

Victorian Travellers, Apennine Landscapes and the Development of Cultural Heritage in Eastern Liguria, c. 1875-1914

This article investigates late nineteenth-century travel in Italy from the unaccustomed perspective of historical ecology.¹ It focuses on the nature of Apennine landscapes in the northern region of Liguria, a site of growing importance for foreign travellers in the period,² and argues that some (but far from all) travellers' observations and reflections are rich, if somewhat overlooked, sources for the history of landscape in this area.³ I have had direct personal experience of this landscape, especially in and around the small town of Varese Ligure (Val di Vara, La Spezia province), through annual fieldwork visits since 1994.⁴ In 2004 I published a study of the earliest history of Varese written c. 1558 by a local priest Antonio Cesena, which provides a detailed description of the country around Varese.⁵ Cesena's work is still useful today to historical ecologists as an unusually detailed and realistic description of a specific landscape at a particular moment in time, something which is reinforced when contrasted with contemporary foreigners' accounts of eastern Liguria such as Fynes Moryson's.⁶ Discussing Cesena's text over many years with local experts in historical ecology, including Don Sandro Lagomarsini, Diego Moreno and Roberta Cevasco, has encouraged me to investigate other writings about the local landscape, notably those of travellers, to see what they might reveal about landscape ecology.⁷

In the year 2000 the establishment of the European Landscape Convention (ECL) provoked some controversy among historians of landscape. 'Landscape' is of course a much-contested term with a wide semantic range which means different things to different people in different disciplines.⁸ Grove and Rackham appropriate the OED to define it as 'a tract of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features, especially considered as a

product of modifying or shaping processes or agents...'.⁹ For the ECL in contrast, 'a "Landscape" means an area, *as perceived by people*, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (my emphasis) which is 'a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity'.¹⁰ Although there have been some academic defenders of this definition,¹¹ it is clear that it irons out local and regional ecological specificity in favour of a vague European 'heritage', based on how landscape is perceived, namely an aesthetic appreciation. It is unsurprising that many have reacted angrily to it. Diego Moreno and Carlo Montanari have, for example, accused the ECL of subscribing to a 'fashionable cultural geography approach which cannot individuate the historical and cultural contents of the landscape itself without reference to a pure "representation" or as "visual perception"'.¹² Angelo Torre has also come out against perception and in favour of the importance of place in an article which takes aim at the late Denis Cosgrove's cultural characterisation of landscape.¹³ Roberta Cevasco in demonstrating the value of attending to specific landscapes and the practices that made and make them has criticised 'cultural landscape' as a 'misunderstanding of the dynamic nature of most rural European landscapes since the late 1960s'.¹⁴

It is this ELC definition of landscape and responses to it which prompted me to write this paper, as a way of showing that it is possible for historians to arrive at much more nuanced and precise definitions of 'cultural heritage' if specific landscapes are studied in multi-disciplinary ways. As we shall see, in the case of eastern Liguria attitudes about its landscape as expressed in late nineteenth-century travel books seem to prefigure the ECL's definition of landscape heritage if they are read selectively for what they say about the

aesthetic appreciation of landscape rather than for what they say about working landscapes (or even ecosystems). Before moving on to the specific evidence I will end this preamble by considering what 'cultural heritage' means in eastern Liguria now. The concept is significant as in the last few decades 'heritage' has become an increasingly dominant part of political debates about the meaning of the humanities, including History, across the world.¹⁵ 'Heritage' has, it would seem, won out over 'ecology' as a way of thinking about landscape, for contemporary policymakers at least.¹⁶ One of the ways in which they have sought to concretise 'cultural heritage' is by the designation of sites around the world as 'heritage sites'. The most influential manifestations of this trend towards the subsuming of History within heritage are perhaps the 'World Heritage Sites' of UNESCO. The World Heritage Convention was drawn up in Paris in 1972 and has resulted in, at the latest count, 911 sites of cultural (704 sites), natural (180) and mixed (27) interest worldwide.¹⁷ Both 'World Heritage Sites' (covering 'outstanding' sites) and the ECL (covering all landscapes, but not monuments) have been controversial with historians and geographers because they are seen as compromised by political concerns about bolstering national and supra-national identities: indeed they often cause practical problems for local people primarily by encouraging excessive tourism.

In Liguria there are two World Heritage Sites: Portovenere and the Cinqueterre villages added to the list in 1997,¹⁸ and the palaces in central Genoa added in 2006.¹⁹ According to UNESCO documentation the Cinqueterre 'is a cultural site of outstanding value, representing the harmonious interaction between people and nature to produce a landscape of exceptional scenic quality that illustrates a traditional way of life that has existed for a thousand years and continues to play an important socio-economic role in the

life of the community'. This, and the rest of the lengthy description on the World Heritage website, implies that these landscapes 'illustrate a traditional way of life' without any meaningful consideration of how such a life might be sustained in the future, or any understanding of how it was arrived at in this specific place in the first place. The Cinqueterre is in fact in crisis because of unsustainable tourism in large part caused by its World Heritage status, with the local national park mired in controversy and seemingly unable to implement sustainable plans.²⁰ In the original UNESCO listing the appreciation of the place is entirely aesthetic ('exceptional scenic quality') but if such simplistic attitudes are maintained the inevitable result will be the loss of the very landscapes they seek to preserve, including those of the Apennine interior as well as the coast, as the practicalities of local land management are lost in an inappropriately touristic understanding of what these landscapes are, what they are for and how they might be sustained in the future. Local policymakers are struggling to satisfy what seem to be irreconcilable expectations.²¹ It is deeply ironic therefore that tourism in the Cinqueterre, unlike all other parts of the Ligurian coast, is an almost entirely late twentieth-century development: there is very little evidence that nineteenth-century travellers went there at all.

The origins of 'cultural heritage' as an idea may not be that old - indeed David Lowenthal dated it to 'about 1980'²² - and it is certainly not possible to trace a line of descent from the nineteenth century or earlier in any meaningful way. But it does seem to be the case that related ideas were in the air in the late nineteenth century, and that foreigners already held strong opinions about what Italian landscapes were like and what they were for. Many nineteenth-century travellers envisaged aesthetic appreciation as an important motive for travel and also valued the transformative effects which travelling had

on them. A powerful, if somewhat particular, example is provided by Vernon Lee (1856-1935), who wrote copiously about her travels at the turn of the twentieth century. In her collection of essays characteristically called 'The Sentimental Traveller' which was published in 1908 she expressed this very clearly:

For the passion for localities, the curious emotions connected with the lie of the land, shape of buildings, history, and even quality of air and soil, are born, like all intense and permanent feeling, less of outside things than of our own soul. They are the stuff of dreams, and must be brooded over in quiet and void. The places for which we feel such love are fashioned, before we see them, by our wishes and fancy; we recognize rather than discover them in the world of reality.²³

Lee was, as in this quotation, most often concerned with the dreams which travel evoked, and the feelings, emotions and sense of nostalgia which real places expressed for her rather than with anything we might term reportage.²⁴ In an early example of interest in what later became the iconic tourist site of the region, in the same book Lee published an essay about Portofino in which she recalled that:

For years one of the objects of my longing had been that "Mountain" (in Italian phrase) of Portofino. Winter after winter it used to greet my visit; a hazy violet dolphin outline, between sky and sea, when I opened my shutters on returning to that hospitable Genoese villa. It summed up the delight that yearly visit was to me, like the chink of the forge over the way, the bells of the mules carrying myrtle and arbutus faggots to the smell of the olive logs in my fire, which glimmered absurd and charming in the sunshine.... The point, the stab of it all, the essence of all that violet and azure winter loveliness, was the desire for the Mountain of Portofino.²⁵

If 'fantasy, rather than factual history and analysis, pervades the Vernon Lee essay',²⁶ Lee's narcissism and self-absorption grew out of an attitude to travel which valued aesthetic response to place (the famous *genius loci*) above all else, especially when voiced by a self-fashioning narrator dreaming nostalgically about Italian landscapes she had yet to see.²⁷ This attitude turned out to be quite typical of what might be termed 'serious' travel writers of this period, including J. A. Symonds and Henry James (although he didn't appreciate Lee

at all).²⁸ The key point here is that nostalgia is a crucial component of heritage because heritage extracts from the past only the meaning it has for us now in the present rather than trying to come to terms with what the past was like in any more objective sense.²⁹

Other visitors to Italy at this time took a very different approach to Vernon Lee's nostalgia. George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882), first US ambassador to the Kingdom of Italy (between 1861 and 1882), was very much interested in the 'reality' of Italy which Lee increasingly left behind.³⁰ Marsh is now regarded as one of the initiators of the ecological approach to conservation although specialists on Marsh disagree about the finer details of this characterisation of him.³¹ His seminal book *Man and Nature* (1864) was intended to make 'practical suggestions rather than indulge in theoretical speculations' about the conservation of what he believed to be degraded landscapes,³² and was, for example, deeply concerned about the erosive effects of deforestation and their dramatic consequences, including flooding.³³ In his extensive treatment of flooding he noted in passing that 'The streams which pour down the southern scarp of the Riviera di Ponente, near Genoa, have short courses, and a brisk walk of a couple of hours or even less takes you from the sea beach to the headspring of many of them.'³⁴ This sort of description which demonstrates actual knowledge from walking the land is completely different to Lee's musings on similar landscapes.

If aesthetic and ecological approaches to landscape in Italy already existed as alternatives in late nineteenth-century travel narratives, this will come as no surprise to those who equate the history of travel with the 'ethnographic impulse',³⁵ although that notion still tends to be employed more about travel outside rather than within Europe.³⁶ Despite the controversial history of western ethnographic practice,³⁷ it is hardly surprisingly

that some histories of nineteenth-century nation-building, colonialism and imperialism have used the evidence of travel narratives.³⁸ Specialists in travel have by contrast tended to stick to narrower themes centred mostly on the practice of travel.³⁹ There has certainly been a powerful strand in travel history which sees travel writing as evidence for what travellers saw,⁴⁰ as evidence about the places they visited, even though, of course, this evidence must be not be understood is a crude way, as simple unproblematic description. More recently however there has been a substantial shift among historians towards the meaning of travel in line with the more widespread impact of the 'cultural turn' on them.⁴¹ This 'imaginative geography' of travel has resulted in many thought-provoking books concerned more with travellers themselves than the places they travelled to,⁴² in which travellers are seen to have had crucial roles in constructing identities which ranged from their own as individuals to those of nations and empires.⁴³ Travel *writing* is probably now the most fashionable topic in the sub-discipline of travel studies,⁴⁴ and it is interesting to note how scholarly concern with identity and meaning sits easily alongside more popular histories of travel aimed at a wider public, which have always focussed on famous travellers and their self-absorbed antics, as this is exactly what many literary studies of travel writing do.⁴⁵ In what follows I take a rather different approach, one which is opposed to 'landscape as cultural heritage' but which takes account of the 'cultural turn' in travel history as what travellers and their readers felt about the places they visited whether in actuality or in their dreams is clearly as interesting for historians as for literary scholars or cultural geographers. But prioritizing 'perception' over everything else which can be learnt from travellers and the texts they left behind surely results in a very one-sided impression of travel writing and its usefulness to historians as evidence about the past. As will become clear some travellers were both

knowledgeable and observant and their detailed descriptions of place allow us to locate practices in specific landscapes with some precision.

In the decades immediately before the First World War a significant literature of travel developed in Britain about the Italian region of Liguria. It was initially focussed on the coast, 'the Riviera' and its largest town, Genoa. Genoa had been favoured by British visitors throughout the period of the Grand Tour, even though historians of that cultural practice have rather neglected this city as a popular site of travel.⁴⁶ Historians have often dealt only with Rome, Venice, Florence and Naples, inadvertently (perhaps) still perpetuating the patterns popularly thought to have been typical of 'the Tour' at the time.⁴⁷ As Mary Shelley noted in the Preface to her *Rambles in Germany and Italy* of 1844, 'I found that I could say little of Florence and Rome, as far as regarded the cities themselves, that had not been said so often and so well before'.⁴⁸ It was admittedly not until the mid-nineteenth century that visiting Genoa and the Rivas became really fashionable, their popularity in part fuelled by the enormous success of Giovanni's Ruffini's *Doctor Antonio*, a novel written in English by an exiled Italian which was published in 1855 and set near San Remo.⁴⁹ A history of coastal tourism exists for the French resorts such as Nice, Cannes or Hyères;⁵⁰ the Italian sites have been comparatively neglected even when their importance to Victorian travellers is acknowledged.⁵¹ Barely acknowledged are the unknown histories of inland tourism, although there is good evidence that Apennine travel was increasingly popular after c.1875.⁵² The fashion for it seems to have ended around 1914.

The wider context for Ligurian travel history is easily sketched. Historians of British travel have concentrated on the elite 'Grand Tour' (c. 1550-c.1830),⁵³ and mostly dealt with the continuous development of artistic 'taste', collecting and connoisseurship amongst the

wealthy.⁵⁴ There have been surprisingly few attempts at social history of a broader kind,⁵⁵ even though most educated travellers kept manuscript diaries and sketchbooks which can be very rewarding for social historians, although some are tediously repetitive.⁵⁶ Published travel writing has been more popular with historians perhaps because it is thought to say more about contemporary discourses about travel per se.⁵⁷ Travel writers were indeed invariably very conscious of the traditions within which they worked and often adopted the opening gambit, as Mary Shelley did, that it was impossible to say anything new. I would argue however that prior to the nineteenth century travellers avoided the Apennines so that late nineteenth-century Apennine travel and the literature it produced was new, and largely coincided with the contemporary fashion for 'Alpinism' (and for Lake District, Welsh and Scottish tourism).

By the late nineteenth century the Tour was long over, replaced in the eyes of most travel historians by bourgeois 'tourism' and 'travelling' which developed rapidly in the 'Railway Age'.⁵⁸ Later Victorian tourism was often a group experience – frequently single ladies 'of a certain age'⁵⁹ – organised by agents, most famously Thomas Cook.⁶⁰ In its routine practices it was already becoming something like modern 'mass' travel. But tourism was also an attitude of mind, 'a system for managing pleasure and keeping danger and destabilization at bay', an experience which was therefore much harder to standardise than had been the case in the Grand Tour era.⁶¹ Travelling was, in contrast, often a self-consciously individual experience whose aim was to go 'off the beaten track'; to get away from the vulgar hoards.⁶² The distinction – often a fine one - was well understood at the time, as was amusingly explored by Emily Constance Cook in a satirical essay published in 1891.⁶³ Travellers by then were often snobbishly 'anti-tourist', as we still are.⁶⁴ This 'anti-

tourist' attitude had been developed by the many long-term British residents in Italy, especially those around Florence, the so-called 'Anglo-Florentines' who wrote about Italians in a much more sympathetic, informed and sophisticated way. Many of the best-informed authors were women: Lucy Baxter ('Leader Scott', d. 1902), Janet Ross (d. 1927), Helen Zimmern (d. 1934) and Vernon Lee all wrote widely on Italian history, art and culture from the 1870s until their deaths. Lee, as has been seen, occasionally wrote about Liguria but the others stuck resolutely to Tuscany, and were in large part responsible the British obsession with that region to this day: these were the people who began the creation of our 'Chianti-shire'. They wrote about all things Tuscan: Botticelli, Michelangelo, the Medici, grand villas, peasants' hovels, folksong, cuisine, wine and the hills among which they lived usually in some style.⁶⁵ They created the dominant discourse about Italy in England after the mid-century fever over Unification had died down and immortalised it in the British Institute of Florence founded in 1917. This discourse centred on an idealised view of 'the Tuscan landscape' seen as a direct inheritance from the medieval past in which they tended to patronise local peasants (their servants).⁶⁶ Their work is nonetheless the most relevant context for the Ligurian writing to which I now turn.

My working bibliography of late Victorian books and articles about Ligurian travel fills several pages and includes both famous and unknown names.⁶⁷ The efforts of less well-known writers are perhaps historically more interesting for what they reveal about the contemporary travelling public and its interest (real and presumed) in Liguria. Printed accounts of travel to and within Liguria in the period from around 1875 to 1914 tend to fall clearly into two categories – coastal and inland – with the coastal by far the majority. The Riviera di Ponente west of Genoa became increasingly popular from the 1870s when

Menton was probably the most fashionable of resorts with the British, increasingly so after Queen Victoria stayed there in 1882.⁶⁸ Throughout the 1880s people moved further east to San Remo and especially Bordighera, where Clarence Bicknell had settled in 1878 and set up a museum, library and meeting place for the British community.⁶⁹ The Queen's proposed trip to the Hotel Angst (!) in Bordighera in 1900 was in the end aborted, but the interest it aroused beforehand in the British press and with actual and 'fireside' travellers was considerable.⁷⁰ By then some very famous Victorians were already resident in the area, notably Edward Lear, who had moved to San Remo in 1871.⁷¹ His Ligurian experiences have been documented by historians in some detail using his letters and other personal papers.⁷² Lear, however, sadly never produced an illustrated guide to the Riviera, as he had for locations further south in Italy many years before.

The Italian Riviera was the subject of many straightforward touring guides, some of them quite specialised, catering for this influx of visitors.⁷³ New guides were published pretty much every year, but it was not until 1908 that one devoted solely to the Riviera di Levante (or the 'Newest Riviera' as it was termed) appeared, written by W. T. Beeby and Eustace Reynolds-Ball.⁷⁴ The first major Italian guide did not appear until 1916.⁷⁵ Absolutely typical of late Victorian tourist literature was the very popular Black's guide, a detailed practical companion organised place-by-place which was meant literally to encompass within its covers all the needs of the British abroad; transport, lodging, food, entertainment and so on.⁷⁶ As might be expected the opinions voiced in these guides are usually derivative, and often plagiarised. However, they innovated in one respect: the considerable amount of space they devoted to coastal 'views', perhaps the cultural experience above all other sought by the late Victorian tourist from a visit to the Italian Riviera. The language

used to characterise such 'views' was centred on traditional romantic ideas of landscape beauty, based primarily on visual aesthetics rather than any more structural interest in how such landscapes were formed or might be maintained; historical or social considerations were entirely subordinated to the appreciation of landscape beauty. Indeed, the spectacular Ligurian coast seems to have inspired guidebook writers to produce prose of the most purple kind. The Rev. Hugh Macmillan in *The Riviera* (1892) described the hills behind Portofino as 'thickly wooded with hoary olives, among which gleam picturesque houses on every ledge and terrace,'⁷⁷ and had opened his long book with a long rhapsody to the 'beauty and picturesqueness of the scenery', including the 'numberless' medieval villages.⁷⁸ Such hyperbolic sentiment was typical. Black's guide reported for the same area that: 'The road winds round a constant succession of towering capes enclosing tiny bays wooded to the water's edge and fringed with golden sand. Out of the blue crystalline water rise here and there great needle-shaped rocks, too sharp and perpendicular for even the nests of sea-gulls.'⁷⁹ Generalised, sentimental but vivid descriptions of this sort fill the books and magazine articles of this period to an extent which soon becomes tiresome for the reader, then as now one supposes.⁸⁰

The village of Portofino, as late as 1911 still 'off the beaten track',⁸¹ perhaps suffered most of all in this way: over and over it was described only as 'picturesque', 'charming', 'incomparable'.⁸² Even the most refined authors, such as Vernon Lee, seemed unable to escape the tropes as has been seen. Montgomery Carmichael summed up the extent of the English colonisation of Portofino when, in 1904, he wrote that 'the whole tip of the promontory is in English hands'.⁸³ Ironically, this 'unique' Portofino received exactly the same linguistic treatment as other coastal villages such as Nervi, Camogli and San Fruttuoso,

as well as the larger settlements - or 'colonies' as they were revealingly often termed - of Rapallo and Santa Margherita: all were 'picturesque'. Nervi, like Portofino, appears in all the guides. One of the more original accounts was the chapter called 'Nervi, with no sights' in Frances Power Cobbe's *Italics*.⁸⁴ For her Nervi was a place of nature rather than art: 'I hold that the spots in Italy, where nature is really to be enjoyed, are, above all, those wherein there are no works of art to compete with her...in a word, where travellers most rarely go...'.⁸⁵ Unvisited Nervi – as it was in 1864 - stood as her archetypal example of Italian nature. 'Poor little Nervi' had no pictures or churches 'worth visiting' nor any history (!), but instead 'Villa G' with its sea views, warm air, oranges and lemons, and flowers everywhere, and 'the lovely coast of the Riviera dotted with houses and with the mountain slopes covered with trees'.⁸⁶ The chapter is a fine piece of descriptive writing and quite novel for 1864 in its impressionistic approach especially when compared with contemporary guidebooks but even so Cobbe's supposedly site-specific judgements and language could be applied to almost any of the villages near Genoa on the coast.⁸⁷ The repetitive guidebook tradition continued well into the twentieth century, but by then the Riviera's 'picturesque' beauty had been supplanted by its desirability as a 'health' destination.⁸⁸ The Cinqueterre were entirely by-passed, perhaps because of their 'big, comfortless houses' and famous wine which had 'not kept up its old character'.⁸⁹

By the 1890s 'guidebook' tourists were frequently satirised. *Fugitive Impressions of Italy*, a rare volume privately published by 'J.K.' in Nottingham in 1893, was entirely characteristic in this regard. 'J. K.' and his friends 'Don Bosco' (i.e. Mr Wood) and Herr Scharp were railway tourists who delighted in speed on their 'short holiday in Italy', which included a stop at Genoa.⁹⁰ Their's was a self-consciously 'humorous' whistle-stop trip

during in which the author confessed that he had never read 'Baedeker, Murray or Cook'.⁹¹ Entirely predictably their train passed the Leaning Tower of Pisa in the dark, but they weren't especially perturbed by missing this iconic experience.⁹² Technological change certainly speeded up travel in parts of Liguria, as both rail and road networks had developed significantly by 1900 although these improvements were largely confined to the coast: the coastal lines were opened in 1874 having been preceded by the Genoa-Turin route in 1853.⁹³ Writers complained that the coast was noisy because of the motor traffic; the motorists, of course, revelled in their good fortune and reached places on the coast which were inaccessible before.⁹⁴ The railway never arrived in the Apennine interior of eastern Liguria and metalled roads were a twentieth-century innovation there. This tardy modernization meant that the Apennines remained literally 'off the beaten track' and were therefore appealing to those we might think of as 'slow tourists'.

Venturing inland was both a literal and a figurative way to escape modernity, and there is certainly more than a tinge of nostalgia in many accounts of Apennine travel at this time. As the twentieth century arrived, walking became increasingly fashionable for male travellers especially. In 1900 Hilaire Belloc famously walked 'The Path to Rome', and a few years later G. M. Trevelyan, historian of all things Italian, wrote 'Walking' a passionate essay partly about the central Italian Apennines.⁹⁵ The 'slow travel' tendency already existed in the 1880s and 90s.⁹⁶ A classic example of it is *Wanderings on the Italian Riviera: the Record of a Leisurely Tour* published by Frederic Lees in 1911. With his title Lees was signalling his debt to the well-established genre of 'Wanderings',⁹⁷ but he also quite deliberately travelled on foot when he could have used the train or motored as it enabled him to make much

more detailed and precise observations of what he saw, which give his book and others of its type lasting value.

Lees' 'Wanderings' came at the end of a 'slow travel' movement more or less terminated by the First World War and the 'modern' technological developments it encouraged. At the beginning, as least as far as Liguria was concerned, was *North Italian Folk. Sketches of Town and Country* published by Alice Comyns Carr in 1878 (and re-issued in 1910). Before then there is little evidence that many, or even any, British travellers had been to the Ligurian hill country for pleasure or instruction, even though some of course had passed through on their way to other places mostly via the infamous Bracco pass not far from the coast which travellers down the centuries had braved on their way from Genoa to La Spezia.⁹⁸ Further inland they didn't go. Mrs Comyns Carr's Ligurian essays may, therefore, have begun a fashion for Apennine visiting which soon became focussed on Tuscany, in a way expropriated by the Anglo-Florentines. Travelling in the Ligurian hills, away from the trappings of 'modern Italy' resulted in several books of realistic reportage unlike the generic, repetitive and glib accounts of the nearby Riviera. The best of these books – especially Carr's and Lees' - are so realistic that they are first-hand evidence with which to reconstruct aspects of late nineteenth-century Ligurian rural life free from the romanticised aesthetic contamination typical of the coast and from the haughty, patronising Anglo-Florentine versions of an impossibly idyllic Tuscan dream.

The future creator of *North Italian Folk* was born in 1850, the daughter of Arthur Strettell, consular chaplain at Genoa.⁹⁹ She spent most of her childhood in the city and in surrounding mountain villages in the summer months, apart from annual visits to the Swiss Alps as her father was a keen 'Alpinist'.¹⁰⁰ In December 1873 she married Joseph Comyns

Carr, who soon became a leading figure in London's theatre land, as manager, playwright and art critic.¹⁰¹ Alice and Joe transformed themselves into London celebrities by getting frequently published in the most fashionable magazines. Near the end of her life in 1920 Alice published *Stray Memories*, a touching memoir of Joe who had died in 1916, in which she recalled her Ligurian childhood some seventy-odd years before: on going to London in 1873 she 'had ... been shot from the socially restricted life of a parson's daughter in the small English colony of a small foreign town' (Genoa).¹⁰² 'There was much that must have been, unconsciously to myself, of rare educational advantage in the lovely scenery and picturesque surroundings of my childhood's life on the Riviera and in the Apennines; and my parents so loved both Nature and Art that they gave us constant change of opportunity in these directions. Yet I must confess that as I grew up, the chestnut groves of the Apennines and the shores of the blue Mediterranean became empty joys to me...'.¹⁰³ Although these statements are framed in late Victorian guidebook language - Nature paired with Art, 'colonies' of English in Italy, the inevitable 'picturesque' - *North Italian Folk* itself is much more original and more interesting than any of the guides.

After their marriage Alice and Joe honeymooned in Italy.¹⁰⁴ The extended trip included visits to the haunts of her Ligurian childhood where, in one village, they were 'forced to accept a slice of chestnut cake.'¹⁰⁵ Once they were back in London Joe secured a contract for Alice to write a series of Italian sketches for *The Examiner* weekly magazine, edited by W. Minto between 1874-1878, 'afterwards reprinted in a volume with Randolph Caldecott's illustrations' as she recalled.¹⁰⁶ With typical Victorian nicety she claims that 'I should never have done even as much without their kindly encouragement': whether this was true or not, in 1878 *North Italian Folk* was widely reviewed and favourably received,

notably by J. A. Symonds, then a leading proponent of *italianità* in Britain.¹⁰⁷ *The Graphic's* reviewer, for example, stated that this 'charming little work' (note the patronising tone) was 'one of the very few really noteworthy books' of the season and that her 'descriptions of the glorious scenery of the Apennines' were 'life-like'.

From her recollections it seems that Alice Comyns Carr wrote her first, Ligurian, book for personal reasons and from personal experience. In twenty eight short chapters Alice presents an attractive but also informative picture of contemporary Ligurian existence; few, if any writers, had delved so deeply before. Many of the chapters had appeared in *The Examiner* in the years immediately before 1878, preceding any of the essays about Tuscan Apennine life that I have found. A lengthy essay about 'Peasant Life in North Italy' was published in *Frazer's Magazine* in 1875, and after some re-writing formed the basis of several chapters in *North Italian Folk*.¹⁰⁸ It has been plausibly argued that at this time *Frazer's* was 'gendered strictly male', so it is interesting that Carr's work was published there at such length.¹⁰⁹ The book is divided into Riviera and Mountain sections. Her chapters on Genoa and the Riviera remain 'generic', as if she could not escape the prevailing discourse about the coast.¹¹⁰ At Porto Fino (her spelling) she explained 'you breathe the heavy-perfumed air from the pines, while you hear from afar the murmur of the sea.'¹¹¹ Other chapters included treatments of flowers, palms, fish and lace, each of them stereotypical products/activities long associated with the coast. Once she moved inland though the nature of her response changes, as she seems to have blended her own experiential knowledge with the necessity to arrive at her own opinions in the absence of any precedents to fall back on.¹¹²

One of the most notable features of the book is its location in actual places, specifically the villages of the Scrivia valley immediately north of Genoa, which few, if any, British people had visited (and many travel writers at this time went out of their way to disguise places giving them fictional names, as in Leader Scott's 'The Nook', or left them unnamed).¹¹³ The Scrivia valley is where Alice spent some summers in *villeggiatura*,¹¹⁴ in and around the village of Savignone which Caldecott illustrated.¹¹⁵ In 'The Mountains' she gives us her mental geography of place: singled out are the Giove range and the Antola hills, Busalla, Savignone, the Scrivia valley, Monte Baneo, Casella, Ponte di Savignone, Vallecaldà: a mix of mountains, villages and valley. Most are now significantly larger settlements, although Vallecaldà is still very small and much as it was then. Here she describes a productive mixed landscape of corn, maize, potatoes and vineyards (with red rather than white grapes) where the refrain throughout is the chestnut; 'dense, bountiful chestnut woods', soothing and freshening.¹¹⁶ Carr's suggestive evidence is borne out by ecological studies which have found that crop diversification increased in eastern Liguria during the nineteenth century compared with earlier and later periods.¹¹⁷

Indeed, the heart of the book both physically and emotionally, is the short chapter 'At the Chestnut Harvest'.¹¹⁸ It can be set alongside both the large Italian literature in several disciplines about north Italian chestnut culture and its practices, as chestnuts provided the staple food for peasants across the Apennines for centuries,¹¹⁹ and the strictly contemporary English literature of books and articles from the late 1870s and early 1880s, when there seems to have been something of a fad for 'chestnutting' and chestnuts in general. 'Chestnutting' is first recorded by the *OED* in 1884 (*Harper's Magazine*) but Carr gives a detailed description of the process without using the word and includes a realistic

illustration of a chestnut harvest scene by Caldecott.¹²⁰ His drawing is not impressionistic but observational.¹²¹ The time of year – early autumn – is accurately shown, as are the types and ages of tree and the relative absence of undergrowth, characteristic of chestnut coppices managed for fruiting trees.¹²² All the figures – apart from one – are women, who are using the typical tools for the task. Similar artefacts exist in local museums, such as those collected by Don Sandro Lagomarsini for his museum of rural life in Cassego, near Varese Ligure, in the early 1970s.¹²³ Lagomarsini took detailed oral histories for each artefact at the time and these reveal that the rake and wooden pincers (tools known locally as *le molle*, *la rastellina*, *il cavagno* and *la corba*) are necessary to cope with the spiny husks,¹²⁴ and the pincers seem to be represented by Caldecott. I do not know if Caldecott drew this on site as he could have produced the image from the information carefully recorded in Alice's detailed text where she highlights several things which only direct local knowledge could have told her, especially that there are different types of chestnut, harvested sequentially and used for different purposes, but that the fruit makes a particular sound when it falls on the floor at this time of year. Another sound was recorded too: the 'noisy sounds of revelry',¹²⁵ night-time celebrations of the contented peasants, which presumably reached across the valley to wherever Alice was staying. In interior Liguria, this practice had started to disappear at the very time Mrs Carr was recording it because of extreme depopulation which made it more difficult to maintain the woodland,¹²⁶ while imports of grain also started to lessen the significance of the chestnut as a staple food.¹²⁷

North Italian Folk was very well received probably because it was well-timed and tapped into an emerging desire for inland hill tourism, exemplified by Evelyn Carrington's article 'Cool Haunts in the Italian Highlands' (1878),¹²⁸ and Leader Scott's, *A Nook in the*

Apennines: Or a Summer beneath the Chestnuts (1879). The latter told the story of a summer in the Tuscan Apennines in which chestnuts also figured highly. However, Scott's chapter 'The Chestnut Eaters' is much less realistic than Carr's.¹²⁹ In it she was rather condescending to the peasants, refused to eat their chestnut bread (as it was 'indigestible') and was generally far less interested in the precise details of process and practice. Even so, she recorded one locally-observed point by noting that Apennine cows graze on leaves not grass.¹³⁰ More generic treatments of chestnuts in fact abound in travel books of the period.¹³¹ John Addington Symonds typically concentrated on the aesthetic appeal of the trees: 'The leaves were still green, mellowing to golden; but the fruit was ripe and heavy, ready at all points to fall. In the still October air the husks above our heads would loosen, and the brown nuts rustle through the foliage, and with a dull short thud, like drops of thunder-rain, break down upon the sod.'¹³² But even this was located with some precision to the immediate environs of Pontremoli (Massa-Carrara). It wasn't until 1894 that a more detailed description appeared: 'Chestnutting in the Apennines' (near Pistoia this time), in which the whole harvesting procedure, including the subsequent drying of the nuts in little smoke-houses was reported very accurately by the anonymous author.¹³³ Similar ethnographic descriptions exist for viticulture and wine-making,¹³⁴ and mushroom picking and processing.¹³⁵

Alice Comyns Carr's book refers largely to the Apennine hills immediately north of Genoa. These were visited in 1911, on foot, by Frederic Lees and his guide 'J. K.' a local antiquary (still unidentified), who travelled much of Liguria over a four month period.¹³⁶ 'Wanderings' was published in 1912 and makes an interesting comparison with *North Italian Folk*, as they both reported on inland as well as coastal Liguria. Lees is of particular interest

to me as he visited Varese Ligure – where my own field research has been based – and was, as far I know, the first to publish an account of the town in English.¹³⁷ Born in 1872, he was nearly 40 when he visited. His father, Frederic Arnold, was a well-known botanist from Leeds, and his son sent back letters about the plants he saw which were re-drafted for a lengthy appendix in the book.¹³⁸ Lees appears to have been both highly eccentric but also very up-to-date in his interests. His passion was France rather than Italy, and he published the well-known *A Summer in Touraine* in 1908 as well as a string of articles about Paris and French art.¹³⁹ He lived ‘as a bohemian’ (or tramp) in Paris for part of 1910, as revealed by an article in the *Strand Magazine* whose hilarious accompanying photographs suggest that he may have been somewhat unhinged. But in fact this essay was possibly a spoof and he well knew what was currently going on in the world, writing about x-rays and yogurt (as a cure for old age) as well as (leisurely) travel.¹⁴⁰ Most fashionably of all he *walked* around Liguria, chiming in with that early twentieth-century fad for travelling long distances on foot.

Another up-to-the-minute practice of his was to take photos probably using quite portable equipment, and sixty of them illustrate the *Wanderings*.¹⁴¹ These, like Caldecott’s drawings, encourage realistic reading of his book. The first Varese image is a photo of the ‘very old and picturesque bridge over the Vara’.¹⁴² Lees’s photo reproduces terraces in the background which, even if he termed them picturesque, were much more intensively managed in 1911 than they are now, as we should expect given that the comune’s population was 8185 in 1881 and is currently less than a quarter of that. These terraces are now largely derelict because natural regeneration has taken over as their active human management has stopped.¹⁴³ The second image reproduced is a photo of a stone relief carved with scenes from the life of Christ sited by the sixteenth-century bridge over the

Crovana, whose construction was attributed by Antonio Cesena to 1515.¹⁴⁴ Here the old photograph has preserved detail which a hundred years later is now eroded away. In this chapter, Lees's text is quite brief, but nonetheless preserves unique local information, for which his source is not always clear. The town's Augustinian nunnery, which still exists as an enclosed order, clearly fascinated him. Like many travellers Lees was interested in what he took to be unusual, in this case the 'very interesting industry [of the nuns]...of drying mushrooms and making confectionary'.¹⁴⁵ However, he could not physically access the nunnery himself because it was forbidden to nearly all – especially men - as it still is. Instead, 'you can enter a little vestibule and talk with one of the nuns who stands behind a revolving apparatus with shelves...you can give your order and shortly receive it, at the above-named revolving counter', your order of marzipan sweets (*sciurette*) or *porcini*. Exactly the same physical set-up exists today one hundred years on, although the aged nuns no longer make *sciurette* or dry mushrooms; consultations are now of the spiritual sort. More interesting still are the details Lees supplies of the nuns' incomes, as where he got this information from is hard to imagine. Indeed he admits this difficulty himself: 'though it is difficult to obtain any definite information, it is said that these Augustinian nuns live very happy and healthy lives, and when one looks down upon their beautiful and extensive garden, whose produce they also sell, one can readily believe it.' This, of course, tells us that Lees walked up high enough – maybe to the nearby cemetery – to gaze on the garden, but did not publish a photograph if indeed he took one.

In 1911 around 900,000 tourists visited Italy, probably attracted by the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Italian unity.¹⁴⁶ Frederic Lees, who most likely published his Ligurian *Wanderings* to coincide with those festivities, was therefore one traveller among

very many. His book was well received, well distributed and possibly quite widely read on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁴⁷ Its subtitle – ‘The Record of a Leisurely Tour in Liguria’ – makes clear that the desirability of ‘slow travel’ to out-of-the-way places was something he himself recognised rather than something I have imposed on him. But as significant as the ‘leisurely tour’ is the ‘record’ which his leisurely approach enabled. Like Alice Comyns Carr he had the time to observe what soon turned out to be a dying culture of intensive manual work, killed off by depopulation brought on by the emigration caused by the extreme poverty and disease found in the remote inland valleys which could not stand up to competition from new markets.¹⁴⁸ In my view, Lees was successful in his efforts to memorialise the rural Liguria through which he and his Italian guide ‘J. K.’ walked. Once ‘off the beaten track’ as he so much desired, his work becomes reportage transcending the traditional genre in which it is expressed, and it is reportage of this sort which is surely worth more attention than it has received from travel historians in recent years.

Years of field work in eastern Liguria have demonstrated that the landscapes which travellers often characterised as ‘natural’ (capitalised by Victorians as Nature) are in fact almost entirely the products of continuous human activity which renewed itself from one generation to the next.¹⁴⁹ Collaborative, highly interdisciplinary research of scholars based at the University of Genoa has employed the methods of historical ecology (oral history, cartographical analysis, palynology, detailed survey of plant cover) to plot how people past and present have actively created ‘landscape’, perhaps especially since the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁰ Historical ecology may not have been a nineteenth-century practice but late nineteenth-century ‘slow’ travel books can add to the body of ecological knowledge if they are approached ‘realistically’. Diego Moreno’s advocacy of the ‘realistic reading’

(*decifrazione realistica* in Italian) of all sources about actual past landscapes including written ones can be applied,¹⁵¹ as has been suggested here, to specific travel writings when their authors revealed what they knew about the concrete practices which physically created and maintained landscapes. But reading these 'realistic' accounts at the same time reveals clearly the part played by travel writing in the formulation of the notion that landscape is overwhelmingly a cultural construct in which 'representation' and 'visual perception' are the only significant issues for discussion. The current obsessions of the EU and UNESCO with 'cultural landscapes' and 'cultural heritage' can be traced back to a metropolitan attitude,¹⁵² which sees rural 'landscape' as something to be visited, drawn, written about and consumed in other ways.¹⁵³ I'm not, of course, suggesting that the 'slow travellers' I've studied here were immune to such cultural influences, as they certainly were not especially when writing about established tourist sites on the coast. But descriptions of the Apennine interior within *North Italian Folk* and *Wanderings on the Italian Riviera* were rather different: the result of deep, immersive experiences of place and turned out to be as much or even more interested in practices, in how country people lived and worked, in crafts and in harvests, in how and what was grown as in picturesque scenery and the pleasures to be had from English 'society' all along the Riviera. If historians of travel read these and similar books realistically they can ally themselves with historical ecologists to challenge the unconvincing 'cultural heritage' agenda which threatens to reduce their discipline to nothing more than entertainment,¹⁵⁴ as knowing what past landscapes were actually like using all the sources at our disposal will help us better to conserve them for the future.¹⁵⁵

¹ A. T. Grove and Oliver Rackham, *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe. An Ecological History* (New Haven and London, 2001) warn about the problems of relying solely on written documents for landscape history at p. 18.

² Marco Doria, 'Vacanze in Liguria. Dal "Grand Tour" alle seconde case', in G. Assereto and M. Doria (eds), *Storia della Liguria* (Rome and Bari, 2007), pp. 363-378, especially pp. 366-372.

³ Bruno Giontoni, 'I paesaggi della Liguria tra ottocento e novecento', in Assereto and Doria, *Storia della Liguria*, pp. 326-344; Grove and Rackham, *Nature of Mediterranean Europe*, p. 183; Attilio Brilli, *Il viaggio in Italia. Storia di una grande tradizione culturale* (Bologna, 2006), pp. 409-412.

⁴ Grove and Rackham, *Nature of Mediterranean Landscape*, pp. 20-21 on the importance of fieldwork. See also Ross Balzaretti, 'Students as Front Line Researchers: The Landscape History of Liguria', Report for the HEA Subject Centre for History at http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hca/resources/detail/students_as_front_line_researchers

⁵ Ross Balzaretti, 'The History of the Countryside in sixteenth-century Varese Ligure', in Ross Balzaretti, Mark Pearce and Charles Watkins (eds), *Ligurian Landscapes. Studies in Archaeology, Geography and History* (London, 2004), pp. 123-138.

⁶ Balzaretti, 'The History of the Countryside', pp. 116-117.

⁷ As implied by Diego Moreno and Roberta Cevasco, 'Appunti dal terreno: storia locale, storia territoriale ed ecologia storica', in Renato Bordone, Paola Guglielmotti, Sandro Lombardini and Angelo Torre (eds), *Lo spazio politico locale in età medievale, moderna e contemporanea* (Alessandria, 2007), pp. 313-328.

⁸ David Matless, 'Describing Landscape. Regional Sites', *Performance Research* 15 (2010), pp. 72-82.

⁹ Grove and Rackham, *Nature of Mediterranean Europe*, p. 12.

¹⁰ The text of the Convention is at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

¹¹ Knut Krzywinski, Michael O'Connell and Hansjörg Küster (eds), *Cultural Landscapes of Europe* (Bremen, 2009), product of an EU funded project : <http://ecl.cultland.org>

¹² Diego Moreno and Carlo Montanari, 'Más de la percepción: hacia una ecología histórica del paisaje rural en Italia', *Cuadernos Geográficos*, 43 (2008), 29-49 at p. 45 (article in English despite its title).

¹³ Angelo Torre, 'Un "tournant spatial" en histoire? Paysages, regards, ressources', *Annales HSS* 63 n. 5 (2008), 1127-1144. Denis Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape: geographical change and its cultural representations in*

sixteenth-century Italy (Pennsylvania, 1993) and *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (London, 1984) are classics of the genre.

¹⁴ Roberta Cevasco, 'Environmental Heritage of a Past Cultural Landscape. Alder Woods in the Upper Aveto Valley of the Northwestern Apennines', in Marco Armiero and Marcus Hall (eds), *Nature and History in Modern Italy* (Athens, Ohio, 2010), 126-140 at 126-127, and also her *Memoria verde. Nuovi spazi per la geografia* (Reggio Emilia, 2007), especially 242-248.

¹⁵ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London, 1996).

¹⁶ Cinnamon Carlane, 'Putting the "And" Back in the Culture-Nature Debate: Integrated Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection', *Journal of Environmental Law and Policy* 153 (2006-2007), 153-223 with consideration of EU policy at 184-189.

¹⁷ The text of the Convention is at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> with the heritage 'list' at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>. The Scheme is reviewed by Mechtild Rössler, 'World Heritage Cultural Landscape: A UNESCO Flagship Programme 1992-2006', *Landscape Research* 31 (2006), 333-353.

¹⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/826>

¹⁹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1211>

²⁰ 'From Smart History towards common European Heritage by a preservation model of CINQUE TERRE NATIONAL PARK – Italy' at http://home.agh.edu.pl/~zfiit/publikacje_pliki/Smart%20History%20Handbook.pdf

²¹ Manuela Salvitti, 'Policies of landscape management: Planning as an instrument for conservation and enhancement of European heritage', at http://www.convenzioneeuropeapaesaggio.beniculturali.it/uploads/2010_12_21_14_33_23.pdf

²² Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, p. 4.

²³ Vernon Lee, *The Sentimental Traveller. Notes on Places* (London, 1908), p. 4.

²⁴ Martha Vicinus, "'A Legion of Ghosts": Vernon Lee (1856-1935) and the Art of Nostalgia', *GLQ* 10.4 (2004), 599-616, especially p. 604.

²⁵ Lee, 'The Mountain of Portofino', pp. 113-114.

²⁶ Wendy Gan, 'A Return to the Imaginary: Psychoanalysis and Travel in Vernon Lee's Travel Essays', *Prose Studies* 22 (1999), 79-90 at p. 85.

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- ²⁷ Catherine Maxwell, 'Vernon Lee and the Ghosts of Italy', in Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (eds), *Unfolding the south. Nineteenth-century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 201-221 at p. 212.
- ²⁸ John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion. Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (London, 1987), p. 12 and James Buzard, *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 187-189.
- ²⁹ Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, pp. 5-6.
- ³⁰ J. Donald Hughes, *What is Environmental History?* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 29-32; David Lowenthal, *George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation* (Seattle, 2000); *Environment and History* 10.2 (2004) (Special Issue on Marsh); John Elder, *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa. From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh* (Charlottesville and London, 2006).
- ³¹ Richard W. Judd, 'George Perkins Marsh: The Times and Their Man', *Environment and History* 10 (2004), 169-190 downplays Marsh's originality in contrast to David Lowenthal, *George Perkins Marsh: Prophet of Conservation* (1958).
- ³² *Man and Nature*, p. vi.
- ³³ Marcus Hall, *Earth Repair. A Transatlantic History of Environmental Restoration* (Charlottesville and London, 2005), 54-91 which provides a case study of Marsh's relationship to contemporary 'mountain restoration' in the Alps near Cuneo in southern Piedmont.
- ³⁴ Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*, p. 392.
- ³⁵ Joan Pau Rubiés, 'Travel writing and ethnography', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 242-260.
- ³⁶ Anna Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation. Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Newark, 2008), pp. 15-37 is an exception.
- ³⁷ John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the historical imagination* (Boulder, 1992).
- ³⁸ Notably Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 22-55 and her 'Cross-National Travellers: Rethinking Comparisons and Representations', in Deborah Cohen and

Maura O'Connor (eds), *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York and London, 2004), pp.133-144, especially p. 135.

³⁹ Clearly outlined by Jill Steward, 'Performing Abroad: British Tourists in Italy and their Practices, 1840-1914', in M. D. Lasansky (ed.), *Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance and Place* (Oxford, 2004), 53-72. The classics are: Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad. The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1992); R. J. B. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960*, pp. 159-181; Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour. Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London, 2000 [orig. edn. 1998]); Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London, 2003); Attilio Brilli, *Il viaggio in Italia. Storia di una grande tradizione culturale* (Bologna, 2006).

⁴⁰ Edward Chaney, 'British and American Travellers in Sicily from the Eighth to the Twentieth Century', in his *Evolution of the Grand Tour*, 1-40.

⁴¹ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Identity History is Not Enough', in his *On History* (London, 1997), 351-366 and François Bédarida (ed.), *The Social Responsibility of the Historian* (Providence and Oxford, 1994).

⁴² Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour. Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester, 1999) is probably the most influential work, borrowing 'imaginative geography' from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1976). Clifford Geertz's, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) remains influential in this respect too.

⁴³ For example, James Buzard, *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993); Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800. Authorship, gender and national identity* (Aldershot, 2001); Mirella Agorni, *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century. British Women, Translation and Travel Writing (1739-1797)* (Manchester, 2002), 100-110, 119-141; Anna Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation. Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Newark, 2008); Melanie Ord, *Travel and Experience in Early Modern English Literature* (New York, 2008); Barbara Shaff, 'Italianised Bryon- Byronised Italy', in Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel (eds), *Performing National Identity. Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions* (Amsterdam and New York, 2008), pp. 103-122.

⁴⁴ Excellently presented by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁵ Paul Fussell, *Abroad. British Literary Travelling between the Wars* (Oxford, 1980); Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (London, 2001); Ian Littlewood, *Sultry Climates. Travel and Sex* (London, 2001); John Julius Norwich, *Paradise of Cities, Venice and its Nineteenth-century Visitors* (London, 2003).

⁴⁶ Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London, 2003), e.g. at pp. 42-44 and Edoardo Grendi, 'Fonti inglesi per la storia genovese', in *Studi e Documenti di Storia Ligure in onore di Don Luigi Alfonso per il suo 85 genetliaco* (Genoa, 1996), pp. 349-374 are rare exceptions.

⁴⁷ Catherine Edwards and Michael Liversidge, *Imagining Rome: British Artists and Rome in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1996); Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London, 1996); Rosemary Sweet, 'British Impressions of Florence in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Historical Journal* 50 (2007), 837-859; Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes. Sir William Hamilton and His Collection* (London, 1996) for Naples.

⁴⁸ Mrs Shelley, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843*, 2 volumes (London, 1844), p. viii.

⁴⁹ Allan C. Christensen, 'Giovanni Ruffini and "Doctor Antonio": Italian and English Contributions to a Myth of Exile', *Browning Institute Studies*, 12 (1984), pp. 133-154.

⁵⁰ Michael Nelson, *Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the Riviera* (London, 2001).

⁵¹ Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 43-46; Richard J. B. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960* (London, 1996), pp. 162-163; Doria, 'Vacanze in Liguria', pp. 366-372; Stefano Pivato, *Il Touring Club Italiano* (Bologna, 2006), p. 18.

⁵² E. M. Clerke, 'Village Life in the Apennines', *Cornhill Magazine*, 39, n. 234 (June, 1879), 723-736; Leader Scott, *A Nook in the Apennines: Or a Summer beneath the Chestnuts* (London, 1879), rev. in *Saturday Review*, 48 (July 19, 1879), 85-86; W. Kenworthy Browne, 'A Summer Evening's Walk in the Apennines', *Merry England*, 13, n. 78 (Oct., 1889), 414-423; Anon., 'Chestnutting in the Apennines', *Chambers's Journal*, 11, n. 546 (June 16, 1894), 374-376; Lord Windsor, 'A Driving Tour in the Apennines', *Outlook*, 1, n. 22 (July 2, 1898), 676-677; Leader Scott, *Tuscan Studies and Sketches* (London, 1888), includes 'The Mushroom Merchant in the Apennines'; Lina Duff Gordon, *Home Life in Italy. Letters from the Apennines* (London, 1908).

⁵³ Black, *The British Abroad*; Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*; Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the GrandTour*; Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*; Brilli, *Il viaggio in Italia*.

⁵⁴ Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (eds), *Grand Tour. The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996); Cesare de Seta, *L'Italia del Grand Tour da Montaigne a Goethe* (Naples, 2001).

⁵⁵ Black, *The British Abroad* and *Italy and the Grand Tour*; Littlewood, *Sultry Climates*; Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*.

⁵⁶ Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 17-22 argues in favour of manuscript accounts and provides a useful list as Black, *The British Abroad*, 366-368, supplemented by Lorna Watson, *The Errant Pen. Manuscript Journals of British Travellers to Italy* (La Spezia, 2000).

⁵⁷ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, pp. 1-39 and Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy*, pp. 14-40.

⁵⁸ Steward, 'Performing Abroad'.

⁵⁹ Often savagely satirised in the contemporary press: e.g. 'Italian Tours and Tourists', *The Quarterly Review*, 103 (1858), 346-390.

⁶⁰ Edmund Swinglehurst, *Cook's Tours: the Story of Popular Travel* (Poole, 1982); Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 years of popular tourism* (London, 1991); Jill Hamilton, *Thomas Cook: the holiday-maker* (Stroud, 2005).
Cook's Tours were ruthlessly mocked in contemporary reviews and magazines especially by the novelist Charles Lever, 'Continental Excursionists', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, XCVII (February 1865), pp. 230-233.

⁶¹ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, p. 215.

⁶² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, pp. 19-79.

⁶³ Emily Constance Cook, 'Travellers and Tourists', *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 270 (May, 1891), 487-494.

⁶⁴ Buzard, *Beaten Track*, pp. 4-7.

⁶⁵ Pemble, *Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁶ For example, Janet Ross, 'Vintaging in Tuscany', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 32 (1875), 442-445 and 'Oil-making in Tuscany', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 33 (1876), 465-468.

⁶⁷ Augustus Hare, *Cities of Northern Italy. The Riviera di Ponente* (London, 1883) and *The Rivas* (London, 1897); Mrs Oliphant, 'San Remo', *Good Words* 34 (Dec., 1893), 124-130; Vernon Lee, *The Sentimental Traveller* (London, 1908), which includes 'The Mountain of Portofino', and her story Dionea' (set in fictitious Montemirto in Liguria) in *Hauntings and Other Tales* (London, 1890), available in Catherine Maxwell and

Patricia Pullam (eds), *Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales* (Ontario, 2006), pp. 77-104. Lee's essay 'On Modern Travelling' is also thought-provoking: Vernon Lee, *Limbo and Other Essays* (London, 1897).

⁶⁸ Nelson, *Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the Riviera*, pp. 21-36. Her son Prince Leopold also visited, as evidenced by the magnificent photograph album in Nottingham University Library, MS 317, dated c. 1884.

⁶⁹ Desmond Hawkins, 'Clarence Bicknell', in the *ODNB online*, <http://via.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41049?docPos=2>. Clarence Bicknell, *Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Riviera and Neighbouring Mountains* was published in 1885.

⁷⁰ E. B. Selby and Carl Siewers, 'The Italian Riviera', *Windsor Magazine* (Apr., 1900), pp. 523-537 and W. Miller, 'Bordighera: Past and Present', *Westminster Review* 154 (July, 1900), pp. 48-57.

⁷¹ Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear* (London, 1985), p. 206 [orig. published 1968].

⁷² Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear, Selected Letters* (Oxford, 1988), 225-283; Michael Montgomery, *Lear's Italy* (London, 2005), pp. 212-248.

⁷³ Notably Hare, *Cities of Northern Italy*. For the genre see Alan Sillitoe, *Leading the Blind. A Century of Guidebook Travel 1815-1911* (London, 1995).

⁷⁴ *The Levantine Riviera* (London, 1908), pp. 1-6.

⁷⁵ L. V. Bertarelli (ed.), *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano. Liguria, Toscana Settentrionale, Emilia*, 2 volumes (Milan, 1916).

⁷⁶ Black, *The Riviera*, pp. viii-xiv, 1-4. Augustus Hare's popular guides began with *A Winter at Mentone* (London, 1861) and ended with *The Riviervas* (London, 1897). Tens of thousands of copies were sold.

⁷⁷ Rev. Hugh MacMillan, *The Riviera*, 2nd edn (London, 1892), p. 282. This edition is illustrated by numerous, highly romanticised, black and white engravings.

⁷⁸ MacMillan, *Riviera*, pp. xiii-xvi. For hyperbole in travel writing see Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, pp. 84-91.

⁷⁹ Black, *The Riviera*, p. 137.

⁸⁰ For example, J. T. Bent, 'Cervo', *Fraser's Magazine* 625 (Jan., 1882), 107-117; Oliphant, 'San Remo'; John G. Dow, 'On the Riviera di Ponente', *Good Words* 35 (Dec., 1894), 827-835; Selby and Siewers, 'The Italian Riviera'; Stephen Gwynn, 'The Riviera di Levante', *Saturday Review* 89 (June, 1900), 742-743; Miller, 'Bordighera'; Etta Courtney, 'A Ligurian Impression', *Argosy* 74 (June, 1901), 263-270.

⁸¹ Frederic Lees, *Wanderings on the Italian Riviera. The Record of a Leisurely Tour* (London, 1912), pp. 272-279.

⁸² MacMillan, *Riviera*, pp. 281-282; Beeby, *Levantine Riviera*, p. 51 'an epitome of the most beautiful scenery in Europe'.

⁸³ A. H. Hallam Murray, Henry W. Nevinson and Montgomery Carmichael, *Sketches on the Old Road through France to Florence* (London, 1904), p. 116 (in 1932 edition). It was also suggested that 'the Englishman has a keener eye than anybody else for the recondite beauties of Italy'.

⁸⁴ Power Cobbe, *Italics. Brief Notes on Politics, Places and People in Italy in 1864*, pp. 488-508. Sally Mitchell, 'From Winter into Summer: the Italian Evolution of Frances Power Cobbe', *Women's Writing* 10 (2003), 343-352 deals with *Italics*, although not this section.

⁸⁵ Power Cobbe, *Italics*, p. 489.

⁸⁶ Power Cobbe, *Italics*, p. 497.

⁸⁷ For Nervi see also MacMillan, *The Riviera*, pp. 276-280; Black, *The Riviera*, pp. 135-136; and especially the unusually negative comments of Hare, *Cities of Northern Italy* (1876 edition), p. 58.

⁸⁸ J. Burney Yeo, 'The Health Resorts of the Western Riviera', *Fortnightly Review* 31 (1882), 198-224; Adriana Ghersi, 'Projects of therapeutic landscapes', *Journal of Mediterranean Ecology* 8 (2007), 99-103 deals with Ligurian sanatoria at pp.101-102.

⁸⁹ Black, *Riviera*, p. 139; Macmillan, *Riviera*, p. 259.

⁹⁰ J.K., *Fugitive Impressions of Italy* (Nottingham, 1893), pp. 16-27. This book, apparently not to be found in any academic library in Britain, was written by John Kendall, a Manchester businessman, as Lee Kendall, a descendant, explained to me.

⁹¹ J. K., *Fugitive Impressions*, p. 94.

⁹² J. K., *Fugitive Impressions*, p. 27.

⁹³ Albert Schram, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 150; Pivato, *Touring Club*, 44-51.

⁹⁴ Anon. 'Caravanning Notes', *English Illustrated Magazine* 83 (Feb., 1910), 535-536; W. H. Koebel, 'Italy and the Car', *Bookman* 40 (July, 1911), 177-178; Pivato, *Touring Club Italiano*, 59-67.

⁹⁵ Hilaire Belloc, *The Path to Rome* (London, 1900) and G. M. Trevelyan, 'Walking', in *Clio, a Muse and other essays* (London, 1941), pp. 1-18 which first appeared in 1913

⁹⁶ Frank Abell, 'On Foot Along the Riviera', *London Society*, 50 (1886), pp. 417-427 and Constance Everett-Green, 'A Bicycle Tour on the Riviera', *Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* 5, n. 29 (1897), 643-663.

⁹⁷ Richard Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa* (London, 1863); C. M. Doughty, *Wanderings in Arabia* (London, 1908); Rodolfo Lanciani, *Wanderings in the Roman Campagna* (London, 1909).

⁹⁸ Macmillan, *Riviera*, p. 291; Gordon Home, *Along the Rivas of France and Italy* (London, 1908), 275-279.

⁹⁹ Anthony Esposito, 'Carr, Joseph William Comyns (1849–1916)', Oxford DNB online, <http://via.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46761?docPos=3>

¹⁰⁰ Mrs J. Comyns Carr, 'The Engadine in the Sixties', *Fortnightly Review* 116 (1924), 817-829.

¹⁰¹ A. Comyns Carr, *J. Comyns Carr, Stray Memories* (London, 1920), p. 17.

¹⁰² *Stray Memories*, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Stray Memories*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Italian honeymoons were common at the time: Helena Mitchie, 'Victorian honeymoons: Sexual reorientations and the "sights" of Europe', *Victorian Studies* 43 (2001), 229-253.

¹⁰⁵ Comyns Carr, *Stray Memories*, p. 25. Some of Alice's copious fictional work was also evidently informed by her Ligurian experience, e.g. 'The Last Day of Carnival', *Belgravia: a London magazine*, 39 (1879), 99-110, in which 'chestnut woods stretched away inland behind the cottage...'.

¹⁰⁶ *Stray Memories*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁷ *The Examiner* 3646 (Dec., 1877), p. 1588; *The Graphic* 422 (Dec., 1877), p. 619 (with six of Caldecott's engravings); *Saturday Review* 45 (Jan., 1878), p. 123; *Academy* 306 (Mar., 1878), p. 226 (by J. A. Symonds).

¹⁰⁸ *Fraser's Magazine*, 11, n. 66 (June, 1875), pp. 704-719.

¹⁰⁹ H. Fraser, S. Green and J. Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 89.

¹¹⁰ Comyns Carr, *North Italian Folk*, pp. 3-134.

¹¹¹ *North Italian Folk*, pp. 92-96 at 92.

¹¹² *North Italian Folk*, pp. 137-282.

¹¹³ Some had though: Elizabeth Fanshawe (d. 1856) and her sister the poet Catherine went there in 1829 as Elizabeth made sketches of the valley in my possession.

¹¹⁴ *North Italian Folk*, pp. 263-272.

¹¹⁵ *North Italian Folk*, pp. 139-162, illustration p. 142.

¹¹⁶ *North Italian Folk*, p. 139.

¹¹⁷ Rodolfo Gentili, Elio Gentili and Sergio Sgorbati, 'Crop changes from XVI century to the present in a hill/mountain area of eastern Liguria (Italy)', *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 5 (2009).

¹¹⁸ *North Italian Folk*, pp. 156-164, a reworked version of the anonymous 'Chestnut Harvest in the Apennines', *The Examiner* 3485, Nov. 14, 1874), pp. 1240-1241.

¹¹⁹ E. Baraldi, M. Calegari and Diego Moreno, 'Ironworks economy and woodmanship practices. Chestnut woodland culture in the Ligurian Apennines (16-19th C.)', in Jean-Paul Metailié (ed.), *Protoindustries et histoire des forêts* (Toulouse, 1992), pp. 135-149; Roberta Cevasco, Bruna Menozzi, Chiara Molinari, Diego Moreno, Claudia Vaccarezza, Maria Angela Guido and Carlo Montanari, 'The Historical Ecology of Ligurian Chestnut Groves: Archival documentation and field evidence', *Acta Horticulturae* (ISHS) 866 (2010), pp. 43-50 at http://www.actahort.org/books/866/866_2.htm. Giovanni Cherubini, 'La "civiltà" del castagno in Italia alla fine del medioevo', *Archeologia medievale* 8 (1981), 247-280 traced this 'chestnut culture' back into the medieval period.

¹²⁰ *North Italian Folk*, p. 161, titled 'Gathering the Chestnuts'.

¹²¹ For contemporary impressionistic versions of Apennine landscapes and peasants see the work of the Ligurian painter Alberto Issel: P. Rum (ed.), *Alberto Issel, Il paesaggio nell'Ottocento tra Liguria e Piemonte* (Milan, 2006), e.g. p. 61 'Rivarò'.

¹²² Grove and Rackham, *Nature of Mediterranean Europe*, p. 68.

¹²³ S. Lagomarsini, 'Progetto di Museo contadino. Scuola popolare di Cassego', *Biblioteca di Lavoro*, 58-59 (1976), 3-31, at 20-21 and 'Il Museo contadino di Cassego', in Paolo De Nevi., *Val di Vara. Un grido, un canto* (Genoa, 1988), pp. 493-494.

¹²⁴ De Nevi., *Val di Vara*, p. 489 (oral history from Sergio, Scurtabò)

¹²⁵ *North Italian Folk*, p. 156.

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- ¹²⁶ Paolo Arvati, 'Il caso demografico ligure', in Assereto and Doris, *Storia della Liguria*, pp. 379-400 at p. 385.
- ¹²⁷ Marco Doria, 'Da un'economia di antico regime all'industrializzazione', in Assereto and Doria, *Storia della Liguria*, pp. 211-228 at p. 218.
- ¹²⁸ *New Quarterly Magazine* (Jan., 1878), 363-389.
- ¹²⁹ Scott, *Nook in the Apennines*, pp. 95-103.
- ¹³⁰ Scott, *Nook in the Apennines*, p. 96.
- ¹³¹ Lina Duff Gordon, *Home Life in Italy. Letters from the Apennines* (London, 1908), image of 'Drying the Chestnuts' opposite p. 308; W. T. Beeby, *The Levantine Riviera* (London, 1908), p. 189.
- ¹³² Symonds, *New Italian Sketches*, p. 18; Phyllis Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds. A Biography* (London, 1964), 236-261 for his complex relationship with Italy.
- ¹³³ Anon. 'Chestnutting in the Apennines', *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*, 11 (1894), 374-376.
- ¹³⁴ Leader Scott, *Tuscan Studies and Sketches* (London, 1888), 161-180, but referring to the Tuscan Apennines; Janet Ross, 'Vintaging in Tuscany', in her *Old Florence and Modern Tuscany* (London, 1904), 119-130, first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1875. Helen Zimmern, *Italy of the Italians* (London, 1920; first edition 1906), pp. 251-255 took a more scientific approach to Italian viticulture which she saw as an industry rather than a quaint peasant custom.
- ¹³⁵ 'The Mushroom Merchant in the Apennines', in Scott, *Tuscan Studies*, 235-243.
- ¹³⁶ Lees, *Wanderings*, pp. v-x.
- ¹³⁷ Lees, *Wanderings*, pp. 294-298. Varese does not appear in any of the English guides prior to this as far as I know.
- ¹³⁸ Lees, *Wanderings*, pp. 319-335.
- ¹³⁹ 'How I Lived in Paris Without Money. The Story of a Modern Bohemian', *Strand Magazine*, XLII (July-Dec., 1911), 323-330 and 'The Holiday Maker in Paris. Sights to See in the French Capital', *Pall Mall Gazette* 48 (Sept., 1911), 397-402.
- ¹⁴⁰ 'Can Old Age be Cured?', *Pall Mall Gazette* 35 (June, 1905), 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Prof. Pole, 'Photographs for Travellers and Tourists', *Macmillan's Magazine* 6, n. 33 (July, 1862), 248-251 explained the cumbersome techniques of that period. John Falconer and Louise Hide, *Points of View. Capturing the 19th Century in Photographs* (London, 2009), 162-171 outline the emergence of amateur photography in the late 1880s.

¹⁴² Lees, *Wanderings*, p.295.

¹⁴³ Charles Watkins, 'The management history and conservation of terraces in the Val id Vara, Liguria', in Balzaretti, Pearce and Watkins, *Ligurian Landscapes*, pp. 141-154.

¹⁴⁴ Sandro Lagomarsini (ed.), *Relatione dell'origine et successi della terra di Varese descritta dal r.p. Antonio Cesena l'anno 1558* (La Spezia, 1993), pp. 89-90.

¹⁴⁵ Lees, *Wanderings*, p.296.

¹⁴⁶ Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World*, p. 163.

¹⁴⁷ It was briefly reviewed in *The Bookman* 43 (Dec., 1912), 75 and *The Geographical Journal*, 41 (1913), p. 273.

¹⁴⁸ F. Moscatelli, 'Territorio e popolazione nell'alta Val di Vara: Varese Ligure in età moderna', *Miscellanea storica ligure* 5, n. 2 (1976), 103-166 and Arvati, 'Il caso demografico ligure', pp. 384-386.

¹⁴⁹ Balzaretti, Pearce and Watkins, *Ligurian Landscapes*.

¹⁵⁰ Diego Moreno, *Dal documento al terreno* (Bologna, 1990); Roberta Cevasco, *Memoria verde*.

¹⁵¹ Diego Moreno, 'Pastori e serpi delle Alpi Ligui (1890-1990)', in *Milieux naturels, espaces sociaux. Etudes offertes à Robert Delort* (Paris, 1997), pp. 313-330, especially p. 313.

¹⁵² Sandro Lagomarsini, 'Urban exploitation of common rights: two models of land use in the Val di Vara', in Balzaretti, Pearce and Watkins, *Ligurian Landscapes*, pp. 179-188.

¹⁵³ Diego Moreno, 'Escaping from "landscape": the historical and environmental identification of local land-management practices in the post-medieval Ligurian mountains', in Balzaretti, Pearce and Watkins (eds), *Ligurian Landscapes*, pp. 129-140.

¹⁵⁴ Diego Moreno, 'Activation Practices, History of Environmental Resources, and Conservation', in Glauco Sanga and Gherardo Ortalli (eds), *Nature Knowledge. Ethnoscience, Cognition, and Utility* (New York and Oxford, 2004), pp. 386-390; Sandro Lombardini, Diego Moreno and Angelo Torre, 'Patrimonio culturale: problem di definizione storica', in Giovanna Galante Garrone, Andreina Griseri, Sandro Lombardini, Lorenzo

Mamino and Angelo Torre (eds), *Le risorse culturali delle valli monregalesi e la loro storia* (Savigliano, 1999), pp. 3-7; Roberta Cevasco, 'Nuove risorse per la geografia del turismo rurale. Ecologia storica e risorse ambientali nell'appennino Ligure-Emiliano', *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, series 13, volume 10 (2005), pp. 345-374.

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