of Rome in 1871. Perhaps even more significantly, there is no indication that Horner did publish Isolina transatlantically. Whatever her reasons for desiring to do so when she wrote to Marsh about publishing in 1867, the novel only appeared in one U.S. edition, via J. P. Lippincott. Lippincott advertised the novel as a work “exhibiting an intimate and accurate knowledge of aristocratic society in England” (“Isolina” 2) and the “Literary Notices” in Godey’s Lady’s Book identify it as “An English novel of moderate merit, which will please a fair number of readers” (543). Horner did not sign her name to this work; rather, as with her earlier political history on Hungary that included a sympathetic biography of the contentious revolutionary Lajos (anglicized “Louis”) Kossuth, she used the pseudonym E.O.S.

Even considering the transatlantic Italomania of the early 1860s, one wouldn’t necessarily recognize in Isolina a plot calculated to appeal to an American audience, though there are explicit moments of narrative explanation that directly address that audience. The novel begins in the height of the London season, with the genteel circles
abuzz with the sudden death of a lauded Italian expatriate actor named Camelli on the London stage. After opening with a description of the fine people in Hyde Park and “the atmosphere of a London July” (3), the novel pauses with a narrative gesture toward its American audience: “It is difficult for a foreigner to comprehend the divisions and subdivisions of English society, which are neither regulated by congeniality of mind, nor by assimilation of manners, nor by respect for character; and it is equally difficult to trace the cause of this strong caste feeling which exists in a nation politically free. Wealth, fashion, rank, beauty, talent, genius itself, though each may claim admission into certain circles, can never aspire to be received on a footing of perfect equality by those privileged beings who are lucky enough to count a given number of names among their ancestors in the herald’s office” (4-5). With this explanation, the novel shifts from park tableau to follow Camelli’s nine-year-old daughter, Isolina. Musically gifted Isolina is educated primarily as the “adopted daughter” of Miss Ellinor Mowbray (later Lady Campbell), but is largely dismissed as an outsider in the upper-class circles she attempts to navigate. This holds true even after she is revealed to be the granddaughter (and potential heiress) of the Venetian aristocrat Count Michieli, who had disowned Isolina’s father when the young heir chose to pursue life as an actor under the name “Camelli.” When her patron embarks on an extended tour of Italy, Isolina attempts (and largely fails) to support herself as a governess until, on Lady Campbell’s return, Isolina finally rises to fame as a public singer.

Though most of the action takes place in Britain, Italy proves a constant presence not only through Isolina herself as a figure of hybrid language and nationality but also through the Italian elements described within English environments that often go
unremarked by the characters. In the context of Isolina’s story, these elements come into focus; Isolina brings out the Italianess woven into English life through, for instance, a London “organ grinder” who speaks to Isolina “in a mixture of patois Italian and broken English” (30). We first see the eponymous heroine at home with her dog Lupo, “a powerful animal from the Campagna of Rome,” in a kind of Italianate haven within London (11). Horner designates Isolina’s childhood home specifically as a “villa on the Thames” twice: once in the first and once in the last sentences of chapter two (9, 13), rhetorically encapsulating the Camelli family within their specific Italy-within-London space. We learn, too, that Camelli had “hired his paradise on earth, and he would often tell his wife and daughter that when he should grow old, he would take them to a still lovelier country, which they must learn to love, as he had learned to love theirs” (13). Altogether, Isolina initially inhabits a tightly contained physical space—an idealized Italy within London, like nested concentric nationalities—that space itself signals the potential for transnational movement between Italy and England. Important, too, in the initial designation of homelands is that Italy is only the “still lovelier country” of Mr. Camelli; Isolina and her mother do not belong to it (England is “theirs.”). But while Isolina’s father explicitly designates her as English, her nationality and irresolvable foreignness are a point of debate throughout the novel.

The novel narrates Isolina’s formal and informal political education, depicting her lessons about belonging, community, identity, and social roles (of birth, of sex, of profession) that form the core of collective morality and hierarchies of power. Despite its occasionally bizarre and dizzying subplots—such as when the novel follows Count Michieli to a very gothic Venice, complete with a potentially haunted castle and a
Machiavellian nephew—*Isolina* is a realist novel with a familiar Bildungsroman core. But the bigger coming-of-age in the text seems to be a social awakening to the reality of a transnational network in which a traditional patriotic value system based on genealogy is becoming, practically speaking, meaningless. As Lady Campbell philosophizes, “Scotch or Florentine, English or Italian … we are, after all, only passing travelers for some few years of our existence on this earth: so we may surely have our preference of one dwelling-place over another” (241). This directly contradicts her brother’s philosophy at the beginning of the novel, when he says that Mr. Bryant “has been bitten with a passion for foreigners ever since he attended meetings for exiles and those sort of people, of whom the country would be well rid,” insists that “an Englishwoman must lower herself by marrying a foreigner,” and cautions that her “democratic ideas … are … dangerous to society and to this country” (39). Though the novel is most ostensibly Isolina’s bildungsroman, the central question she and the other characters incessantly face is how to assign and quantify social values—which often prove locally generated in problematic ways—in a world of ever-increasing transnationality. Even the remotest country estates inhabited by old aristocratic families become backdrops for this moral crisis. All the plots that hinge on Isolina—marriage and professional—ultimately fail when both the heroine and Count Michieli die on Lady Campbell’s Scottish estate (the former while convalescing from a burst blood vessel sustained during a performance, the latter while fleeing political persecution in Venice orchestrated by his heir presumptive, Isolina’s cousin Jacopo Priuli). 181

*Isolina* herself presents a paradoxical figure. For the first half of the novel she is untraveled (and indeed often isolated—perhaps a pun on her name—especially when she
works as a governess), as she points out to Frederick Mowbray (89), and yet she is incessantly hyper国际化. Predictably, other characters stereotypically cite her “Italian nature” as the source for any display of passion or emotion on her part (156), and it is to this same nature that they credit her musical talents. Mr. Fanshaw asks Isolina whether she sings, insisting, “You must, for you are Italian, if I may venture to ask; but, indeed, before I heard your name, I could not doubt it,” but she corrects him: “No, I am not Italian by birth … my father was Italian. My mother is English” (181). Isolina speaks Italian “naturally and sweetly … as her first language had been that of her father” (89). Later, she addresses her grandfather in Italian, “speaking it with ease, and with that soft Venetian accent which she had caught from her father” (271). Her English, however, is marked by a “slightly foreign accent” (281), and she herself is designated as “a young foreigner … at least by name” (379). Yet, Italy is the destination to which “all her best friends seemed destined to turn their steps,” leaving Isolina in England and without the support of her advisors and patrons. When she finally visits Italy, and even Venice, with the Campbells, she remains a foreigner and a tourist. She travels with the English community and visits tourist destinations and sites that are significant to Lady Campbell from her earlier Italian travels. But the trip to Italy for Isolina is not a homecoming. She remains a foreigner, and outsider—a fact that is doubled in her status as non-native and as not of the elite class of her travel community. She is, as Lady Elton says, “semi-Italian” (31), her hybrid status eventually carved in stone on her tomb, which “recorded that here lay ‘Isolina, of Venetian and English parentage’” (478). In England, Isolina is Italian; in Italy, she is one of “the English party” (244). When she returns “home” to England after having rejected Count Michieli’s terms of joining the Venetian nobility, she is “rejoiced
to find that her mother entirely agreed in her preference for an English cottage and independence to a Venetian palazzo and dependence on her grandfather’s will” (273). But she never fully belongs to any country or any class.

*Isolina* transects the class and social hierarchies it sets up in the first chapter, tracing various marriage and professional plots that unfold across Britain and on the Continent. The novel’s plots are interspersed with commentaries on social injustices that, although usually couched in the voices of various characters, explicitly indict English social mores. For example, the clergyman Reverend Hazelwood lectures his high-born wife in reference to her evaluation of Isolina’s social status and her occupation as a governess:

God forbid that I should be a socialist or a leveler of ranks; but how can I, a Christian clergyman, the follower of Paul the tentmaker and Peter the fisherman, consider a man or woman degraded in the exercise of their calling when in every other respect they are worthy of honor? … once and for all, I tell you that we are all alike descended from keepers of sheep and tillers of the soil; that the best and wisest among us have not been, for the most part, the children of wealthy parents, and that the genealogical tables are generally lists of empty names, of less value than the paper on which they are inscribed. Yet you look grudgingly on God’s gifts when conferred on those who do not belong to a self-created class … you would destroy what God has bestowed on another, because that other has not a name in the herald’s office. It is cruel! It is unchristian! (204-5)
Reverend Hazelwood’s impassioned speech highlights the injustice and impracticality of an aristocratic system of social worth, but more significantly for my argument, it uses history to overturn the validity of that antiquated system. Fighting fire with fire, Reverend Hazelwood supplants heraldry with an even more ancient history: before there was an aristocracy, all were “keepers of sheep and tillers of the soil.” Despite Reverend Hazelwood’s initial caveat, his social theory does, in fact, both level ranks and bind them together through a common history. When he says, “We are all alike descended” in the context of the “herald’s office,” it is not perfectly clear whether that “we” is universal or bound to the nation, but the implication is nationalist, linked to the soil of a particular homeland, a past predating ruling traditions and therefore, Reverend Hazelwood, asserting greater authority. Even Sir Roger Campbell “smil[es] at the thought how the fictions of title and family can make men of every race and country inflict on themselves unnecessary pain, whilst foregoing the happiness which nature and truth would place within their reach” (272). The narrator reiterates this moral explicitly at the novel’s end: “How far happier would it be if the fictitious honors of family and wealth were set at their true value, and did not take the place of real greatness and virtue!” (479).

The present’s transnationality creates a problem of conflicting hierarchical standards, even within relatively narrow social circles as aristocrats with land-derived significance cross national borders and encounter other systems on which their elite status doesn’t register equally. Transnationality erodes aristocratic significance. In fact, Isolina dramatizes a direct comparison between English and Venetian aristocracies. George Mowbray insists to Priuli, “Your foreign titles are nothing to me … I am of an English noble family, worth fifty Venetian countships.” Priuli counters, “If nobility consists in the
number of generations gently born, the Golden Book of Venice records the existence of the family of Michieli centuries before that of Mowbray was ever heard of; if in wealth and vast possessions, our riches, still great, have exceeded yours; if in deeds of worth, we count distinguished soldiers, statesmen, men of accomplishment and learning; nor do I suppose that England holds a place in history so superior to that of Venice that the mere fact of your being an Englishman entitles you to claim superiority” (454-5). The high-mobility made possible by modernized transport networks in the second half of the nineteenth century reveals the narrow limits aristocracy’s geographical dominance, especially when juxtaposed with a geopolitically unstable Europe.

On the one hand, the text fixates on the power of lineage to signify identity. We know from one glance at the cover that Isolina is an “actor’s daughter,” and her name is reiterated as a marker of her foreignness in England. On the other hand, the first chapter introduces both the uncertainty of her surname and the resolution of that mystery. Lineage for Isolina is rejected as a source of pecuniary inheritance, but it does establish an inheritance of musical talent that is tied to her father’s professional name (Camelli). And while her use of that name continues to signal a rejection of her familial name (Michieli) and a reluctant defiance of her potential matrimonial name when George Mowbray insists she give up the stage in order to become a more suitable fiancée. When her grandfather rediscovers Isolina, he wishes to reinstate her place in the family; however, under Priuli’s influence, Count Michieli pronounces that in order to do so, Isolina must give up England, Protestantism, and singing and live in his house and under his authority. Isolina declines to reclaim her Venetian nobility in part because it would tie her geographically to Venice and to her grandfather’s house (and its associated rules and
religious demands). She does not know that Count Michieli presents his demands based on Priuli’s interference. Priuli recognizes his new-found cousin as a threat to his status of heir, so he convinces his uncle to require what he knows Isolina will not do. And because Count Michieli listens to his nephew, he effectively dooms the ancestral name.

*Isolina* represents a new social system based on interclass and transnational social networks and the individual’s ability to exercise his or her talents. The count’s failure to embrace this new reality is a failure to adapt and an eventual extinction of the family line. The future (Isolina) is hybrid; clinging to the past proves to be Venice’s death sentence. The “rooted cosmopolitanism” that served imperial expansion for the mid-Victorians fails here because transnational mobility is not unidirectional. Center/periphery models, which as Bar-Yosef and Chambers both note, do not work in heritage spaces fail likewise in London because travelers come in as well as go out. This space is so integrated into the transnational network that even the isolated estates, like the Campells’, lose their rooted nationalism.

Count Michieli’s failures, the novel argues, stem from a post-1861 reflection on the practical applications of ideal liberty. Italian unification efforts were popular across classes, and even elite British travelers often participated in freedom movements and anti-imperialist endeavors abroad. After unification, however, it became clear that the liberty of the wealthy directly conflicted with the liberty of the working classes, who were agitating for social and political progress rather than merely a return to rule by a national aristocracy instead of an imperial sovereign. Horner indicts this kind of fervor for a “liberty” that operates only at a geopolitical level while ignoring the struggles of the
individual citizen. In a passage set off conspicuously as its own paragraph and not couched in a character’s opinion, the novel proclaims,

The idea of liberty varies much with the individual in whom it has taken root, and develops itself very differently, according to the soil in which it grows. There are, perhaps, few who sincerely desire the freedom which would guarantee independent thought, action, and speech to all men alike, and would only impose restraint on the individual according to the moral or material injury he may inflict on his neighbor. The so-called aristocratic liberal, indeed, does not belong to any one social class, but is met with as frequently as selfishness and pride are to be found in human nature. It is perhaps only the instinct of self-preservation, guided by a few enlarged and virtuous minds, which can truly aim at a just balance of democracy in one scale, and restrictive laws in the other, and which would secure respect for the rights of the minority as well as of the majority,—*liberty, social as well as political*, for every human being.

(283, emphasis added)

The narrator rejects fashionable, abstract liberty and interrogates the “restraint” that encumbers citizens within countries that fetishize liberty. Together with Raymond Grew, Isser Woloch argues that “the image of revolution had achieved a kind of sentimentalized respectability in Italy” and “the symbolic and emotive features of those dramas helped frame the dialectic of the ideal and the actual that has had such resonance
in Italian political culture” (Woloch 18). This is a kind of liberty that enthralls the wealthy and the traveler but that does not have any social justice cache. For Horner, such decorative liberty, while depending on the mobilization of the people to fight the imperial armies, is, in fact, an empty promise; it echoes her indictment of the “decayed system, propped up by superstition, soldiers, and police” that she reads in A Century of Despotism in Naples.

“Liberty, social as well as political” had been the rallying cry of republican uprisings throughout the nineteenth century, usually labeled by commentators as localized but in fact emerging from the mobility of revolutionary ideas and persons. For some, especially landed elites, these calls for liberty were isolated to specific places. But in practice, revolution circulated concepts of universal liberty freely across transnational networks. Ilham Khuri-Makdisi traces, for example, Italian radicalism among “nodal cities” that include “imperial metropoles” like Paris and London, as well as densely cosmopolitan port cities like Beirut and Alexandria (26). Even Garibaldi, the icon of Italian liberation, circulated through this network, spending his years of exile in the 1830s and 40s participating in South American revolutions. Stabler, for whom the figure of the exile dominates English literature and culture, argues, “As the 19th century progressed, the public image of Italy began to overtake revolutionary France in being associated with the idea of exile”—an idea that allured “English readers” who “were more willing to cede cultural authority to Italy that to France” (17). Woloch agrees, identifying a broad European effort “to define, advance, or delimit freedom in the aftermath of the French Revolution” as a “long durational process” over the nineteenth century, a “great transition from traditional, particularist conceptions of liberty to new, universalist ideologies” (5).
He further states that the “popular involvement in the liberation struggle” in Italy (inspired by revolutionary heroes like Garibaldi and Mazzini) “offered Europe a new nexus of revolution, constitutionalism, and liberty distinct from the French revolutionary experience” (10).

The significance of Italy in nineteenth-century British definitions of liberty cannot be overstated, as many scholars, such as Maura O’Connor, have already demonstrated.185 Horner articulates liberty more concretely with regional Italian examples in the next paragraph following the indictment of the “aristocratic liberal,” which puts her digression back into the novel’s specific context. “Count Michieli’s idea of liberty,” the narrator proclaims, “was purely political, or rather did not amount to more than a desire that his city of Venice should be relieved from its foreign rulers and become Italian, uniting the commercial prosperity of the present era with the glorious reputation of the past, and that the Queen of the Adriatic should thus recover her former place and distinction as a European state. As he belonged to an old Venetian family, so he clung to its traditions, which, unlike the Florentine noble (whose greatest pride is to trace back his origin to woolcarding and other branches of trade), relate wholly to diplomacy, or the wealth and power enjoyed by the few over the many in the state” (283). The “old Venetian family” differs from the “Florentine noble” whose esteem for trade makes his history beneficial to his present, whereas Michieli’s “traditions” doom him. Count Michieli’s desires for political liberty cannot, in fact, return his family to prosperity. He fails to cultivate the social liberty that the novel proves requisite for the present. The count determines his actions in deference to an aristocratic system of morals, so that when his son trespasses on those morals, he disowns him. His stubborn adherence to an antiquated code destroys
his chance for reconciliation with Isolina as well, and the family’s wealth passes to Count Priuli, who goes mad and is committed “to the same asylum where he had once placed his uncle; and there he ended his miserable days” (478). This decline into extinction, the novel demonstrates, awaits those who champion political liberty as a return to the past. In direct contrast is Reverend Hazelwood, who proudly claims to be “the son of a man who had raised himself by his own own wits and not by standing on dead men’s graves,” suggesting that English and American readers can apply the Venice-Florence moral beyond the Italian peninsula (205). In fact, the gesture toward the “Florentine noble” in the narrator’s indictment of Count Michieli’s “idea of liberty” recalls Reverend Hazelwood’s more ancient system of lineage when he insists that “we are all alike descended from keepers of sheep and tillers of the soil” and levels the social hierarchy by valorizing profession.

**The Nation as Temporal Network**

In remarking on Venice’s extinction, Horner was hardly unique. Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice* (1851-53) had already painted an influential portrait of the city as a lifeless relic of an exalted past, and he had articulated that death as a moral for English readers. As Rochelle Gurstein notes, for Ruskin, “The decline of Venice, in particular, stood as a cautionary tale for modern, industrial England” (103). Florence, however, appears as Venice’s opposite. It becomes the model for social and political progress that Horner, together with her sister Joanna, develops more explicitly for the English-speaking travelers in *Walks in Florence*. Venice, gothic and dead in the novel, is the counter-point
to Florence’s vibrant transnationality and continually developing artistry—a city with “a living present, a living past.”

Whereas in her *Century of Despotism in Naples* Horner identifies the problem of a “decayed system,” which she later dramatizes through the Venetian nobility in *Isolina*, in Florence Horner finds a solution for the pull between tradition and progress. *Walks in Florence*, the Horner sisters’ guidebook, describes the history of the city’s *Misericordia*, a charitable fraternity founded in the thirteenth century to deliver aid and to transport the sick and the dead, as a model for social equity and reform: “Men of every class in Florence belong to the Misericordia, all willing to assist their fellow-creatures in distress. Among these are rich and poor, the noble and the philosopher, whose valuable time is willingly given for the sick and suffering” (1:109). To demonstrate the authenticity of this ideal, they list some of the organization’s noteworthy members, ending with Marchese Carlo Torrigiani, on whose recent death they remark in a footnote: “The Marchese Carlo Torrigiani died on the 11th of April, 1865, at the age of fifty-four, after a short illness, contracted while fulfilling his duty as a Giornante of the Misericordia” (1:109n*). The date of this mini-obituary asserts that this system remains a part of Florentine civic life, connecting past and present through a shared labor of humble community service undertaken by all for the collective good of the *commune*.

The glorification of “woolcarding and other branches of trade” and of cross-class civic duty in Florentine history manifests too in Ruskin’s Florence guidebook, the first installment of which appeared in print just two years after *Walks in Florence*. In *Mornings in Florence*, Ruskin, contemplating a work by Simon Memmi, asserts, “Tubal-Cain, thought the Florentines, invented harmony. They, the best smiths in the world,
knew the differences in tones of hammer strokes on anvil. Curiously enough the only piece of true part-singing, done beautifully and joyfully, which I have heard this year in Italy, (being south of the Alps exactly six months, and ranging from Genoa to Palermo) was out of a busy smithy at Perugia. Ruskin, like the Horners, links art and work across time, bringing tradition into the present. These guidebooks create a temporal network that mimics the form of the spatial network. The temporal network constellates historical moments through heritage structures, attesting that the same landmarks of national identity also profess traditions of transnationalism.

As a genre, the guidebook does for foreign space what the history book does for foreign time: delineate boundaries and landmarks, narrate cohesions and sequence onto potentially infinite chaos, and above all, replace suspense with certitude. Ruskin puts his guidebook in direct conversation with Murray’s popular tourist guides, especially in the first two installments, referring to Murray by name and even directing his reader with his aid. “[W]alk straight to the chapel on the right of the choir (‘k’ in your Murray’s guide),” he tells his visitor to Santa Croce (I). Ruskin saw his essays as deeply integrated with the developing guidebook genre as it emerged through Murray’s publishing firm at least as early as 1845. Elsa Damien charts how Ruskin’s continual (though shifting) involvement in the guidebook genre affected both aesthetic standards and Italian travel generally, pitting tourism’s fast, commercial modernity against Ruskin’s determinedly slow, educational nostalgia (23-4). As Damien points out, “guidebooks do not rely on remembrance but anticipation” (20). But as Ruskin and the Horners show, guidebooks sometimes must bridge collective remembrance with personal anticipation. As Stabler asserts, “The interplay of new physical contexts with intellectual and imaginative
inheritances creates an artistry of mixture and contrast” (24). One may not know the
details of travel in a place like Florence, but they know its history to some extent because
history is what instigates travel there in the first place.

In a densely historical city like Florence, one could never see everything (even if
time and restoration hadn’t taken their toll are the artworks) because looking produces
more to see and develops one’s perceptions beyond the initial reflections. For *Walks in
Florence*, too, takes up the excess of detail. But here, rather than anxiety there is
potential. The Horners emphasize throughout their guidebook the importance of habit for
the traveler in Florence—they offer, after all, “daily walks,” and they insist that “[t]he
stranger visiting Florence for the first time, and whose taste has been formed by the
habitual sight of Gothic or Grecian style in architecture, requires to be accustomed to the
peculiarities of Florentine art, before he can appreciate its true excellence” (1:27). The
Horners’ insistence on a sustained personal acquaintance with the city, though,
contradicts the temporal orientation of the guidebook genre toward anticipation. The
focus on habitual seeing insists on reflection, or an orientation toward remembrance, such
as the travelogue’s mode of reflection on personal memory. *Walks in Florence* attempts
to unite this anticipation and remembrance into a daily present engagement with location.
It’s an interplay between history and personal memory dependent on the destination’s
distinction from the origin (home).

Ruskin’s book shows an awareness of, and an occasionally an anxiety about, the
traveler’s limited time in these environs. As Damien notes in handbooks of the period
generally, “a central problem is how to manage tourist time … Where guidebooks like
the Murrays do their best to be rational and reassuring about tourists’ time—as they do
about all aspects of the journey—Ruskin openly shares his anxiety with the reader. His travel books are overtly published as unfinished products; *Stones* has even been sent to print in ‘desperation’” (25-6). Though Ruskin is aware of time as a problem for tourists, he acknowledges that the limits on this time have already doomed the traveler to failure. “How long do you think it will take you, or ought to take to see a picture?” he asks in the fourth installment of *Mornings in Florence*,

We were to get to work this morning, as early as might be: you have probably allowed half an hour for Santa Maria Novella; half an hour for San Lorenzo; an hour for the museum of sculpture at the Bargello; an hour for shopping; and then it will be lunch time, and you mustn’t be late, because you are to leave by the afternoon train, and must positively be in Rome to-morrow morning. Well, of your half-hour for Santa Maria Novella,—after Ghirlandajo’s choir, Orcagna’s transept, and Cimabue’s Madonna, and the painted windows, have been seen properly, there will remain, suppose, at the utmost, a quarter of an hour for the Spanish Chapel. That will give you two minutes and a half for each side, two for the ceiling, and three for studying Murray’s explanations or mine. Two minutes and a half you have got, then—(and I observed, during my five weeks’ work in the chapel, that English visitors seldom gave so much)—to read this scheme given you by Simon Memmi of human spiritual education … and though indeed I came here from Lucca in three hours instead of a day, which it used to take, I do not think myself able, on that
account, to see any picture in Florence in less time than it took formerly

… Accordingly, I have taken five weeks to see the quarter of this picture.

(IV)

Time to observe and time to reflect (both of which depend on external factors like sunlight and weariness) will never be adequate to see all the pictures of Florence. The itinerary can never be complete. One must, therefore, learn a method of sequence, of seeing by stages, and of perceiving or inferring from incomplete experiences. This is the form Ruskin chooses for *Mornings in Florence*.

Ruskin’s guidebook consists of six installments divided by location; however, only the first, “Santa Croce,” bears a concrete, mapable title. The subsequent five installments have more descriptive or associative titles, such as “The Golden Gate” (part II) and “The Vaulted Book” (part IV). Although the installments appeared independently across a span of years (1875-77), each bears the overarching title *Mornings in Florence*, with the section title and number in smaller type below. Ruskin narrates the series as a continuous sequence as though there are not gaps between the publications of the parts, for instance ending part one with, “[W]e will return [to Giotto’s chapel] to-morrow;—not to-day, for the light must have left it by this time.” And in part two, he promises, “I will show you to-morrow morning, if it is fine.” The temporal form of Ruskin’s series depends on this relation to the whole to produce verisimilitude. He draws the time structure from the imagined tour of the reader, who he generally addresses, like a guidebook, in the present tense and second person: “you are at present within the walls of Florence” (I). The second installment, “The Golden Gate,” even begins with an implied
dialogue: “To-day, as early as you please, and at all events before doing anything else, let us go to … Santa Maria Novella. Do not let anything in the way of acquaintance, sacristan, or chance sight, stop you in doing what I tell you. Walk straight up to the church, into the apse of it;—(you may let your eyes rest, as you walk, on the glow of its glass, only mind the step, half way;)—and lift the curtain; and go in behind the grand marble altar, giving anybody who follows you anything they want, to hold their tongues, or go away. You know, most probably, already, that the frescoes on each side of you are Ghirlandajo’s. You have been told they are very fine, and if you know anything of painting, you know the portraits in them are so. Nevertheless, somehow, you don’t really enjoy these frescoes, nor come often here, do you?” (II). Ruskin dramatizes walking and talking with his reader in Santa Maria Novella, directing, describing, warning, and inviting the rushed tourist to pause. The guidebook conventions—present tense and second person narration—produce a virtual reality that helps the reader imagine this walk. Imagination is necessary because, of course, Ruskin’s reader is probably not presently in Santa Maria Novella looking at artwork while also reading *Mornings in Florence*. Even if the dedicated tourist employed someone to read Ruskin’s instructions aloud while she or he walked through the church, it would be impossible to match the pace of movement to the pace of narration without the reader pausing excessively and breaking the narrative’s verisimilitude.

Throughout *Mornings in Florence*, it proves impossible to align the diegetic temporality (in theory, six days of the same week—a reasonable tourist’s stay in Florence) with the irrepressible extradiegetic time of the narrative voice, which cannot help but assert itself for clarity at times. Ruskin dates the first “morning” (published in
1875) as “Sunday, 6th September 1874,” alerting the reader from the start that these present-tense tours in fact occur in the past. Ruskin begins part six apologizing for what will be a lack of flow from part five, which ends abruptly, “But lunch time is near, my friends, and you have that shopping to do, you know.” Part VI, rather than taking up the narration on the imagined next day, announces its break and calls attention to the extradiegetic temporality’s effect on the narrative flow. “I am obliged to interrupt my account,” Ruskin writes, “first because I find that inaccurate accounts of [the sculptures of Giotto’s campanile] are in course of publication; and chiefly because I cannot finish my work in the Spanish chapel until one of my good Oxford helpers, Mr. Caird, has completed some investigations he has undertaken with for me upon the history connected with it.” The temporal form here—successive mornings—depends on the whole *Mornings in Florence* for verisimilitude even though the project is perpetually incomplete.

At least part of the impetus for the British to travel to Florence—and to Italy and most of the circum-Mediterranean region—was its expansive historical and cultural value within their own traditions. For Horner and Ruskin, this history and culture could be read in Florence’s art and architecture, if the traveler looked carefully. For example, in “The Shepherd’s Tower,” the sixth and final installment in 1877 of *Mornings in Florence*, Ruskin focuses on the “perfect plan of human civilization” as it is presented in the series of reliefs on the Florentine bell tower, a landmark that divides “four successive historical periods, marked by its angles.” Each side of the tower, Ruskin points out, represents a progressive stage of civilization from creation to the sculptor’s Renaissance present: “The first side is of the nomad life, learning how to assert its supremacy over other wandering
creatures, herbs, and beasts. Then the second side is the fixed home life, developing race and country; then the third side, the human intercourse between stranger races; then the fourth side, the harmonious arts of all who are gathered into the fold of Christ.” Within each stage or side are successive hexagonal panels that illustrate the cultivation and development that move humanity to the next stage. These four stages (nomadic life, domestic life, exploration, and harmony) mark a broad historical trajectory that, of course, places Renaissance Florence as the pinnacle of human civilization, although, as Ruskin discusses, some of the restorations to the panels indicate attempts to modernize the present.

The historical structure produces a single teleological arc; however, there is nothing to preclude an understanding of the bell tower’s stages as recurring historical cycles, except the (potentially self-deprecating) view of the traveler’s present as a developmental stage, less advanced than the days of Giotto and Pisano. Seeing modernity as degraded was not an issue for Ruskin. “Forty years ago,” he writes,

there was assuredly no spot of ground out of Palestine, in all the round world, on which, if you knew, even but a little, the true course of the world’s history, you saw with so much joyful reverence the dawn of morning, as at the foot of the Tower of Giotto … Of living Greek work there is none after the Florentine Baptistery; of living Christian work, none so perfect as the Tower of Giotto; and, under the gleam and shadow of their marbles, the morning light was haunted by the ghosts of the Father of Natural Science, Galileo; of Sacred Art, Angelico, and the Master of
Sacred Song. Which spot of ground the modern Florentine has made his principle hackney-coach stand and omnibus station … not a soul in Florence ever caring now for sight of any piece of its old artists’ work; and the mass of strangers being on the whole intent on nothing but getting the omnibus to go by steam; and so seeing the cathedral in one swift circuit, by glimpses between the puffs of it. (VI)

Ruskin summons “all the round world” to describe the significance of this monument, linking it to other sacred and antique lands (“Palestine” and Greece by name, England by implication of the English language publication). But this monument, and the spatial network it evokes, is a historical landmark as well. Ruskin’s description turns the spatial network on end to reveal a network of historical depth. Giotto’s campanile is the apex of both “living Greek” and “living Christian work,” which the tourist reading the monument at “dawn” struggles to see past the chaos of modern transport. The movement of the tourist performing Ruskin’s reading of the bell tower by walking around its four sides demonstrates the repeatability (in order, though starting from any point) of this history. The final panel, “Harmony,” Ruskin reads as a prophecy of a “perfect state” and “perfect world”—not likely to occur in Ruskin’s modernity (after all, he refers to the restorers as “the Devil-begotten brood of modern Florence” [V]). However, this is the moral burden on the viewing subject. If one cannot complete the series, one must begin again, mastering from the beginning in sequence.

Like the reader walking around the campanile and the implied travel that brought both the author and his English reader to Florence, history as Ruskin tells it depends on
mobility. Ruskin meditates on the nuances of travelers’ identities, explicitly linking different classes of wanderer in the reliefs on Giotto’s campanile across time to nineteenth-century wanderers and connecting wanderers in Italy across space to “gypsies” in England. The first stage, beginning with the creation of man, culminates in panels depicting “nomad pastoral life,” Jubal, and Tubalcain. “These last three sculptures, observe,” Ruskin says, “represent the life of the race of Cain; of those who are wanderers, and have no home. Nomad pastoral life; Nomad artistic life, Wandering Willie; yonder organ man, whom you want to send the policeman after, and the gipsy who is mending the old schoolmistress’s kettle on the grass, which the squire has wanted so long to take into his park from the roadside” (VI). On the reference to the squire’s voracious property enlargement, Ruskin clarifies in a footnote at the end of the fourth series. For now, suffice it to mark a class distinction between the landed gentry and the vagrants, “Wandering Willie” and the “gipsy,” who identify a low-class (and in the case of gypsy, a raced) mobility. Both the static squire and the vagrants remain distinct from “you,” the implied traveling reader, who is mobile but clearly of a dominant class and race.

In the second stage, domestic life, Ruskin clarifies the progress of those who have a bound home: “In the nomad life you may serve yourself of the guidance of the stars; but to know the laws of their nomadic life, your own must be fixed”—a lesson he illustrates in the “sextant revolving on a fixed pivot.”188 This series culminates in a panel depicting Daedalus, at which point Ruskin concludes by distinguishing again the “savage wanderer” at the end of series one with “the arts of the missionary, or civilized and gift-bringing wanderer” that he reads at the beginning of series three, which features panels depicting the conquests of sea and earth, or the “[b]eneficent strength of civilization
crushing the savageness of inhumanity.” Ruskin reads this imperial triumph, unsurprisingly, in a panel depicting Hercules’ victory over Antaeus—an anachronistic scene in this Christian history, but as a fable, one calculated to appeal to Protestant imperialist tourists. Significant here is that, while “fixed” domesticity is necessary for historical progress, so, too, is mobility—and, in fact, mobility is not only a mark of “modern Florence” but also a condition of past Florence responsible for making it historically important.

In every stage represented on the campanile, Ruskin interprets history through various forms of travel—even the final, seemingly un-parallel stage, “harmonious arts,” finds meaning for Ruskin through mobility and mapping. This most advanced stage of civilization, he argues, begins with the panel signifying “Geometry,” by which he means “[n]ot ‘mathematics’ … but the due Measuring of the Earth and all that is on it.” He claims that this dual field of surveying and cartography is distinctly Christian in origin, which faith is both the “first inspiration of the great Earth-measurers” and the “constant inspiration of all who set true landmarks and hold to them, knowing their measure; the devil interfering, I observe, lately in his own way, with the Geometry of Yorkshire, where the landed proprietors, when the neglected walls by the roadside tumble down, benevolently repair the same, with better stonework, outside always of the fallen heaps; —which, the wall being thus built on what was the public road, absorb themselves, with the help of moss and time, into the heaving swells of the rocky field—and behold, gain a couple of feet.” Ruskin appends a footnote to this demonstration of Yorkshire enclosure: “I mean no accusation against any class; probably the one-fielded statesman is more eager for his little gain of fifty yards of grass than the squire for his bite and sup out of
the gypsy’s part of the roadside. But it is notable enough to the passing traveler, to find
himself shut into a narrow road between high stone dykes which he can neither see over
nor climb over, (I always deliberately pitch them down myself, wherever I need a gap,)
instead of on a broad road between low grey walls with all the moor beyond—and the
power of leaping over when he chooses in innocent trespass for herb, or view, or splinter
of grey rock.” Amid disdain for modernity and the technology of travel, Ruskin draws a
connection between present (lower) classes of mobile people and a stage of civilization.
In the present degraded vagrants, he identifies a developmental stage of civilization, but
he cannot keep himself out of it when he describes the squire stealing “the gipsy’s part of
the road,” which also proves to be his, the passing traveler’s, part.

Ruskin’s guidebook describes spatial and temporal networks that organize the
city, its history, and the bodies of travelers; these networks operate in *Walks in Florence*
also, but the Horner sisters’ guidebook connects history even more deliberately with the
present. *Walks in Florence* begins with a broad history that situates the city’s laudable
achievements in relation to nineteenth-century European politics. The preface explains,
“Though Florence was often distracted by factions, her history, compared with that of
contemporary states, excepting perhaps Venice and Genoa, was one of advanced
civilization” (1:6). This sentence locates “advanced civilization” in antiquity, as does
Ruskin, but does not leave it there, subtly undermining either a strictly ascendant or
descendant historiography. Neither war nor peace, this history of Florence proves,
endures perpetually, progressing along a single arc—a resonating historical instability,
particularly in light of Italy’s recent unification and Britain’s imperial expansion.
Florentine liberty, the Horner sisters explain, sometimes thrived, sometimes suffered, but
“Good sense and increasing power derived from higher education and commercial wealth, enabled the citizens to establish order and to subdue, if not wholly to destroy, a barbarous aristocracy” for a time (1:7). Then, the “growth of riches … accompanied with greater luxury and its attendant vices, prepared the way for the entire destruction of civic liberty” (1:7). Even this “entire destruction,” however, proves provisional. Explicitly commenting on pre-sixteenth-century Florence, these reflections implicitly comment on the nineteenth-century European political climate. Offering both broad and deep historical accounts, *Walks in Florence* leads readers among significant monuments and edifices, describing in detail important destinations and linking the reflections to the present physical landscape. Each chapter typically begins with a current description of an existing landmark, and then traces some important moments in its history, ending with a chronology of some hitherto key events in that landmark’s life. In addition to resisting readings of uninterrupted progress or decline, these histories refuse to acknowledge or speculate on distant moments of absolute origin.

The Horners’ book removes the need for temporal distance. By habitually walking among Florentine monuments, Horner argues, outsiders can engage peripatetically with history not *in spite of* but *because of* the city’s present life. For Ruskin, this compromise is a matter of clearing away or seeing past the muck of modern and foreign life. As Horner insists, however, “It is in the churches, palaces, and streets of Florence, within the compass of *daily* walks, that we must search for the true history of her citizens” (1:viii). For the Horners, Florence’s grand history is indivisible from the plight of modern Florentines. They insist, “Names as great [as Medici] … are still preserved, *not only in history but in their descendants*, who inhabit the places of their ancestors, and thus keep
No matter the influx of foreigners—the wealthy and the powerful—the essence of Florentine greatness is hereditary, a matter of birthright. Unlike Ruskin, the Horners do not linger on the bell tower’s history but moves quickly to a description of Donatello’s statues on the Western face. These, they explain, “are portraits of … friends of the artist,” one of which “has a bald head, popularly called a *Zuccone* or great gourd, by which name this statue is known; it is admirably executed, and exhibits one of the qualities in which Donatello particularly excelled, the work being exactly calculated to produce the intended effect *at a distance*; and thus the statue which, in the artist’s studio, appeared a failure, was one of his most successful productions” (1:65). Here, the difference between failure and success is a matter of distance. It is this artistic feat of Donatello’s through which Horner chooses to define Florentine art and, by extension, Florence itself. It is, essentially, the same mimetic pattern through which writers like Ruskin reproduce Enlightenment histories of Western culture—histories that underwrite how foreign empires control space that, through imperial fractiousness, has become peripheral. Ruskin’s teleology is not only an explanation of art but a history against which he laments modern foreign Florentine life. While he marks Florence’s transnationality as a condition of civil advancement in the past, he denounces it in the present as proof of how far Giotto’s descendants have fallen. For the Horners though, the messiness of daily life is the nation, and it is this social history that they choose to emphasize in their guidebook. The nation, these authors together demonstrate, is networked—not just spatially, through the routes by which texts and bodies circulate physically, but ideologically and practically, with crisscrossing threads of significance coming and going over space and time.
By habitually walking among Florentine monuments, outsiders can engage peripatetically with history, as Ruskin will later reiterate. *Walks in Florence* explains, “Simple, courteous, yet reserved, humorous and fond of ease, yet proud of traditional industry and freedom, but still more proud of the traditional greatness of his city, the Florentine retains many of the virtues, with some of the defects of his Republican forefathers” (viii, emphasis added). Once again, “traditional industry” and “freedom” are linked for the English-speaking traveler, who ideally learns this historical theory as she makes first-hand memories in Florence. Not only does *Walks in Florence* map “true history” onto present space, but it also indicates that a substantial part of engaging with the spatially or temporally distant is familiarizing it, transforming it into everyday knowledge through “daily walks” among present-day Florentines. The Horners encourage habitual interaction with a place and its history in order to naturalize novelty while also allowing subtle details to manifest. Such habitual excavation embraces those meanings as an active part of present, everyday existence and celebrates the ongoing interactions of then and now. “Daily walks” allow the traveler to immerse herself in the rhythm of a place. They allow her to access a “true” vantage point from which to comment on ongoing history and far-reaching politics in a manner that preserves an investment in the “living present.”

*Walks in Florence* adapts a fluid scale of examination, adjusting from telescope to microscope to reshape the historical picture. It negotiates perspective and distance, focusing on the details of a component or projecting outward into broad contexts to offer varied identities within equally varied histories. As the narrator leads the reader through the Uffizi, for instance, she comments on the art objects there, as well as on the reductive
impressions their chronological arrangement likely leaves on the visitor (345). The Uffizi itself is a landmark with a history, but the guide moves in ever closer to examine the history of the rooms and even the individual items—each of which has its own unique story and temporal trajectory—that coexist in the monumental space. In contrast, the perspective also moves outward conceptually and spatially at times, for example, from the varied history of a sarcophagus to a similar object in the British Museum, or from a Rubens painting to a discussion of the artist and his work in the context of European politics (424-5 and 422). The history of a landmark can never fully encompass a comprehensive identity; every particulate also has a history that is not negated merely because another history rearranges or envelops it. The narrative of a place and time can thus contract to details, but also can expand beyond itself, creating a nucleus of meaning through the constant tug of inward/outward forces. As I have discussed through Charles Dickens’s narrative depictions of Italy as spatially and temporally fractal, the traveler here can view the history embedded in a landmark microscopically, interrogating each stone’s temporality, so too can she understand history as consisting of moments that can be assembled (and reassembled) into eras.  

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The Horners’ guide includes many paratextual instances that compromise the stability of the physical descriptions, undercutting the guidebook’s authority and reliability while emphasizing the importance of “daily walks.” To know the city is to accept it as a “living,” dynamic network of people and structure over time as well as over space. For example, the Horners explain that the Basilica’s reliquaries have been moved to the “gem-room” in the Uffizi; that a Jacopo Pontormo painting has been moved from the Uffizi to St. Mark’s; and that “a table of pietra-dura, executed in 1600 for the altar of
the Medici Mausoleum … may have been removed” from the Uffizi, current location unknown (128, 389, and 437). A reader who actually relies on the guide for direction, therefore, risks becoming lost among destinations perpetually in flux.192 The present forcibly interrupts the Horners’ historical narrative: “Guido Cavalcante, the friend of Dante, who is described by the chronicler Dino Compagni as ‘a young and noble knight, brave, courteous, and much addicted to solitude and study, happened to be walking along the Corso degli Adimari’—now Via Calzaioli—‘towards the Piazza of the Baptistery…’” (26-7). Just as Susan in Isolina and in her political histories warns against the celebration of a liberty that neglects broad social reform, the sisters here narrate a nuanced, democratic history including great deeds without abstracting them and without severing present Florentines from their exalted ancestors. Indeed, history here is a matter of continuity rather than rupture. They write, “Many barbarous acts of cruelty were perpetrated by the Florentines in the halcyon days of their Republic, both towards citizens who happened to belong to a vanquished minority, and towards captives taken in war, especially if natives of a rival city; but the Florentines were nevertheless great in patriotic virtue, and capable of noble devotion and heroic self-sacrifice for the sake of Florence. Names as great and even greater than that of Medici, such as Capponi, Ridolfi, Strozzi, Albizzi, are still preserved, not only in history but in their descendants, who inhabit the places of their ancestors, and thus keep alive the memory” (8).

For the Horners, those who want to access Florence and its history spend time there living; for Ruskin, they must spend time looking. “It is the crowning virtue of all great art, however little is left of it by the injuries of time, that little will be lovely. As long as you can see anything, you can see—almost all … And if you look long, you will
find it is not so little” (I). Ruskin demonstrates this method of seeing by describing a fragment and directing his reader to look at it until its aesthetic merit becomes apparent: “but what is Florentine, and for ever great—unless you can see also the beauty of this old man in his citizen’s cap, —you will never see … you will,—or may—know, from this example alone, what noble decorative sculpture is, and was, and must be, from the days of earliest Greece to those of latest Italy” (I). Damien calls these instances of “synecdochical thinking” in Ruskin’s Italian travel writing. Yet, in the moment when Ruskin asserts that the “beauty of this old man in his citizen’s cap” contains knowledge of “noble decorative sculpture … from the days of earliest Greece to those of latest Italy,” he is not substituting a part of sculpture for the whole throughout time. Rather, he describes an instance in which the overall form of “noble decorative sculpture” becomes visible within the small part by virtue of the traveler’s sustained looking. In short, Ruskin, like Dickens, describes a fractal structure in which the whole form is visible at a fine scale within the part. Synecdoche doesn’t quite account for Ruskin’s description, in part because he is identifying what he considers sculpture at its apex, its most “noble.” He knows he can see its history and future in this example because it will never, to Ruskin, advance beyond this point but only either degenerate or repeat in cycles of development.193
CONCLUSION

Long before the Mediterranean enabled the British navy to establish imperial
ascendancy, it had, as James Boswell so succinctly notes, provided the cultural ideology
that facilitated the empire’s success across the nineteenth century. The sea—or
specifically for Boswell, its “shores”—set the stage for Western civilization and allowed
British thinkers to trace their heritage to the great political and cultural civilizations of
Greece, Rome, Egypt, and the Holy Land. This cultural lineage, as Felicia Hemans so
emphatically insists, both establishes Britain as the natural heir to high culture and allows
depth to constructions of Western heritage in Britain. On an individual scale, nineteenth-
century travel to the Mediterranean established a traveler’s cultural authority and polish
(by allowing them to participate in an aristocratic mode of moving and seeing, as Chard
explains), but it simultaneously exposed the traveler to contradictions, tensions, and
fissures in Britain’s overwrought relationship with what Thomas Hardy, writing nearly a
century after Hemans, still designated the “historical and original Mediterranean.”

Travel writing’s default mode is verisimilitude, but it is, by its production,
necessarily reflective and told through the distancing properties of memory and narration.
On an individual scale, it functions like the broader method of constructing heritage
through discourses that use historical material and situatedness to construct cultural and
political identity in the present. Just as travel writing creates connections of memory
across space, so too do heritage discourses create connections of across time. British
writers on the Mediterranean mark history, their individual places in it, and their broader
imperial identity through the Mediterranean. Time and its passage manifest in the landscape and in the ruins that characterize its shores for British travelers and tourists.

The sea itself, though, exceeds human time, constantly checking human calculations of triumphant—or even significant—Western history at the same time as it conveys British travelers to the spaces that form the foundation of British history and culture. Byron depicts the Mediterranean Sea as distinct from the antique lands that encompass it by virtue of its constancy, endurance, and atemporality: “Thy shores are empires,” he apostrophizes, “changed in all save thee” and “Time writes no wrinkle on thy azure brow— / Such as creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now” (IV.clxxxii.1630 & 1637-8). To travel in and around the Mediterranean, as Byron discovers, is to experience not only the contrast of modernity and history but also the insignificance of human history in the context of natural history. The history of human civilization—extended to the most ancient origins of Western civilization apparent in the Mediterranean region—pales in significance when juxtaposed, as the sailing pilgrim cannot help but do, with the sea’s unconquerable fluidity. Sioban Carroll argues that the sea, as an unconquerable space, serves as an “atopia,” a “supranatural space” into which, for Byron, “human history disappears” (206, 73). More precisely, it is a space onto which human history—or any other account of time—cannot be marked. Where the present traveler brings modernity onto the landscape, juxtaposing past and present on a single plane, the enduring timelessness of the sea exceeds human narrative. On one hand, Byron sees change in the decay of empires like Rome, where time alone triumphs (IV.cx). On the other hand, he sees longevity and repetition—positively in the endurance of poetry and song, negatively in Italy’s generations who “plod in sluggish misery / Rotting from sire to
son, and age to age” (IV.xciv.838-9). If there is a genealogy as Hemans suggests, it is a genealogy of misery that looks like movement but is in fact repetition.

This somewhat counterintuitive sense of the sea as timeless and unchanging while the landscape is fluid is what allows Charles Lyell to redefine time itself beyond human history’s narrow limits. Citing Byron in his *Principles of Geology*, Lyell breaks apart foundational assumptions about time’s scale, ultimately challenging historical arguments of human significance that Britain had long located on the Mediterranean’s shores. For later Mediterranean travelers, a journey to Athens or Rome, for example, attested not to humanity’s antiquity but to the earth’s. Instead, what one could find on those historic shores was a kind of enduring, multifaceted imbrication of past and present—what Susan Horner described as a “living past.” Byron, too, argued that “History, with all her volumes vast, / Hath but *one* page” (IV.cviii.968-9). Past and present are palimpsestic for Byron because the present chooses what to know and what to forget: it constructs a heritage through discourse. Such writing of history not only from the present but also *through the lens of* the present and with an awareness of constructing a particular present political, national or cultural identity. This is the kind of “historical romance” Georg Lukacs, in his foundational treatise on the genre, recognizes in the work of Alessandro Manzoni, who, he argues, “discovered a theme which enabled him to overcome the objective unfavourableness of Italian history and to create a real historical novel, that is, one which would rouse the present, which contemporaries would experience as their own prehistory” (70). This type of historical narrative that seeks to “rouse the present,” I have endeavored to argue, is a form of heritage discourse. And for nineteenth-century British
travelers and writers, no space offered as much cultural capital to such discourses as the Mediterranean.

For British writers of the Mediterranean, the sea establishes cultural dominance by transferring naval powers out of Britain and ensuring the safe passage of goods, capital, and cultural relics back in. Moreover, the sea proves the only permanent feature on earth as humans experience it. In Modern Greece, the “blue waters … of old that bore / The free, the conquering … / E’en as their barks have left no traces on your tide” (vi.55-6, 60). The sea proves stubbornly unwritable and constant, both in its escape from the effects of time and ruin and in its function to carry “[t]he free, the conquering” to victory. At the same time access to the sea reopens heritage landscapes for the British, its unchangeability contrasts with the revolutions of civilizations and the insignificance on a geological timescale. Much as it exceeds human attempts to mark and contain time, so too does the sea defy attempts to control, own, or even permanently demarcate space. The sea requires any potential colonizer’s constant physical presence. It can neither be carved into imperial or national segments with borders or walls nor be marked with monuments and ruins that attest to civilization’s endurance over time. Landmarks require land; there is no maritime analog. At sea, no traveler can ever be truly sure that they witness, observe, and record the world “on the spot” of an esteemed predecessor or great event, except in the sense of the whole sea as an indivisible “spot.”

The Mediterranean had long been cast as ancient and originary for British travelers, but it was also a politically charged space of concentrated transnationality and overlapping empires. For instance, historians have credited the “Alexandria Massacre” of 11 June 1882 with launching the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt that year; the
altercation that sparked the massacre, however, was not the “confrontation between civilization and barbarism” (Holland 112) reported in the London papers but a dispute between “an Arab donkey boy” and his Maltese passenger over the fare (Chamberlain 14). The squabble escalated as Egyptian and Greek passersby joined in until “some Europeans in panic started firing guns from their balconies … A riot soon became a massacre” (Chamberlain 14). As Robert Holland notes, “In a city where altercations between expatriate minorities and native Alexandrians were a daily occurrence, the spark was always likely to be a banal one” (Holland 112). And yet, the story—which, like Waterloo, swiftly became an event—appeared in Britain as a cohesive, comprehensible defining moment in British policy in the eastern Mediterranean.

I have tried not only to recover the nineteenth-century Mediterranean in British literature but also to recover the Mediterranean as central to nineteenth-century British literature. The sea and its shores suffused texts across genres, from explicit travel narratives to fiction to scientific and political writing. Recovering the centrality of the Mediterranean allows us to recognize a de facto transnationality shaping British experiences, perspectives, and literature. What if, in the manner of Thackeray and the Horners, twenty-first century readers, writers, and scholars asked ourselves how and why we classify travelers, landscapes, and aesthetic merit in the ways that we do? What if we analyzed the raced and classed rhetoric of mobility that we largely still use in current scholarship—in particular, the hierarchy of terms through which scholars across disciplines continue to designate “tourists,” “exiles,” “refugees,” “cosmopolites,” “expats,” and especially “migrants” or “immigrants”—and recognize how much we have inherited from nineteenth-century imperialist taxonomies of mobility? What might
happen if we were to read and to teach designated migrant literature, such as Tomás Rivera’s *The Harvest*, in the same literary tradition as canonical white British authors, such as the self-styled “exile” Lord Byron or the “bourgeois gypsy” Vernon Lee? What changes when *Villette*’s Lucy Snowe is an immigrant instead of an expatriate? The implications of re-orienting our understanding of what it means for a text, an author, an idea, or even a history to be “British” are numerous, particularly when we yoke that concept of nationality to political and cultural hierarchies. Even the nation as a concept, in fact, seems to become less a stable identity and more a coincidence of multifaceted, interacting, and dynamic forms. The nineteenth-century Mediterranean begs the question: what makes a nation? An empire? And who belongs to it—or does not? These questions still resonate in the present—for example, as we face the continuing refugee crisis and the Brexit fallout. No longer is the goal of empire to impose cultural standards from a center onto all the globe’s peripheries; twenty-first century fantasies of closed borders and pure nations (and their attendant political rhetoric) aim to encapsulate the center while exploiting resources from without.

The connections between nineteenth-century nation- and empire-making and twenty-first century nationalist politics are thus not difficult to trace. Katarina Gephardt’s recent monograph *The Idea of Europe in British Travel Narratives, 1789-1914* notes almost immediately, “The imperial legacy of the nineteenth century feeds both the anti-European rhetoric and the residual notion of Britain as the center of civilization in the British press” (2). Since the publication of Gephardt’s book, we are facing what seems to be an inevitable dissolution of European identity and its political expression via the European Union in the wake of Brexit, as well as the rise of populist politics in the
United States built on a similar “us vs. them” nationalist rhetoric. While it would be simplistically presentist to say that we have been here before, it might be “strategically presentist,” in the vogue terminology of Victorian scholarship, to recognize that these divisive forms and structures based on demographics and borders are still smoke and mirrors. Sociologist Dariusz Gafijczuk has recently written in response to current affairs in Europe of the impossibility of “confin[ing]” European nations by solid boundaries. Citing imperial and colonial expansion throughout Western history, Gafijczuk claims that, in mythology, “[t]he history of Europe begins with a crossing over the Mediterranean,” of the kidnap of Europa. From these mythological beginnings, the Mediterranean has been a space of transport ensuring that “Europe is an ‘unfinished adventure’ that is ‘allergic to borders.’”


---. “Journal, 1861-1862.” British Institute of Florence. MS.


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1 Boswell, 3:21.
2 Just as philhellenism swept Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century, Egyptomania saturated British culture the second, even in communities well beyond London fashion, as demonstrated, for example, in the Egyptian winged sun image that decorates the grave of the poet Arthur Clough in Florence’s English cemetery. The Egyptian iconography on Clough’s tombstone was designed by the British migrant author Susan Horner, who I discuss in chapter four. Horner describes Clough’s death in her journal of 1861-2 and explains how Clough’s wife, Blanche, asked her to design the image. A walk through the English or Protestant Cemetery today reveals the popularity of ancient Egyptian symbols, even among the Christian dead in Italy.  
3 See also chapter two.
4 See Abulafia on the Mediterranean Sea’s prevailing winds and currents (xxiv-xxv). Reading from north to south along wind patterns depends on global notions of climate, whereas anyone in a boat would quickly get a sense of how the water currents generally move counter-clockwise as cold Atlantic water enters from the Strait of Gibraltar.
5 See, for example, Edward Said’s iconic Orientalism; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s scholarship on postcolonial nationalism and culture, especially Nationalism and the Imagination; and Srinivas Aravamudan, “In the Wake of the Novel.”
6 Hardy, “Genoa and the Mediterranean” [March 1887], line 1. This poem is part of the aptly titled Poems of Pilgrimage section in the also aptly titled collection Poems of the Past and the Present, first published in 1901.
8 See also Chloe Chard on “imaginative geography” and the “discourse of travel” on the Grand Tour (Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour 12).
9 See Carol Jacobs, Telling Time; and Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, Sequel to History.
It is worth noting here that, although Matz’s article offers a temporality studies reading of twentieth-century literature, his title is a play on Leah Price’s *How To Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*.

On rising narrative attention to “small[] fractions of time,” see Sue Zemka on the development of the “moment” in Victorian literature.

Prior to Levinson, *Modern Language Quarterly* and *PMLA* both featured studies considering the importance of formalism and arguing for its rejuvenation in conjunction with cultural studies, including essays by Wolfson, Robert Kaufman, and Catherine Gallagher, all of which indicate a beneficial integration of literary formalism, aesthetics, and cultural studies.

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On time in Dickens’s novels, see especially Livesey and Grossman.

See Robert Holland 110.

See also Abulafia 568.

See Chatterjee; also see Hargrave.

On classical education in Britain, see Clarke; and Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*.

Susan Horner letter to Caroline Crane Marsh, currently in the George Perkins Marsh Collection in the University of Vermont Special Collections.

On the importance of discontinuity in nineteenth-century historiography, see Brand.

Clarke’s *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900* traces the history of Greek and Latin both as foundational content of British grammar schools through the nineteenth century and as the source of their structure, with the first grammar schools established by the “Roman governor Agricola … to bind his subjects more closely to Rome” (1).

See Robert Holland; Gallant.

Although not written in English, Germaine de Staël’s *Corinne* explores issues of history and national identity in England—where it was widely popular throughout the nineteenth century—and on the Continent, particularly (as the subtitle indicates) in Italy.

I am using the terms “imagination” and “reality” here and throughout the dissertation (unless specified otherwise) purely to mark a distinction between physical places or object and their literary representations; I synonymously use “fiction” and “nonfiction,” though as I will show throughout, these designations are particularly complex and sometimes arbitrary in travel writing, despite the sometimes-desperate authorial attempts to distinguish between them.

In chapters 2 and 3, for example, I discuss some of the major British writers who explicitly take up Byron’s Mediterranean project (in ways often complicated by Byron’s already ubiquitous legacy in the 1840s), such as William Thackeray and Charles Dickens; other writers for whom Byron’s travels are narratively formative include George Gissing and, as I discuss in chapter 4, Susan Horner. See also David Roessel’s *In Byron’s Shadow*.

See Esterhammer.

Hemans’s revised second edition of *Restoration* is twice as long as the first. My citations follow the lineation in Susan Wolfson’s edition, which marks where the two editions differ but maintains a consistent line numbering.

See, for example, Cheeke; Minta; Robert Holland 42-6; and Roessel.


Catherine Robson call Hemans “arguably the most widely published, most widely read poet of the nineteenth century” (149). See also Wolfson, *Borderlines*. 
“The fact is,” Byron writes in his letter to Hobhouse, which serves as the preface, “that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive … it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so” (Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage 122).

33 See, for instance, Buzard on the “authenticity effect” (172-92); and Colbert, 2 and 14-5.
34 There is also an element of irony, as the line attempts to elevate the individual ruin to the level of the ruined empire. As I discuss in chapter 3, Thackeray amplifies this to satire, explicitly invoking Byron, in Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo.
35 As I discuss in chapter 4, Susan Horner, a longtime admirer of Byron’s poetry, develops a similar technique of layering personal experience onto historic spaces.
36 In Blackadder: Back and Forth (6 December 1999), Blackadder navigates his time machine to the battle in order to steal Wellington’s boots (accidentally killing him in the process) only to return to a present England under French imperial rule.
37 “Indeed, even the name of the battle was created by the newspapers. The French newspapers had called it the ‘Battle of Mont Saint Jean.’ British newspapers instead used the name ‘Waterloo’ since Wellington’s dispatch had been dated from his Waterloo headquarters and ‘Waterloo’ sounded more English and was easier to pronounce” (Marysa Demoor, 456. See also Cathcart).
38 On Walter Scott’s “Field of Waterloo,” see Shaw, 55-61. Over the nineteenth century, reviewers of Scott’s poem would repeat the lines “On Waterloo’s ensanguined plain, / Lie tens of thousands of the slain: / But none by sabre or the shot, / Fell half so flat as Walter Scott” (qtd. in the April 1880 entry of “Belles Lettres,” in Westminster Review, Volume CXIII, January-April 1880, 298.
39 Hemans and Byron read each others’ poetry and maintained a tempestuous professional relationship through their mutual publisher, John Murray. Byron’s correspondence, as Wolfson notes in her edition of Hemans’s works, attests that he admired Restoration and deplored Modern Greece. His Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, however, indicates a similarly complicated perspective toward the harvesting of antiquities by imperial powers.
40 On the trope of Italy as a fallen woman in, for example, Mary Wollstonecraft’s Maria (1798) and de Stael’s Corinne (1807), see Stabler (43).
41 Lady Morgan’s Italy (1821), for instance, traces empire from Egypt to Greece, Italy, and finally England (17), and J. S. Howson’s History of the Mediterranean (1849) later echoes this lineage via Johnson and Byron (12).
42 See Wolfson, Mellor, and Sweet.
43 Byron wrote canto III between 25 April and 4 July 1816, encompassing the one-year anniversary of Napoleon’s defeat at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815.
44 Byron explains further in the note the significance of this particular story and its great value through time: “I know of no human composition so affecting as this [Julia Alpinula’s epitaph], nor a history of deeper interest. These are the names and actions which ought not to perish, and to which we turn with a true and healthy tenderness, from the wretched and glittering detail of a confused mass of conquests and battles, with which the mind is roused for a time to a false and feverish sympathy, from whence it recurs at length with all the nausea consequent on such intoxication” (308n634).
45 Stabler argues, “[E]xile accentuates the linguistic peculiarities of a writer like Byron who, after only a few years of residence abroad, was condemned by his contemporaries and by subsequent critics for being ‘un-English’” (10).
Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy actually directs travelers to significant locations described Corinne (331). In fact, Angela Leighton discusses Corinne as a travel guide in its own right (223-38, 223). See also Buzard, The Beaten Track, 111 & 168.

On Italy and the Mediterranean region as postcolonial space, see Chambers.

On the “imagined geography” of former Grand Tour sites, see Chard, Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour.

As I discuss in more detail in chapter 4, the role of specific natural elements, especially sunlight, for the appreciation of art remains a point of significance for travel and art guides throughout the nineteenth century. For example, both the Horners and John Ruskin in the 1870s guidebooks to Florence emphasize the importance of Tuscan light in creating and appreciating Florentine Art. The importance of the specific natural environment is itself a component of Florentine form. As the Horners explain in their travel guide, “[T]he brilliant southern sun, rendering the slightest indentation or colour perceptible on the surface [of the cathedral] at a considerable distance, imparts a peculiar beauty or character, which would be wanting in similar architectural decorations beneath a northern sky” (53). The regional sunlight allows the traveler to interact with foreign historical and artistic landmarks.

The necessity of death for succession has been examined perhaps most famously by Derrida in his Specters of Marx.

See Wolfson 31n11.

See Robert Holland on the 1815 Congress of Vienna.

See Blackstone.

See Peacocke, 112-49; and St. Clair, Lord Elgin and the Marbles.

Peacocke quotes the wall plaque in the British Museum: “Elgin’s removal of the sculptures … has always been a matter of discussion, but one thing is certain—his actions spared them further damage by vandalism, weathering and pollution. It is also thanks to Elgin that generations of visitors have been able to see the sculptures at eye level rather than high up on the building … In London and Athens the sculptures tell different and complementary stories. In Athens they are part of a museum that focuses upon the ancient history of the city and its Acropolis. In the British Museum, they are part of a world museum, where they can be connected with other ancient civilizations, such as those of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia” (112; emphasis added). The exhibit label informs through the same nineteenth-century universal heritage discourse Hemans lyricizes, setting the museum up as a kind of cultural anthology.

Wolfson notes that the reviews and journals speculated widely about the poet’s name and sex, with some even surmising Byron to be the author (34).

He details possible desecrations: “the pyramid of bones [is] diminished … A few still remain, notwithstanding the pains taken by the Burgundians for ages (all who passed that way removing a bone to their own country), and the less justifiable larcenies of the Swiss postilions, who carried them off to sell for knife handles.” Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage III.LXIII-LXIV.

To “fair Greece,” Byron indicts his homeland “Dull is the eye that will not weep to see / Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed / By British hands, which it had best behoved / To guard those relics ne’er to be restored” (II.xv.129-32).

The historical geography of Liberty’s steady march westward from Greece to England will soon encounter an adjustment with the revolutionary Greek movements in the 1820s against the Ottoman Empire (technically, Great Britain’s ally). When Britain’s own empire rises, British writers become more eager to locate the origins of liberty in Italy, and especially in Florence. See Lady Morgan’s 1821 Italy, which specifically explains that “liberty found her palladium in Florence” (9). This book was specifically banned in pre-unification Italy, as the English banker John Maquay records in his diary that his party’s trunks were searched for it. See also Gallant. In chapter 4 I discuss British conceptions of Florence and liberty.
To the modern Greeks who have no claim to either the ancient lands or the heritage objects, Hemans offers immigration to the Americas, “the scenes of fictions wildest tales, / Her own bright East, Morea! flies” (xi.101-2).

The massacre of the Greek Orthodox Suliotes—the result of Ali Pasha’s broken treaty with the Greek-Albanese rebels in the mountains of Suli—occurred 16 December 1803. The story evoked strong sympathy with Westerners because it vividly demonstrated Christian suffering under Ottoman rule. Hemans glorifies the Suliote mothers, both in this stanza and in her later poem “The Suliote Mother,” published in the “Lays of Many Lands” section of her collection *The Forest Sanctuary; and Other Poems* (1825). See Elizabeth Fay on “maternal nationalism” in *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism* (91-105); and Janion on Suli.


Here, I am echoing theories of succession and sovereignty from political histories like Ernst Kantorowicz’s *The King’s Two Bodies* and literary theories like Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*.

We can read this subjective travel as a reaction against older models of travel writing that focused on description according to popular taste. See Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*; and Colbert.

As Beard also notes, the railway line to Pompeii opened in 1839, and Pompeii was included in Murray’s first *Handbook for Travellers in Southern Italy* in 1853 (22-3).

I want to stress that the disciplines I am designating as “archaeology” and “geology” are not perfectly synonymous with those disciplines as they are practiced today. In the early nineteenth century, both were still in the process of developing central theories and methods of inquiry, and both were influenced by strong cultural-historical concerns. Although the Society of Antiquaries of London had officially existed since the mid-eighteenth century, Royal Societies for Archaeology and Anthropology were not chartered in London until the 1840s. The Geological Society of London was officially chartered in 1825.

Zimmerman reads Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” alongside uniformitarian geology to explain how “even as it exposed the terrible specter of eventual annihilation, geology offered a theory that empowered the small, the individual” (4).
On ruins in Romantic poetry, see Regier. The crucial difference for Gell is that ruin is not a stable state on which one can lyricize but an urgent matter requiring the antiquary’s attention to prevent.

This balance of reason and imagination in historical depiction is paradoxical because “[h]e who is deficient in the art of selection may, by showing nothing but the truth, produce all the effect of the grossest falsehood. It perpetually happens that one writer tells less truth than another, merely because he tells more truths.”

See also Martin Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time* 42-7.


See Thomas. On Victorian timekeeping and innovation in relation to narrative, see Zemka 4–7. On transportation’s effects on individual experiences of time in Dickens’s representations, see Grossman 26, 71, and 185–86. On pre-railway travel and time, see Livesey.

On time as a dually political and aesthetic form, see Levine 49–81.

On tourism, see Buzard. On the ubiquity of travel narratives about Italy, see Stabler. On *Pictures from Italy* and the travel narrative, see Flint’s introduction to *Pictures from Italy*, as well as Browning and McNees.


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See also Kragh, “Geometry and Astronomy.”

See Mandelbrot 402.

See Kolmogorov and Yushkevich 53–74.

On De Morgan’s career and distrust of the Royal Society, see Stephen. Additionally, Babbage’s preface addresses the problematic imbrication of science with social influences (especially religion) (x).

For example, Taylor stretches “Romantics” to include the likes of Macaulay and Carlyle, but we could also think of Thomas De Quincey’s “radix” from “The English Mail Coach” (1849), in which he perceives an entire sequence of events in the first moment (333).

See Zemka on the “moment” as a Victorian narrative technique distilling time into a highly potent unit; also see Zimmerman on individual significance in geological time.

See McNees on Dickens and the guidebook genre.

On the relationship between *American Notes* and *Pictures from Italy*, see Browning.

Vrobel expands her fractal time and its phenomenological lineage through Husserl in her book *Fractal Time*.

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For background on the meridian at San Petronio, see Heilbron 23 and 274–79.

Although *Pictures from Italy* makes no mention of it, Heilbron notes that “to ease public perplexity over time [at San Petronio], the obliging fabbricieri ordered, as early as 1758, that four clocks be installed east of the meridian line, ‘because by equable motion alone clocks and the sun cannot be made to tell the same time.’ The clocks mark a conventional central European time, local mean time, old Italian time, and, what was more difficult, true solar time” (279).

For example, the law of conversion in thermodynamics (see Kuskey 76, 79–80, and Gold 6–7). See also Harman’s history of nineteenth-century physics, 4–5.

See, for example, Picker 16 and Heady 109.


Murray had published both Felicia Hemans’s and Lord Byron’s Mediterranean poems, as I discuss in chapter one, as well as a series of *Handbooks for Travellers* that would become the definitive authority for Victorian travel.
Moxon, incidentally, had been convicted of blasphemy in 1841 after publishing Percy Shelley’s *Queen Mab* with the parts Mary Shelley had expunged from her edition of Percy Shelley’s works.

I use “real” only in the basic sense of experiential and material phenomena—what appears narratively present—as opposed to what is imagined or remembered. Of course, part of *Cornhill to Grand Cairo*’s humor arises in the messy overlaps among these categories in the face of efforts to delineate strictly between fiction and nonfiction.

Freedgood discusses this intergenre collaboration as a potential component of imperialism (393–411).

Thackeray, diary entry, 19 August 1844, in *1841–1851*, 150.


Thackeray to Carmichael-Smyth, 28 March 1845, in *1841–1851*, 188–90, 190. Robert Hampson notes the problem of an “already textualized” journey for Thackeray, 221.

For a precedent, one might look, as did Thackeray, to Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* as a travel narrative that blends satire, aesthetics, and politics. See also Beaty.

Said notes, “The form of such works as [Alexander] Kinglake’s *Eothen* (1844) … is rigidly chronological and dutifully linear … Kinglake’s undeservedly famous and popular work is a pathetic catalogue of pompous ethnocentrisms and tiringly nondescript accounts of the Englishman’s East” (193).

See Leask on “the dialectical relationship between antiquity and modernity in travel writing situated on the threshold of the modern era” (2).

Buzard observes a series of motifs that contribute to what he terms the “authenticity effect” (172–92, 177). Thackeray’s text, I argue, works somewhat differently from guidebooks and travelogues because it takes authenticity as part of its joke, embedding it in a fictionalized journey with a distinct narrative persona.

See Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 70–2. Buzard takes this idea of being “on the spot” from John Murray III, *A Handbook for Travellers on the Continent* (v–vi). Also, notably, in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which Thackeray invokes both explicitly and implicitly, Byron insists on its composition “amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe” (preface to the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*).

Thackeray’s “Eastern book” entered the market among substantial company, including Mary Shelley’s *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844), Charles Dickens’s *Pictures from Italy* (1846), and Harriet Martineau’s *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (1848). It also engages earlier poetic representations of the East, such as *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and Percy Shelley’s “Ozymandias.”

Thackeray’s letter to Edward Chapman on 22 December 1845 indicates that Thackeray wrote the dedication, preface, and title last, delivering them to the publisher together (see *1841–1851*, 219).

Thackeray’s diary of 1844 dates the trip from 22 August to 27th October (1841–1851, 139–57, 150 and 156).

On the Maltese quarantine, Peter Vassallo explains that “healthy passengers sailing from Britain to Malta at the time were not obliged to undergo quarantine” but that Thackeray spent seventeen days in quarantine on the return journey (69).


On the development of satire and split characterization in Byron, see Beaty, who notes the “advancement of Byron’s satiric technique” in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*’s “two personae,” even though he argues that cantos I and II “do not qualify as sustained satire” (44–5).

See de Man, 212.
I argue that *Cornhill to Grand Cairo* develops the skeptical narrative method Fisher identifies in *Vanity Fair*.

The Treaty of Paris (1815) decreed Corfu and the rest of the Ionian Islands a protectorate of Great Britain (see Holland 26).

Thackeray’s criticism of the travelers who regard *Tooke’s Pantheon* (1698) as an authority on modern Greece is understandable since its descriptions would have been contemporary to the seventeenth century.

See Roessel.

The section of Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* to which Thackeray alludes here is canto I, stanzas 58–70, wherein the narrator leaves Harold in Spain momentarily and overlays his own reflections in Greece and Turkey (81–5). Both feminine ideals are distant and inaccessible.

This allusion demonstrates the portability of tropes between travel writing and other types of literature. Similar instances of “My name is Norval” as a common rote recitation occur in such novels as *Mansfield Park* and Thackeray’s own *Vanity Fair* (see Austen 148; and Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 538).

Thackeray to Carmichael-Smyth, 26 July 1845, in *1841–1851*, 203–4, 204.


Thackeray to Charlotte Ritchie, August 1845, in *1841–1851*, 208–9, 209.


This common moment is crucial to economic exchange; in this sense, Thackeray prefigures an economic version of what Johannes Fabian calls coevality. For a narrative application of coevality, see Michie, “Hard Times, Global Times: Simultaneity in Trollope and Gaskell.”

See Leask, 43–53.


The OED dates the usage of the term “Levant,” meaning “[t]he eastern part of the Mediterranean, with its islands and the countries adjoining,” from the fifteenth century through the 1840s. The term could include Greece, the Ionian Islands, and the coastal areas of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria cohesively, without the dynamic political borders of countries, empires, religions, etc. As such, it held currency in the nineteenth century as a term for travel and commerce, though it was already becoming something of an archaism.

See Adelson, Nash, Malley, and Auchterlonie, for examples.

Trollope’s *Autobiography* identifies this agent through an anachronistic combination of political negotiations: “I was to communicate with an officer of the Pasha, who was then called Nubar Bey. I presume him to have been the gentleman who has lately dealt with our Government as to the Suez Canal shares, and who is well known to the political world as Nubar Pasha” (107).

Despite the philanthropic tinge to *The Bertrams*’s denigration of Alexandria, the Egyptian port city held strategic importance throughout the nineteenth century. As J. S. Howson’s *History of the Mediterranean* (1849) acknowledges, “Gibraltar and Alexandria, with Malta between them, are the necessary stages between Britain and her Indian Empire” (13).

Cain and Hopkins identify an “imperialist enterprise” that was “spearheaded, not by manufacturing interests, but by gentlemanly elites who saw in empire a means of generating income flows in ways that were compatible with the high ideals of honour and duty” (1:46). We can align Trollope’s internationalism with this latter type of “gentlemanly” imperialism as a solution to the kind of uncouth mobility and commerce he decries in Alexandria.

Trollope’s method was neither singular nor universal. Proto-archaeological efforts, for example, also engaged directly with coexisting, contradictory historical and political agendas. On the roots of British archaeology in geopolitical expansion, see Malley; also see Ledger-Lomas and Gange’s introduction to *Cities of God* (1-38). Goldhill, too, registers “the potent connection in Victorian culture between archaeology and imperial expansion” (85).
On the etymology and geography of the Middle East in relation to British geopolitics, see also Adelson, who claims that the term in the modern sense originated in several political articles in The Times in 1902 and 1903 as a way to give “further definition to the existing geopolitical distinctions in Asia” (24-5). The OED traces it to 1876, but the impetus for the re-mapping, I argue, is already clear in Trollope’s 1859 text.

Murray’s A Hand-book for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Constantinople (1840) uses “the East” and “the Levant” synonymously to refer primarily to lands accessible from the eastern Mediterranean.

With the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire in 1832 and the subsequent appointment of the Bavarian King Otto, Greece became, politically at least, more European. This escalated with the Greek Revolution of 1843, which brought constitutionalism to Greece (see Robert Holland 50-1 and 69-71).

On Britain’s role in determining national borders in the Middle East, see Biger 21-2.

See Sanders, who argues that the temporalization of Cairo as a medieval space emerged from British anxiety about Eastern modernization. She shows how depictions of a place’s temporality—especially in relation to Western narratives of modernization—functioned within imperial ideologies.

In fact, Trollope recasts many of the travel passages later in Tales of All Countries. See especially “A Ride across Palestine” and “George Walker at Suez.” Trollope’s Autobiography, too, addresses travel as inspirational for his fiction during The Bertrams’s composition: “From Egypt I visited the Holy Land, and on my way inspected the Post Offices at Malta and Gibraltar. I could fill a volume with true tales of my adventures. The Tales of All Countries have, most of them, some foundation in such occurrences” (109).

I’m grateful to Helena Michie for pointing out that John Caldigate (1879), which illustrates a far from positive account of settler colonialism in Australia, offers another rare depiction of far-flung travel in a Trollope novel.

It should be noted that George uses these spaces inversely. He travels to Jerusalem in part to decide on a future profession, whereas in Alexandria, he reminisces on the life he feels he’s wasted (563).

These three locations are significant to British geopolitics of both the 1840s and the late 1850s, uniting the time of the narrative to the time of the novel’s publication (see Bourne 3-107 and Robert Holland 3-108).

See, for example, Martineau’s Eastern Life or William Henry Bartlett’s Walks about the City and Environs of Jerusalem (1844).

The Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, in fact, is not inaugurated until 1892, though there were multiple international endeavors to survey and build the line in the 1850s. England, Palestine, Egypt & India, connected by a Railway Network (1876) lays out Britain’s ethical and political objectives in this infrastructure: “There is no nation in the world that has grander interests and a mightier stake in Asiatic and African affairs than we have, combining the welfare of our Indian Empire, of our Chinese and Japanese trade, and the ultimate conversion of all these heathen races to Christianity” (McBean viii).

Bar-Yosef argues, “[W]hereas Egypt and Damascus represented a congruent space in which the fabulous Orient and the biblical lands could overlap, the Holy Land was not Orientalized in a similar manner” (44-5). Because he is more specifically concerned with Palestine, he does not include Egypt as part of the Holy Land; however, nineteenth-century geography and travel narratives are far from consistent.

Construction on the Suez Canal, which would connect the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, began in 1859 but was not completed until 1869.
See Leask on the British reverence for “antique lands” central to Western culture in the decades prior to Trollope’s novel (3).

In fact, as Peter Vassallo notes, steamers traveling east from Britain generally were not even required to stop at Malta for quarantine (69).

See Goodlad.

See Levine, “From Nation to Network,” 647-666.


As no scholarly edition of Ruskin’s Mornings in Florence exists currently and scholars are most likely to access the text through various anthologies, I have cited the passages according to the essay number (I-VI) parenthetically in the text rather than to page numbers.

Sir George Trevelyan, letter to Susan Horner 11 January 1878, Woodson Research Center (Rice University).

Horner had certainly edited her earlier Italian travel journal (from 1847-8) as well, even including an index. She probably intended these, like some of her other handwritten and illustrated books, to be circulated privately or passed down to relatives, such as to the adopted daughter, Susan Horner Zilieri, who bore her name.

See, for example, Alyson Price, 165-192; Gabrielli; Neri, 127-137; and Panajia, 41n47.

Leonard Horner and his wife, Anne Lloyd Horner, had six daughters: Mary (b. 1809), Frances (b. 1814), Ann Susan, Katharine (b.1817), Leonora (b. 1818), and Joanna (b. 1823). All the sisters except Mary are known to have published. Unsurprisingly given their early connections, the sisters grew up highly educated and engaged as scholars from a young age. Susan and Joanna never married and often lived together abroad after the deaths of their parents. Mary married Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist; Katharine married Charles Lyell’s younger brother Henry; Frances married the botanist Sir Charles Bunbury, and Leonora married the German historian Georg Pertz.

Now in the British Institute of Florence.

She records, for instance, that “Professor Villari … told us the favorite caricature at Turin just now is the King of Prussia plucking the petals of a daisy and saying Io la riconosco Io non la riconosco. Alluding to his hesitation in acknowledging the Kingdom of Italy” (77).

See also the Angelica Pasolini dall’Onda Collection in the Vieuxseux archive.

Susan’s journal entry of 13 Feb. 1862 records, “Joanna and I went to the Vieuxseux in search of some books, and then took a historical walk home” (69, underline in original).

Susan’s obituary in The Athenaeum claims, “Miss Susan Horner lived in familiar intercourse with all that was most cultivated in scientific and literary society,” and it cites her works as the “best indication of her mental activity, and of the questions, political as well as artistic, to which by her natural temperament she was directed.” The article then lists Susan as the author of Hungary and its Revolutions (1854); A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily (1860); The Tuscan Poet Giuseppe Giusti and His Times (1864); Walks in Florence (1873, co-authored with Joanna Horner); Greek Vases, Historical and Descriptive (1898); and as the translator/editor of A Translation of Colletta’s History of Naples with a Supplement Bringing the Work up to Date (1858); Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century (n.d., from German).

Manuscripts for these three books are held in the British Institute of Florence. Horner may have written other books, like these, as personal gifts, but the nature of private circulation puts the burden of recovery largely on happenstance.

The Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy 8th edition (1874) notes, “Those who desire to study in detail, but agreeably, the History and Antiquities of Florence cannot do better than consult that pleasant book ‘Walks in Florence’ by the Misses Horner” (2). Baedeker’s lists it as “further reading” alongside Ruskin, Oliphant, and Hare beginning in the 1889 edition (380). Later editions expand the list to add George Eliot’s Romola and others (1892, 1903, and 1906 editions,
for example). See *Italy: Handbook for Travellers*, 13th ed., 465. The American tourist Clarissa Sands Arnold mentions in her travel diary of 1900-1 that she is reading it alongside one of Augustus Hare’s guides and George Eliot’s *Romola* while traveling (97). Deborah Stewart Weber provides the citation for Hare’s *Walks in Rome* for this passage, but it seems more likely given the context that Sands Arnold is reading Hare’s later *Florence* (1884). Additionally, Margaret Oliphant cites *Walks in Florence* in her 1876 *The Makers of Florence: Dante, Giotto, Savonarola; and their City* (342).

Horner writes to Marsh that “when Mr. [Ferenc] Pulszky left Florence he requested we would supply his place as Florentine correspondents” for the winter of 1866-67. The “we” here presumably refers to Horner and her younger sister Joanna. Her letter to Marsh later (4 March 1867) indicates that this transnational journalism endeavor centered on Susan’s capabilities and literary career: “I do not wish to be a newspaper correspondent, and I have much to occupy me, besides I doubted my own capacity for such an undertaking but I had only a day to decide as Mr. Pulszky was anxious to settle the matter and also as a true friend to me, thought in a literary point of view my acting as a correspondent for a few months might eventually prove of use to me, and as he thought me equal to it, I consented” Horner, letter to George Perkins Marsh. MS. George Perkins Marsh Collection. University of Vermont Special Collections.
As Ducci notes, G.P. Marsh, too, felt that “unification was not to be a goal achieved by the political elite, far removed from the needs of the majority of the country, who had shown itself to be capable of merely substituting local oppressors with foreign ones. Instead, he felt that the unification should be a result of a ‘revolutionary force,’ an expression of the will and desire of Italian citizens” (5). As indicated in correspondence archives, the Marshes and Horners discussed and debated international politics in depth, but it’s impossible to determine whose opinions on which nation and revolution first influenced whose. What is certain is that U.S. and British perspectives on empire and local government were deeply intertwined with circum-Mediterranean affairs.

See also Grew, 212-245.

See O’Connor. See also, Davis.

On the other hand, he continues, “[o]f bestial howling, and entirely frantic vomiting up of hopelessly damned souls through their still carnal throats, I have heard more than, please God, I will ever endure the hearing of again in one of His summers” (V).

See Elsa Damien 19-30.

Ruskin was well aware of Galileo’s exile. In the first installment of Mornings in Florence, he describes “Galileo whom Florence indeed left to be externally interesting, and would not allow to enter in her walls.” Here, he appends a note containing two lines from Samuel Rogers’s Italy (1830): “Seven years a prisoner at the city gate, / Let in but his grave-clothes” (I).

It also encapsulates what Garrett Stewart calls a “disjunctive twinning” of attraction and repulsion through which Britons imagined Italy (216).

Conversely, Hare begins Walks in Rome with concrete “dull, useful information,” such as the locations of (English-owned, if possible) shops and professionals, even including a list of addresses for “artists studios”—information that would have become outdated almost immediately (chapt. 1). Murray’s A Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy, too, lists the locations of English professionals in Florence, implying a stable English presence and enabling an insular English economy abroad.

The complexity of form here requires sustained looking: there are “subtle secret[s]” like the “immeasurability of the curved lines; and the hiding of the form by the colour.” (IV).

Hemans’s depiction of the sea as the facilitator of dominance—the masters of the sea master the world—recalls her similar depiction in Restoration, where naval acumen will make Britain great just as it made Venice a maritime power. The image of the sea as always changing and yet unchanged perseveres in travel writing that tries to grapple with time, and it even becomes, in 1830, the dually poetic and geographical feature through will Charles Lyell, quoting Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, conveys the hypothesis that “the land rather than the sea is subject alternately to rise and fall” (Principles of Geology 1:459).

See Manifesto of the V21 Collective: Ten Theses.

See Gafijczuk, “Europe Has Never Liked Borders – and It Won’t Be Confined by Them Now.”