

IN SEARCH OF PROUST IN THE VISITORS' BOOKS OF VENICE:  
A DISCOVERY AT THE MARCIANA

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For my mother, the poet Susan Wise, Venetian.

What precisely do we know about Proust's stays in Venice? We can merely affirm today that Proust made two visits to the Serenissima, in May and October 1900. Despite an abundance of bibliographies<sup>1</sup> we are no further advanced in our knowledge about these trips than we were since Louis Védrières' investigations in 1954. Even though we have a certain amount of information about the first springtime stay, the second, in the autumn, remains "a mystery to all Proustians"<sup>2</sup>. Biographies have all too frequently mistaken *La Recherche* for autobiography, and especially to flesh out their accounts of Proust's stays in Venice. It is, however, not without interest to note that in a manuscript for the novel Proust makes a subtle allusion to a second trip made by the hero to Venice. Here, the narrator recalls his hotel window "with its unique ogive combined with the Gothic and the Arabic" the place where his mother sat reading as she was waiting for him: "And if I wept on the day I saw it again, it was simply because it said to me: "I remember your mother well"."<sup>3</sup> The one single proof of Proust's return visit to Venice is his signature in the register of the Armenian monastery on the island of *San Lazzaro*.<sup>4</sup> It must be stressed: we know absolutely nothing of the circumstances of this second trip, neither where he stayed, nor with whom, nor for how long. This signature in the register does, however, give us a lead to follow: to research Proust's tracks in the visitors' books belonging to the museums and private residences of Venice.

*What we know*

Proust's first trip to Venice is relatively well documented, although our information rests mainly upon the cousin of Reynaldo Hahn, Marie Nordlinger-Riefstahl's<sup>5</sup> memories from later in life, and upon rare allusions in Proust's correspondence. Some years after their trip to Venice, Proust, who was already claiming to be suffering from the effects of anti-asthmatic powders on his memory, wrote to Marie Nordlinger: "You have a remarkable memory, [...] I envy you for retaining such

1. See in particular: L. VÉDRINES, "Séjours vénitiens", *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust* (abbreviated to *BSAMP*), no 4, 1954, pp. 57-60; T. IWASAKI, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie - Poésie et vérité des séjours vénitiens", *Études de langue et de littérature françaises*, no 4, March 1964, p. 85; N. IVANOFF, "Proust et Venise", *L'Oeil*, nos 217-218, August-September 1973, pp. 20-29; Cl. ROQUIN, "Venise: un "pèlerinage ruskinien" de Marcel Proust", *BSAMP*, no 23, 1973, pp. 1674-1682; R. DE CADAVAL, "Proust a Venezia", *La Fardelliana*, nos 1-7, 1985, pp. 79-89; P. COLLIER, *Proust and Venice*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; A. BERETTA ANGIUSSOLA, "Pèlerinages proustiens à Venise", *Bulletin Marcel Proust* (abbreviated to *BMP*), no 44, 1994, pp. 42-58; St. TOFFOLO, *Marcel Proust tra Venezia Padova e Verona*, Venezia, Grafiche Vincenzo Bernardi, 2009, and "Proust e Venezia", *Quaderni Proustiani*, no 10, 2016, pp. 121-179.
2. A. COMPAGNON, account of *Proust and Venice*, by P. COLLIER (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), *French Forum*, vol 16, no 3, September 1991, p. 361.
3. Cahier 3, f° 33, v° (see *RTP*, t. IV, *Esquisse XV.3*, p. 695).
4. Signature discovered at an unknown date by the French consul M. Gueyraud, then presented in 1931 by M. DUJARDIN ("Marcel Proust à Venise", *Le Figaro*, literary supplement, 10 October 1931, p. 7).
5. Marie Riefstahl, née Nordlinger (1876-1961). Her voice can be heard in an interview from 13 October 1955 on Paris Inter, broadcast by France Culture on the 18 August 2014: <http://www.franceculture.fr/emission-grands-ecrivains-grandes-conferences-proust-15-par-andre-maurois-et-en-expo-a-londres-2014>. See also the articles: M. NORDLINGER-RIEFSTAHL, "Proust as I Knew Him" (*The London Magazine*, vol. I, no7, August 1954, pp. 51-61); "Proust and Ruskin" )*Marcel Proust and his Time 1871-1922*, London, Wildenstein Gallery, 1955, pp. 57-63): this text is reprinted in the exhibition catalogue for *Marcel Proust 1871-1922. An Exhibition of Manuscripts, Books, Pictures and Photographs* (Manchester Whitworth Gallery, 1956, pp. 5-10); "Memories of Marcel Proust" (*The Listener*, no 63, 28 April 1960, pp. 749-751). An older and shorter version of Marie Nordlinger's memoirs appeared in the introduction to M. PROUST, *Lettres à une Amie. Recueil de quarante-et-une lettres inédites adressées à Marie Nordlinger. 1899-1908*, Manchester, Éditions du Calame, 1942, pp. V-XI. See also M. NATUREL, "Donation Marie Nordlinger - L.A. Bisson", *BMP*, no 61, 2011, pp. 9-11.

precise recollections about those days in Venice”<sup>6</sup>. At the time of the publication of George Painter’s biography of Proust however, Robert Vigneron warned:

The critical examination of evidence is, in our opinion, more indispensable still than the collecting of evidence [...] ; the memories of friends and contemporaries must be verified with the aid of objective documentation; and [...] chronology must be established with the most implacable vigilance, [...] according to first-hand documents.<sup>7</sup>

This first trip to Venice took place between the beginning of May and June 1900, but we are still not certain about the exact dates. Marie Nordlinger says only that: “One radiant morning in May we saw, my aunt, Reynaldo and myself, the arrival in Venice of Marcel and his mother.”<sup>8</sup> According to Philip Kolb this could only have been the 26 April or the 6 May 1900. Proust was hoping to be joined by Reynaldo Hahn, who was then in Rome, at the same time as Léon Yeatman and his wife<sup>9</sup>. Despite the absence of information about the genuine facts about this trip, conjectures and extrapolations are legion. Thus, we find this affirmation, lacking any proof whatsoever: “At the beginning of May 1900, Reynaldo Hahn rejoined Proust in Venice; they travelled together to visit Padua, and in June stayed in Battaglia Terme, a small thermal resort close to Padua [...]”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, a letter by Reynaldo Hahn, written in Rome, gives us some indication about his trip to Italy, but without furnishing us with the slightest indication about the presence of Proust: “I have been to see Venice, Florence, Padua, Siena and Pisa; so many profound impressions that I shall try to translate into the fluid language of sound”<sup>11</sup>.

Another unpublished letter from Reynaldo Hahn to Suzette Lemaire, difficult to date, describes a stay in Venice which could be the one he spent with Proust: “The day before yesterday, at midnight, I was in a gondola on the Grand Canal, alone with the old gondolier”<sup>12</sup>. Philip Kolb had noted on one of his index cards several parts of this letter, which he dated as “after 29 May 1900”<sup>13</sup> which would indicate that Proust was still in Venice on this date. But we know that Reynaldo Hahn made several trips to Venice, and this letter, of which we know only extracts, does not appear to mention Proust.

The novelist’s correspondence is strangely silent on these trips to Venice. One single letter furnishes a few precise details about the one he made with his mother, which he evokes in 1917 to Princesse Alexandre de Caraman-Chimay:<sup>14</sup>

Princesse, do you remember when you were gazing at the pillars of Saint John of Acre in front of St Mark’s? And the Hôtel de l’Europe where Mama was filled with wonder by your charm, which was as new for her and as true as that of Venice? And your fondness shared with the

6. *Corr.*, t. IV, p. 239.

7. R.VIGNERON, “La méthode de Sainte-Beuve et la méthode de M. Painter”, *Modern Philology*, Vol 65, no 2, November 1967, p. 138.

8. M. NORDLINGER, “Au lecteur”, *Lettres à une Amie, op. cit.*, p. IX.

9. See two letters: *Corr.*, t. II, pp. 395-397. Unfortunately the unpublished memoirs of Madeleine Yeatman, wife of Léon, do not contain any reference to this Venice trip (I would like to thank her descendant, Monsieur Yeatman-Eiffel, for giving me access to these texts).

10. Auction, Ader-Nordmann, Paris, 21 June 2012, notice for lot no 88.

11. Auction, Ader-Nordmann, Paris, 26 May 2011, lot no 162.

12. Letter conserved at Harvard University, BMS Fr.219.1, no 189. Phrase recopied by Ph. Kolb, Kolb-Proust Archive, index card no c23410. Ph. BLAY also quotes some parts of this letter in his thesis, along with several others that prove the absence of Hahn in Paris on 29 May 1900 (“*L’Île du rêve* de Reynaldo Hahn. Contribution à l’étude de l’opéra français de l’époque fin-de-siècle”, François-Rabelais University, Tours, 1999, p. 202).

13. Since then, L. FRAISSE has also presented an abridged version of this letter. He alleges, as does Kolb, that it could date from 1900, since Reynaldo Hahn exclaims “God knows how I would like to see the Exposition!” (“Un témoignage rapproché sur Marcel Proust: la correspondance inédite de Reynaldo Hahn avec les dames Lemaire”, *Marcel Proust aujourd’hui*, no 9, 2012, p. 25).

14. Née Princesse Hélène Bassaraba de Brancovan (1878-1929). She was the sister of Anna de Noailles and Constantin Bassaraba de Brancovan.

prince for the Contarini-Fasan palace?<sup>15</sup>

So, as Louis Védrières observed: “Everything fades from view as if Marcel Proust had woven a veil of mystery around his accounts of the City of Water”<sup>16</sup>. There still remain numerous areas of shadow concerning this first trip to Venice, and confusions continue, such as the legend which has it that Proust stayed at the *Danieli* Hotel<sup>17</sup>, when according to the evidence and his correspondence, he stayed with his mother at the *Europa* Hotel. However, let us remember that in 1900 there were two Europa hotels: the Hôtel de l’Europe in one of the *Giustinian*<sup>18</sup> palaces, the one on the Grand Canal, today the headquarters of the Venice Biennale, and the *Europa e Regina* hotel. The *Europa* hotel has hosted a number of personalities<sup>19</sup>, including Richard Wagner<sup>20</sup>, and Anatole France<sup>21</sup>. Ruskin mentions it in an index to *The Stones of Venice*, although he refers to it as “*Albergo all’Europa*”<sup>22</sup>.

One single photograph exists of Proust in Venice, seated on a terrace<sup>23</sup>, probably that of an hotel. It was first published by Pierre Abraham in 1930<sup>24</sup>, with no indication of its location, then published again by Georges Cattai who titled it: “Proust in Venice on the shore of the Lido, about 1900”<sup>25</sup>. Since then the same photograph is generally captioned simply as “Proust in Venice”<sup>26</sup>. But if we look at it closely, it is clear that it cannot be the Lido, and that the terrace is situated rather on the Grand Canal, perhaps at the Hôtel de l’Europe.

Philip Kolb pointed out an annotation in Proust’s handwriting in a copy of Ruskin’s *The Bible of Amiens*: “Marcel Proust / Hôtel de l’Europe 61”<sup>27</sup>. This number would be the number of Proust’s room in this hotel on the Grand Canal<sup>28</sup>. Anne Borrel points out that the hotel could not contain sixty bedrooms, but the numbering could have been a little arbitrary or the hotel could have had annexes<sup>29</sup>. In 1911, in a letter to Reynaldo Hahn, Proust is recalling the name of this Venice,

15. Letter to Madame de Caraman-Chimay [23 August 1917], *Corr.*, t. XVI, p. 213. Proust tells Jacques Porel about his own admiration for the Contarini-Fasan Palace, comparing it to the *Contarini degli Scrigni e Corfù* that his mother Réjane had acquired on the Grand Canal: “I adored a Contarini Fasan palace which must be a doll’s house next to your grandeurs, but which, in its narrowness, was delightful”. (*Corr.*, t. XVIII, p. 424, [14 or 15 October 1919].)
16. L. VÉDRINES, article quoted above, p. 60.
17. According to G. D. PAINTER, *Marcel Proust. Les années de jeunesse (1871-1903)*, translated from the English by G. Cattai and R.-P. Vial, Mercure de France, 1966, p. 338.
18. Note that this palace is sometimes called “*Ca’ Giustinian*”, and at other times “*Palazzo Giustinian*”, the first is the Venetian nomenclature and the second its Italian designation. For Venetians there is only one “*Palazzo*”, which is the “*Palazzo ducale*” (the Doge’s Palace), the others are referred to as “*Ca’...*”. In the same way there is only one “*Piazza*”, St Mark’s, the others are called “*campo*”. Venetian toponymy is in Venetian dialect and differs considerably from Italian onomatology.
19. On the residences of famous visitors to Venice, see G.-J. SALVY, *Un carnet vénitien*, Paris, Éditions du Regard, 2001.
20. V. BOCCARDI, *Wagner a Venezia nel bicentenario della nascita 1813-2013*, Venezia, Biblioteca del *Gazzettino*, 2013, p. 32.
21. As shown by a letter written by Anatole France with notepaper headed “Hôtel de l’Europe, Venise” (auction Maison Michel Lhomme, Paris, 21 March 2009, lot no. 13).
22. J. RUSKIN, *The Stones of Venice*, vol III, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1853, p. 298.
23. This photograph was included in the sale of the collection of Patricia Mante-Proust (Sotheby’s Paris, 31 May 2016, lot no 175) and was bought by Proust collector Reiner Speck from Cologne.
24. P. ABRAHAM, *Proust. Recherches sur la création intellectuelle*, Paris, Les Éditions Rieder, coll. “Maîtres des Littératures” no 7, 1930, pl. XXIX.
25. G. CATTAI, *Marcel Proust. Documents iconographiques*, Geneva, Pierre Cailler Éditeur, coll. “Visages d’hommes célèbres”, 1956, pl. 53.
26. See for example Cl. MAURIAC, *Marcel Proust par lui-même*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, coll. “Écrivains de toujours”, 1963, p. 162.
27. This copy is conserved at the BnF (Imprimés, Rés 43).
28. *Corr.*, t. X, p. 263, no 11.
29. A. BORREL, “Proust et Ruskin: l’exemplaire de *La Bible d’Amiens* à la Bibliothèque nationale de France” 48/14. *La Revue du Musée d’Orsay*, no 2, 1996, p. 74-79. See also Fl. CALLU, “Proust a Venezia”, exhibition catalogue for *Viaggio in Italia: un corteo magico, dal Cinquecento al Novecento*, G. MARCENARO and P. BORAGINA eds, Genoa, Electa, 2001, pp. 396-397.

which he calls, in their jocular language “Benise”, hotel: “P.S. Do you think that there is more foliage at the Lido in May than in Benice, and there is as nice a hotel as the Europe”<sup>30</sup>. But we also know that Proust stayed in an “Hôtel de l’Europe” in Amsterdam<sup>31</sup>, so the annotation in *The Bible of Amiens* could refer rather to his stay in Holland.

In order to rediscover the hotel where Proust stayed, Marie Dujardin first of all suggested following up a remark in *La Recherche* which concerns a “hôtel de Venise”<sup>32</sup>, but, she added, no hotel of this name existed either at that period or has existed since. But an article by Augustine Bulteau, in *Le Figaro* of 1903, mentions the “Palais Venice”, also called “*Venier dei Leoni*” which was a hotel on the Grand Canal, just next to the Palais Dario<sup>33</sup>. It was in this palace-hotel that resided in particular Henri de Régnier and Jean Lorrain. This hotel was also called by Régnier the “*Palazzo Veniere, Casa Barbieri, grande canale*”<sup>34</sup>, thus in all probability reproducing the Venetian pronunciation of “*Venier*”. According to Régnier it was not an hotel but a “family boarding-house”, which he named on its part “*Casa Barbier*”<sup>35</sup>. We can have confidence in Régnier because, as Sophie Basch stressed: “Régnier - along with Wolfe - is the only writer whose Venetian terminology is impeccable, where no conceivable Venetian proper name becomes mutilated in the accuracy of his writing [...]”<sup>36</sup>. This palace is now the site of the Peggy Guggenheim gallery.

Just as we do not know the exact date of Proust’s arrival in Venice, nor do we know the date of his departure. We can only be certain that he had returned home in June at least, because around the 21 June 1900 Reynaldo Hahn remarked that in Paris Proust was “less ill than in Venice”<sup>37</sup>.

### *On the trail of the registers*

Other trips by Proust are attested to by his signature in hotel registers: the guest book, 22 August 1893, from an inn at Sassal Masone<sup>38</sup>, as well as that of the hotel at Beg-Meil in 1895<sup>39</sup>. The registers from the Venice hotels have been deposited in the city archives. Unfortunately they are missing several years, 1900 being one of them. So it is impossible to verify Proust’s presence in any Venetian hotel<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, we know that foreign travellers had to register their names at the Venice police headquarters, so it ought to be possible to discover a form showing the name of Marcel Proust. But here too we hit a dead end, since the police registers for 1900 are missing.

30. *Corr.*, t. X, p. 262 [shortly after 4 March 1911].

31. A letter exists written on notepaper headed “Hôtel de l’Europe, Amsterdam” from Proust to his mother, from October 1902 (*Corr.*, t. III, pp. 163-165), kept today at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Koch Collection, Yale University.

32. *Albertine disparu*, RTP, t. IV, p. 204.

33. FOEMINA, “Le Masque”, *Le Figaro*, 2 November 1903, p. 1. Augustine Bulteau signed her articles Foemina and her novels, Jacques Vontade.

34. See his letters in J. LORRAIN, *Venise*, Paris, Éditions La Bibliothèque, coll. “L’Écrivain voyageur”, 1997, pp. 65 and 68. The text of “Venise” was first published in *La Revue illustrée*, nos 8 and 9, from 1st and 15 April 1905. Lorrain was inspired by his stay at “Palais Veniere” for a passage in his novel set in Nice *Les Noronoff*.

35. H. DE RÉGNIER, *L’Altana ou La Vie vénitienne. 1899-1924*, t. 1, Paris, Mercure de France, 1928, p. 59 (republished under the title *La Vie vénitienne*, Mercure de France, 1986). He describes how Mme de La Baume rented this palace to lodge her guests when they were too numerous for the *Ca’ Dario* (*Ibid.*, p. 81). According to *Le Gaulois*, the garden of the Venier palace belonged to Mme de La Baume (17 July 1902).

36. S. BASCH, *Paris-Venise 1887-1932. La “folie vénitienne” dans le roman français de Paul Bourget à Maurice Dekobra*, Paris, Honoré Champion, coll. “Travaux et recherches des Universités rhénanes” no XV, 2000, p. 96.

37. *Corr.*, t. II, letter no 250, [shortly after 21 June 1900].

38. K. WANNER, *Der Himmel schon südlich, die Luft aber frisch. Schriftsteller, Maler, Musiker und ihre Zeit und ihre Zeit in Gaubünden 1800-1950*, Chur, Verlag Bündner Monatsblatt, 1993; quoted by L. KELLER who provides a reproduction in: *Proust sur les Alpes*, éditions Zoé, 2003, p. 7.

39. J. LE FOLL, “Il y a cent ans: le séjour de Marcel Proust à Beg-Meil”, 5 p. Online: <http://fr.slideshare.net/fouesnant/100-ans-fouesnant>. This article reproduces a page from the Hôtel Fermont showing the signatures of Reynaldo Hahn and Marcel Proust (p. 5).

40. Contrary to a claim made by an Italian internet site ([http://www.marcelproust.it/gallery/proust/proust\\_venezia.htm](http://www.marcelproust.it/gallery/proust/proust_venezia.htm)) which declares that unlike G. Painter, J.-Y. Tadié was able to examine the hotel registers to establish Proust’s presence at the hotel *Europa* and his absence from the *Danieli*. But J.-Y. Tadié has assured me that he has never been able to see these registers which were and remain impossible to find (email from 3 September 2013). This site also erroneously states that the old hotel *Europa*, the Giustiniani palace, became the site of the university Ca’ Foscari (which is, as its name indicates, in the “*Ca’ Foscari*” palace, on the other side of the Grand Canal).

What other registers exist which could prove the presence of Proust in Venice? We present here the results of our researches carried out over fifteen years. Several museums and “*Scuole*”, such as the *Scuole dei Frari*, held registers of visitors, but for the most part these are reserved for well-known personalities, which Proust was not yet in 1900. Often too these visitors’ books have disappeared. Such is the case with the visitors’ book to the *Galleria dell’Accademia* (where Proust saw paintings by Carpaccio in particular), which has not been conserved<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, other cultural or religious establishments did not start keeping registers of visitors until later. The *Scuola San Giorgio degli Schiavoni* only kept a register from 1955 onwards. Similarly, at the monastery of *San Francesco del Deserto*, which was visited by Henri Régnier<sup>42</sup>, the visitors’ book does not make an appearance until 1922. The owners of fine residences at this time liked to have their guests sign their names in visitors’ books, a ritual that Marcel Proust enjoyed. It was on the occasion of Proust’s visit to the Château-la-Vallière, for the marriage of Armand, Duc de Guiche, that the Duc de Gramont, anxious at seeing the writer about to sign the visitors’ book, advised him: “Your name, Monsieur Proust... *but no thoughts!*”<sup>43</sup>

### *San Lazzaro degli Armeni*

We know practically nothing about Proust’s second visit to Venice. Only one thing is certain: on 19 October 1900 Proust signed the register of the monastery of the Mekhitarist fathers, an Armenian Catholic order, on the island of *San Lazzaro degli Armeni* in the Venetian lagoon.<sup>44</sup> This is why all assertions concerning Proust’s second trip to Venice are nothing but pure speculation, if not invention. As when P.F. Preswich claims, without the slightest documentation to support it, that Proust returned to Venice for a week with Federico de Madrazo, since Reynaldo Hahn was fully occupied<sup>45</sup>. In reality we have no proof, either of the length of Proust’s stay, nor the presence or not of any companions. Two letters from Proust to Douglas Ainslie, dating from October 1900, take us to the start of the trail. First of all he invites him to spend “eight days in Florence and Venice”, then, on account of “the lateness of the season”, he modifies his proposition: “it will be just Venice, Verona and Padua”<sup>46</sup>. This then suggests Ainslie as a possible companion for the trip, but no confirmation of a favourable response from his English friend exists. No more can we state, as some have done, that in the end Proust made the trip entirely alone<sup>47</sup>. Proust’s correspondence between the beginning of October 1900 and January 1901 is to a large extent missing. And furthermore, Proust seems to want to keep his autumnal trip to Venice from his correspondents, when he wrote in 1901: “October has come and I still haven’t been in a state to leave Paris for a single day. I haven’t been able to go anywhere for one day since May 1900”<sup>48</sup>. So we do not know either the date of his second arrival in Venice, or the date of his return to Paris<sup>49</sup>.

41. According to the information kindly furnished by Giovanna Nepi Scirè from the *Soprintendenza del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali* (letter of 12 October 2001).

42. H. DE RÉGNIER, *L’Altana ou La Vie vénitienne 1899-1924*, edition quoted above, t I, p. 242.

43. Proust quoted this anecdote on two occasions: in a letter to Bertrand de Fénelon, in 1904 (*Corr.*, t. IV, p. 198) and in 1908 to Daniel Halévy (t. XVIII, p. 585). See too the unpublished letter from Proust in the catalogue of Librairie Les Neuf Muses, April 2017, (cf. *BIP*, no 47, 2017).

44. A partial reproduction of the page that Proust signed in the monastery’s register is presented in N. IVANOFF, “Proust et Venise”, article quoted above, pp. 20-29.

45. P. F. PRESTWICH, *The Translation of Memories. Recollections of the Young Proust from the Letters of Marie Nordlinger*, London and Chester Springs, Peter Owen Publishers, 1999, p. 101. On the other hand she points out clearly that a postcard from Reynaldo Hahn to Marie Nordlinger, from 7 June 1900, indicates that Reynaldo is back in Venice by this date. So when a written proof exists Preswich quotes it.

46. *Corr.*, t. II, p. 412 (which Kolb dates either between 30 September and 4 October, or between 7 and 11 October 1900) and t. XII, p. 398 (“about mid-October 1900”).

47. See for example FI. CALLU (who is even mistaken about Ainslie’s first name), “Proust a Venezia”, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

48. *Corr.*, t. II, p. 453. Kolb remarks on this peculiarity, p.454, n. 2.

49. In his index cards, Kolb quotes a letter from Proust to Princesse Alexandre de Caraman-Chimay, from 6 December 1900, which proves his presence in Paris on this date, because he would have attended Henri Bergson’s lecture at the Collège de France, 7 December. (Kolb-Proust Archives, cards C24430 and C24440). But this letter is not included in his edition of Proust’s correspondence.

I was able to consult the register of the San Lazzaro monastery and verify all the names that are represented in it<sup>50</sup>. If Proust's signature is mentioned frequently in studies about Proust in Venice, those of his friends are not reported<sup>51</sup>, even though they might constitute fresh leads. It must be understood that this register is classified by country, but sometimes visitors have placed their signature after their friends, without respecting this geographical division. I therefore checked every page<sup>52</sup>. In the "France" section, for the 19 October 1900, the day on which Proust left his signature ("Marcel Proust - Paris"), there are only two other visitors<sup>53</sup> - "Julien Landeau - Le Mans" and "Juliette Shani Amondriez - Genève"<sup>54</sup>. We shall find the signature of Julien Landeau again in another museum, which we will come to later. Furthermore, in this same section and for the same year, we can see the following dates and signatures<sup>55</sup>:

- 14 April: "C. de Las Cases - Paris"<sup>56</sup>;
- 16 May: "Prince Brancovan"<sup>57</sup>, "Princesse A. de Caraman-Chimay"<sup>58</sup>, and "Abel Hermant"<sup>59</sup> (all three friends of Proust);
- 18 September: "*Signora* Bulteau - Paris"<sup>60</sup> and "Comtesse G. de la Baume"<sup>61</sup> - Paris";
- 28 September: "Vicomte de Polignac"<sup>62</sup>;
- 12 December (an unusually late date to be visiting Venice at the period): "Valéry Larbaud - Vichy" and "Jean-José Frappa - Paris"<sup>63</sup>;
- 29 December: "Jean Cruppi, député de la H. Garonne - Paris"<sup>64</sup>.

50. My grateful thanks to the *Padre Superiore* of the monastery for granting me permission to consult the register at length and to have so kindly presented me a reproduction of the page on which Proust's signature features. This photocopy is kept at the documentation centre of the "Proust" team at ITEM-CNRS, at the ENS, Paris.

51. But Philip Kolb noted some names in his records which are now available online at the Kolb-Proust Archive: <http://www.library.illinois.edu/kolbp/>.

52. I checked every page then every country, without finding any other friends or acquaintances of Proust apart from the ones quoted here.

53. On the same 19 October, there were no British or Americans, but four Austrians and three Italians.

54. In his records, Kolb also noted this name, which he deciphered as "Juliette Stani Amoudriez", but he did not include that of Julien Landeau (record C24260).

55. Here we see an amusing onomastic coincidence, the visit, on 21 February, of "Lieutenant A. Albaret, 16<sup>e</sup> Dragons (Reims)".

56. Could this be Comte Emmanuel Joseph Augustin de Las Cases (1854-1934), a barrister recommended by Proust in 1908 to his friend Louis d'Albufera? (cf. *Corr.*, t. VIII, p. 256).

57. Prince Constantin de Brancovan must have arrived only a few days earlier, since he was present on 11 May 1900 at the church of Saint-Philippe du Roule, Paris, for the funeral of Prince Duc de Poix (*Le Figaro*, 12 May 1900, p. 2).

58. The papers note the travels of "Prince de Caraman-Chimay": to Florence (*Le Figaro*, 23 April 1900), then to Venice (*Le Figaro*, 3 May 1900, p. 5). Princesse Alexandre de Caraman-Chimay would have returned to Paris before 24 May, when she is present among the guests at the British Embassy for the celebration of the anniversary of Queen Victoria's birth (*Le Figaro*, 25 May 1900).

59. Abel Hermant (1852-1950), writer. In a letter to Marie Nordlinger Proust criticises the derogatory comments of Hermant about the English admirers of Ruskin in Venice, which appeared in an article in *Gil Blas*, 4 September 1904, p. 1 (*Corr.*, t. IV, pp. 272 and 273, n. 8).

60. Augustine Bulteau (1860-1922), nicknamed "Toche". Proust did not think very highly of her and spelled her name "Bultot" (*Corr.*, t. III, p. 319 and t. IV, p. 155).

61. Marie-Isabelle-Victoire-Ghislaine Gontran, Comtesse de La Baume Pluvinel, née Crombez (1858-1911), married in 1878 to Charles-Paul-Léon-Séraphin Gontran, Comte de La Baume Pluvinel (1846-1883). The comtesse signed her articles, poems and novels Laurent Evrard. See the obituary notice by André Beaunier in *Le Figaro* (8 February 1911, p. 1) and the list of persons present at her funeral, many of whom were friends of Proust, in *Le Figaro* (14 February 1911, p. 3) and *Le Gaulois* (same date, p. 2).

62. This must be Armand de Polignac (1872-1961), who in 1902 married Princesse Marie-Hélène de Bauffremont Courtenay and became the 6<sup>th</sup> Duc de Polignac in 1917. Proust encountered him at the funeral of Prince Edmond de Polignac (*Le Figaro*, 13 August 1901).

63. Larbaud (1881-1957) who at that time was only nineteen years old, was making a long trip that year in Italy with his friend Jean-José Frappa (1882-1939), son of the painter Jean Frappa, who went on to become a journalist, writer and playwright.

64. Jean Cruppi (1855-1933) was a barrister until 1898, when he was elected deputy of the Haute Garonne. After that he became minister. Proust knew him well, because he had married a first cousin of Jeanne Weil.

The three friends of Proust who, in the spring, visited the monastery and its famous garden of olive trees on the lagoon, must have recommended it to him then, but he did not visit it until the time of his second trip. The monastery was celebrated above all as a foremost literary location: it is situated on the island to which Byron either went by gondola or swam, to meditate in its gardens and to study Armenian in its prestigious library<sup>65</sup>. We know that when Ruskin visited Venice, Byron was a primordial reference: “*My Venice, like Turner’s, had been chiefly created for us by Byron*”<sup>66</sup>. In 1906, Reynaldo Hahn took his own Byronic pilgrimage: “After a frugal lunch - I had only slept an hour - I was taken to San-Lazzaro by gondola, my eyes wandering across the fluid horizons that Lord Byron scrutinized every morning. One of the “fathers”, ugly and talkative, showed me round the monastery, sparing me nothing.”<sup>67</sup>.

Ruskin visited the Armenian monastery on the isle of *San Lazzaro* at least twice<sup>68</sup>. Their famous library holds a copy of *The Stones of Venice* dedicated by Ruskin to the Mekhitarist brothers, as well as an autograph letter by the English writer<sup>69</sup>, which was published in the *Library Edition* of the works of Ruskin which Proust possessed<sup>70</sup>. Ruskin declared that the island offered one of the most splendid views over the Venetian lagoon, something that could not have been unknown to Proust<sup>71</sup>. Similarly, Proust had probably read what George Sand wrote about her reception by the Armenian brothers in *Les Lettres d’un voyageur*<sup>72</sup>. Finally, he must also have been familiar with this recommendation by Musset, who was the favourite poet of his youth:

[...] they climb into their gondolas and set off to row around the isle of the Armenians; it is there between the city and the Lido, between the sky and the sea, that I advise the reader to go on a beautiful moonlit night, to make love like a Venetian<sup>73</sup>.

Another reason, this time political, that he could have gone to visit this monastery was his interest in the unhappy fate of the Armenians<sup>74</sup>, which he wrote about in *Jean Santeuil*<sup>75</sup>.

### *The Correr museum register*

The register for the Correr museum has never been consulted until now<sup>76</sup>. It was far from easy to find, numerous volumes of visitors’ registers being kept pell-mell in the attic of the *Procuratie vecchie*, in St Mark’s square. In 1900 this museum of the history of Venice was not located in St

65. On this subject, see for example A. MESROBIAN, “Lord Byron at the Armenian Monastery on San Lazzaro”, *The Courier*, vol. XI, no 1, 1973, pp. 27-37.

66. Letter from Ruskin quoted by N. AUBERT, “The Lamp of Memory: Proust, Ruskin and *Le Temps retrouvé*”, *Le Temps retrouvé: 80 ans après: essais critiques*, Adam Watt, ed., Bern, Peter Lang, coll. “Modern French Identities” no 84, 2009, p.25.

67. R. HAHN, *Notes (Journal d’un musicien)*, Paris, Plon, 1933, p. 192.

68. See *Christmas Story: John Ruskin’s Venetian Letters of 1876-1877*, Van Akin Burds ed., Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1990, pp. 169-171 and 263 no 27, and Ruskin’s letter from 29-31 December 1876, p.265.

69. E. T. COOK, *Homes and Haunts of John Ruskin*, London, George Allen & Company, 1912, p. 112.

70. Catalogue for the Marcel Proust exhibition, Bibliothèque nationale, 1965, no 245; as well as in *Marcel Proust and his Time*, London, Wildenstein Gallery, 1955, no 235.

71. E. T. COOK, *Homes and Haunts of John Ruskin, op. cit.*, p. 112.

72. SAND, *Lettres d’un voyageur*, Paris, Michel Lévy Frères Libraires-Éditeurs, 1857, pp. 76-86.

73. A. DE MUSSET, *Le Fils du Titien, Les Deux Maîtresses*, Aix-en-Provence, Éditions ALINEA, coll. “L’intemporel”, 1991, p. 168.

74. See P. ATMADJIAN, *Les Proust Adrien et Marcel et l’Arménie* (Bordeaux, Les Dossiers d’Aquitaine, coll. “Destins du Monde”, 2000), and D. GALATERIA, “Proust e l’eccidio armeno” (*Quaderni Proustiani*, no 10, 2016, pp. 71-74).

75. JS, p. 600-608. Proust must also have known about Anatole France’s involvement in this struggle (the latter made a first statement against the massacre of the Armenians in 1897, then, in 1901, founded, along with Jaurès and Clemenceau, the newspaper *Pro Armenia*).

76. My grateful thanks to Camillo Tonini, from the *Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia* (today responsible for the Doge’s Palace), for allowing me to consult the registers of the Correr museum.

Mark's square but on the Grand Canal, in the *Fontego dei Turchi* palace, the architecture of which was studied by Ruskin. A long time after his stay in Venice, Proust may have read a summary of the history of this museum in an article in *Le Gaulois*<sup>77</sup>. In the register of the Correr museum, for the same year of 1900, there can be found some of the same visitors to the San Lazzaro monastery:

- 16 April: Ct<sup>esse</sup> de Las Cases;
- 19 May: Prince Brancovan and Abel Hermant;
- 4 October: Vicomte de Polignac, Paris;
- 9 October: Ct<sup>e</sup> and Ct<sup>esse</sup> R. de Maupeou<sup>78</sup>, Paris;
- 14 October: Julien Landeau, France.

It is surprising to see that both Princesse Caraman-Chimay and Proust made their way to the small Armenian monastery, but disregarded the nearby and celebrated museum of the history of Venice, unlike their friends. Also, Julien Landeau<sup>79</sup>, this unknown person who crossed paths with Proust at *San Lazzaro*<sup>80</sup>, was there (19 October) *after* the Correr museum (14 October), unlike Prince Brancovan and Abel Hermant, who took the trip to the island of the Armenians *before* visiting the Correr. It is hard to stop oneself from speculating about this Julien Landeau, from Le Mans, who, on the 19 October 1900 signed his name first in the *San Lazzaro* monastery's visitors' book then perhaps passed the pen to Marcel Proust who added his signature under his. Was this the real name of a visitor or a pseudonym? Or, better still, could Proust have done the same as one of his characters in *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*, who, in the visitors' book at an inn at Egandine, first of all signed his own name "and beside it a combination of letters that were an allusion" to the name of the person who he was in love with and whose absence was causing him great unhappiness<sup>81</sup>. To whom could the letters "Julien Landeau" correspond? If he invented this visitor was he thus making a furtive reference to George Sand, with an allusion to her lover Julien Sandeau? As for the city of origin of this Monsieur Landeau, "Le Mans", could this be word play on the English "*The Man*"...? So as we see, it is not difficult to create a legend around Proust's trips to Venice.

### *The Register of the Museum of Archaeology on the island of Torcello*

Another register that has remained unknown until now is the one from the small museum of archaeology on Torcello<sup>82</sup>. According to the administration nobody had ever asked to consult it until I asked permission in 2001. Torcello is one of the most distant islands: an hour and a half's journey by gondola, although at that period it was also possible to take a steam boat, even if the timetables were not always very convenient. Henri de Régnier described his visit to Torcello and the "long cruise"<sup>83</sup> by gondola, which he preferred to the *vaporetto*, to reach the island which in days gone by had been more important than Venice<sup>84</sup>. Its bishopric, its autonomous government (*Podestà* and

77. NOSELLA, "Lettres de Venise", *Le Gaulois*, 27 September 1913, p. 3.

78. This is the Comte and Comtesse René de Maupeou. Proust knew the comtesse who he heard in Cabourg singing melodies by Reynaldo Hahn (*Corr.*, t. VII, p. 267) and he would even have spent time with her (cf. *Corr.*, t. X, pp. 94-95, t. XVI, p. 222). But there is perhaps some confusion between different comtesses of the same name (since, according to Kolb, the comtesse would have been deceased in 1917. Cf. *Corr.*, t. XVI, pp. 222-223, n. 10). But Comtesse René de Maupeou who was well-known for her singing ability died on 4 September 1931 (cf. *Le Figaro*, 5 and 9 September 1931). It was the "dowager Comtesse de Maupeou, née Caroline Koechlin" who died on 29 September 1915 (*Le Figaro*, 30 September 1915).

79. Could this be abbé Julien Landeau, translator of a guide to Rome: Prof. F. SABATINI, *Guide pratique de Rome et de ses environs. Suivi d'un résumé pratique de la grammaire italienne*, translated by abbé Julien Landeau, Roma, Edizioni Oreste Garroni, 1909. He was also the author of *Prières usuelles*, Avignon, Aubanel frères, 1896.

80. Unless of course he is the *unknown companion* of Proust during this Venetian trip?

81. *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*, P. Clarac and Y. Sandre ed., Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", 1971, p. 136.

82. Visitors' register for the Museum of Torcello, Provincia di Venezia. I would like to thank Gloria Vidali (*Settore Scuole Cultura, Provincia di Venezia*) for granting me permission to consult the register. Equally I would like to thank Afio Redo for his friendly welcome. Reproductions of several pages of the register are kept in the documentation centre of the "Proust" team, ITEM.

83. H. DE RÉGNIER, *L'Altana ou la Vie vénitienne. 1899-1924*, edition quoted above, t. I, pp. 237-242.

84. See É. CROUZET-PAVAN, *La Mort lente de Torcello. Histoire d'une cité disparue*, Paris, Fayard, 1995.



*Consiglio*), its cathedral and its churches are described by Ruskin in *The Stones of Venice*, where he devotes a chapter to them. The French edition of 1906 also features a photograph by Alinari, of the principal square where the museum is situated, an important visitors' attraction at the time. Unlike today, visitors came not only to see the churches and the famous golden mosaic of the Madonna. But perhaps one might ascend the steps to the museum simply on account of a long wait for the next *vaporetto*<sup>85</sup>. This visitors' book, which begins in 1883, is divided alphabetically by the name of the visitor and placed in chronological order. It was necessary to check every page closely, in every direction, because in reality the visitors did not respect either alphabetic sequence, chronology, or the topography of the page, which has left this register particularly muddled. We find other acquaintances of Proust:

- Gabriel D'Annunzio, 17 September 1894, signed under the letter "G"<sup>86</sup>;
- Mariano Fortuny<sup>87</sup>, Angeles C. de Madrazo<sup>88</sup>, Ricardo de Madrazo (Madrid)<sup>89</sup>, and Carlos Barzajes<sup>90</sup>, left their signatures under the letter "H", in September 1895;
- Maurice Barrès, 9 October 1896<sup>91</sup>, signed the register, in pencil, under the letter "F" for some mysterious reason (perhaps he was accompanied by a person who signed his name just before him, a certain Silvestro Fouca)<sup>92</sup>;
- Jacques Hermant<sup>93</sup>, Architect from Paris and Mme Hermant, in April 1898;
- Comte Mathieu de Noailles<sup>94</sup>, 27 May 1904.

#### *Visitors' book for the Garden of Eden*

It has been said that Proust signed another visitors' book, not belonging to a museum, but to a private individual<sup>95</sup>: that of Frederic and Caroline Eden<sup>96</sup>, an English couple who, in 1884, purchased a property on the Giudecca, opposite the lagoon, facing the Lido, and whose entrance is still on the *Rio della Croce*, a canal connecting the Giudecca canal and the lagoon. Sir Frederic

85. However, when the Layards, reading Ruskin's pages about these islands aloud, brought their friends to Torcello by gondola, most of them took the time to visit the museum. (cf. *Lady Laynard's Journal*, online: <http://www.browningguide.org/browningscircle.php>).

86. D'Annunzio had come to Venice about mid-August 1894, to meet up with his French translator Georges Hérelle. Hérelle left for Paris on 20 September and D'Annunzio on the 30<sup>th</sup>, for Francavilla, where he lived with Maria Gravida. It was at the time of this trip that he met Eleonora Duse (cf. J. WOODHOUSE, *Gabriele D'Annunzio. Defiant Archangel*, Oxford University Press (1998), 2001, pp. 125-126).

87. Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo (1871-1949), famous artist, inventor and fashion designer.

88. María de los Ángeles Cecilia López de la Calle Landaburu (1863-?), who married Ricardo Federico de Madrazo y Garreta in 1884.

89. Ricardo de Madrazo y Garreta (1852-1917), painter, son of the painter Federico de Madrazo y Kunz (1815-1894), and brother of Raimundo de Madrazo (1841-1920), whose second marriage, in 1899, was to Maria Hahn (1864-1948), sister of Reynaldo Hahn. The sister of Ricardo and Raimondo was Cecilia (1846-1932), who, in 1867, married Mariano Fortuny y Marsal (1838-1874) and was the mother of Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo.

90. Uncertain reading of this name, about whom I could find no information.

91. M. BARRÈS wrote: "It was in Venice that I decided my whole life" ("Examen des trois romans idéologiques", preface to the new edition of *Sous l'oeil des barbares*, Paris, Perrin, 1892).

92. Barrès recounts his visit to Torcello without mentioning the museum of archaeology (M. BARRÈS, *Amori et Dolori Sacrum. La mort de Venise*, Paris, Émile-Paul Frères Éditeurs, 1916, pp. 44-47). He also describes his return by gondola from Torcello (pp. 47-52).

93. This must be Abel Hermant's brother, Jacques Hermant (1855-1930), both sons of Pierre Antoine Achille Hermant (1823-1903), who was also an architect.

94. Husband (1873-1942) of the poet Anna de Noailles.

95. According to Marie-Thérèse Weal, afterword to F. EDEN, *Un Jardin à Venise*, translated from English and presented by M.-T. Weal, Paris, Éditions Le Serpent de la Mer, 2002, pp. 143-149. This book first appeared in English, illustrated with photographs, in *Country Life* in 1903.

96. See I. TONNI, "Il giardino di Frederic e Caroline Eden a Venezia", *Personaggi stravaganti a Venezia tra '800 e '900. Le Storie del FAI/3*, a cura di A. ARBAN, F. BISUTTI, M.CELOTI e P. MILDONIAN, Venice, Antiga Edizioni, 2011, pp. 3-19.

Eden created a garden that was so renowned that numerous writers crossed through the large Giudecca canal to come and see it. And so, according to Marie-Thérèse Weal, signing the Edens' visitors' book were: "Barrès, Paul Bourget, Maurice Maeterlinck, Proust, Henry James, Rilke, etc."<sup>97</sup>. But here the source is pure hearsay. When this property, still called the "Garden of Eden", came to be owned by Princess Aspasia, the son of the princess's gondolier would see this book "lying about" in an umbrella stand...

I was twice able to interview this witness, Francesco Basaldella, amateur historian of the Giudecca<sup>98</sup>. I met him the first time in 2003, when he confirmed, although in a rather vague way, that he had seen a visitors' book in which he had noticed the name of Proust. Ten years later he modified his testimony. At the age of 83, he said that this memory dated from when he was 19: one day when he was helping his father to do some cleaning at Princess Aspasia's house, he found a school exercise book, quite humble, in an umbrella stand, in which were written lists of names, but all in the same handwriting. He thought that it must have been a register kept by the gardener-caretaker who wrote down the names of people authorized to visit the "Garden of Eden" during the princess's absence (as had long been the custom<sup>99</sup>). It seemed to him then *a posteriori* that it definitely could not have been Frederic and Caroline Edens' nor Princess Aspasia's visitors' book, firstly because they would not have chosen a simple school exercise book for their guests to sign, and secondly because all the names appeared to be written by the same hand. Therefore this exercise book did not contain signatures but a list drawn up by a single person. Basaldella wondered whether in the end the book was a "copy" of the Edens' visitors' book. But he confessed that he could not be at all certain, and even less so as to the presence of the name of Marcel Proust. If it is possible that Proust had been a visitor in the Edens' time, it is on the other hand impossible that he visited during the princess's time, as she took over the property in 1928. And even if this exercise book had been a copy of the Edens' visitors' book, would a young 19 year old Italian, of modest origin and not university educated, have picked out and retained the name of Marcel Proust in 1949 - 1950?

It is true that Proust seems to have known, at least by name, the Garden of Eden, but *after* his trips to Venice. Perhaps he had read an article by Mme Bulteau in 1903, in which she listed the palaces that had become the personal property of foreign personalities, mentioning the Edens for their palace on the Grand Canal as well as their garden on the isle of Giudecca:

At Barbarigo palace, in apartments decorated in the eighteenth century with exquisite stuccoes, lives M. Eden who writes knowledgeably about Italian gardens and who has himself created a garden at the Giudecca so beautiful that one holds the memory of it more as if in a dream than in reality<sup>100</sup>.

On the other hand we know for certain that in 1905 Proust read *La Domination* by Anna de Noailles<sup>101</sup>. He complimented the poet on her novel and asked her a question which suggests that he knew the real name of the owner of the garden, unless he is simply alluding to the garden in *Genesis*: "But the most marvellous place in the book is without doubt that garden of Eaden (Eden?) on that day when the azure is in the air like a garden of blue roses"<sup>102</sup>. In her novel Anna de Noailles set a scene in Frederic Eden's garden at the Giudecca, making an allusion to its owner by simply calling it "Eaden garden"<sup>103</sup>. Proust made two references to this garden over again in a

97. M.-Th. WEAL, afterword, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

98. Fr. BASALDELLA is most well-known as an historian of Giudecca. His works are frequently cited, in particular: *Giudecca. Cenni storici* (1983); *Spinalonga. Storia e nuove testimonianze sulla Giudecca* (1993); *Quando a Venezia il "Ghetto" si chiamava Giudecca* (1996); *Giudecca. Fatti di Cronaca* (Venezia, Filippi Editore, 2011).

99. Thus Henri de Régnier visited palaces even when the masters of the house were absent (cf. *L'Altana ou La Vie vénitienne. 1899-1924*, edition quoted above, t. II, p. 134).

100. FOEMINA, article quoted above. *Le Gaulois* had already drawn up a list of foreign owners of Venetian palaces, also citing the Edens, but only for their palace on the Grand Canal (17 July 1902).

101. A. DE NOAILLES, *La Domination*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1905.

102. *Corr.*, t. V, p. 196.

103. A. DE NOAILLES, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-152 and 207.

second letter of compliments<sup>104</sup>. Luc Fraisse suggests that this passage in *La Domination* was the inspiration to Proust, not only for the episode about the hero in the gardens of the Arena at Padua, but also for the scene about the bumble-bee and the orchid<sup>105</sup>.

Proust probably heard about it next from Jean Cocteau<sup>106</sup>, who used the same spelling as the novelist, in a poem entitled “Memory of an autumn evening in the Garden of Eaden” in which he talks about Venice and gondolas, in *La Lampe d’Aladin*<sup>107</sup>. I was able to see, in a private collection, a copy of this work dedicated to Reynaldo Hahn in February 1909. Perhaps Proust too received a copy, or at least heard his musician friend talk about this collection<sup>108</sup>. Marie de Régnier, under the writer’s pseudonym of Gérard d’Houville, also calls the garden “Eaden”<sup>109</sup>. In 1909, Abel Bonnard speaks similarly about “the terrace of the garden of Eaden”, as if he had been there several times<sup>110</sup>. Proust was also familiar with D’Annunzio’s novel *Le Feu*, where the characters are entertained in the garden of Eden, even though it is not mentioned by name<sup>111</sup>. In *Envoi à la France*, the Italian novelist described once again, still without naming it, “this garden bathed in sunshine in the Giudecca”<sup>112</sup>. In 1919, Jean-Louis Vaudoyer particularly remembered the flowers

of that dear garden of Eaden, stretching to the shores of the Giudecca like a nereid on the sea shore, and where we went, as the sun was setting, to gaze at the pearls of water as they welcomed, like a fabulous rain, rubies, garnets and amethysts from the heavens<sup>113</sup>.

But perhaps it was first of all thanks to Henri de Régnier that Proust was familiar with the name of this garden. Régnier visited it numerous times<sup>114</sup> and mentioned it several times in his novels and poetry<sup>115</sup>. The memory of Régnier had become so closely linked with this garden in the Giudecca that in 1938 it was proposed that a plaque commemorating his presence there should be erected<sup>116</sup>. Finally, in 1948, in the *sestier Dorsoduro*, on the wall of the little garden of *Ca’ Dario*, overlooking a charming little square, the *campiello Barbaro*, such a plaque was unveiled by Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, and in the presence of Mariano Fortuny<sup>117</sup>.

104. *Corr.*, t. V, p. 202.

105. L. FRAISSE, “La *Recherche* avant la *Recherche*: Proust commentateur d’Anna de Noailles”, *Publif@rum*, 2, 2005, URL: <http://www.publiforum.farum.it/n/02/fraisse.php>

106. Proust would not have met Jean Cocteau before spring 1910 (according to Ph. Kolb, *Corr.*, t. X, p.232, n. 5).

107. J. COCTEAU, *La Lampe d’Aladin, Poèmes*, Paris, Société d’éditions, 1909, pp. 53-55, (the poem is dated September 1908).

108. There is no reference to this collection of Cocteau’s poems in Proust’s correspondence. For works dedicated between the two writers, see my article “Deux dédicaces inédites”, *Quaderni Proustiani*, 2014, pp. 257-262.

109. G. D’HOUVILLE, “Les beaux jardins”, *Le Figaro*, 31 May 1913, p. 1.

110. A. BONNARD, “Trois ‘Venise’”, *Le Figaro*, 28 September 1909, p. 1.

111. G. D’ANNUNZIO, *Le Feu*, translated from the Italian by G. Hérelle, Paris, Calmann-Lévy Éditeurs, 1903. See in particular the passage where Foscarina takes a gondola and goes alone to the garden of Rio della Croce (pp. 274-275).

112. G. D’ANNUNZIO, *La Léda sans cygne, récit de la lande, suivi d’un Envoi à la France*, translated from the Italian by André Doderet, Paris, Calmann-Lévy Éditeurs, 1922, pp. 169-172.

113. Jean-Louis VAUDOYER, “Les palais du roi”, *Le Gaulois*, 4 October 1919, p. 1.

114. *L’Altana ou La Vie vénitienne*, edition quoted above, t. II, pp. 149-157.

115. See his *Esquisses vénitiennes* (1906), as well as his poem “Le jardin de souvenir”, *Vestigia Flammae*, 1921. It is often mentioned too in his personal notebooks, see A. LEGUY, “Henri de Régnier et Venise”, Doctoral thesis, University of Maine, 2002.

116. See two articles signed “Guermantes” (pseudonym of Gérard Bauer): “Les jours se suivent. Le jardin vénitien et le souvenir”, *Le Figaro*, 15 September 1937, p. 1; “Les jours se suivent. *Vestigia Flammae*”, *Le Figaro*, 13 September 1938, p. 1.

117. J.-L. VAUDOYER, *Italie retrouvée*, Paris, Hachette, 1950, pp. 68-77.

### *The Visitors' book of Ca' Dario*

Proust had several acquaintances who owned palaces in Venice and could have asked their visitors to sign their guest books. Mme de La Baume-Pluvinel, friend of Mme Bulteau, bought and restored the Dario palace on the Grand Canal, where these ladies received many Parisian friends, most of them friends of Proust as well, like Reynaldo Hahn, Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, the Daudets and Henri de Régnier. The latter describes his stays in Venice and at the Dario Palace in his *Esquisses vénitiennes*, first published in 1905 in *La Revue de Paris*<sup>118</sup>, then in book form in 1906, with illustrations by Maxime Dethomas. Proust asked this same artist to also illustrate his own text on Venice<sup>119</sup>. This palace must have particularly interested Proust, since Ruskin mentions it in *The Stones of Venice*, in which the first illustration is a drawing of *Ca' Dario* that he did himself of a typical medallion on its façade. Mme Bulteau liked to keep visitors' books in her own homes<sup>120</sup>. The one from the Dario Palace - more than 700 pages! - is filled with the names of visitors<sup>121</sup>, among whom appear the signatures, along with texts and drawings or musical scores, of numerous artists and writers, but, sadly, not that of Proust. In 1900 in particular we find: Léon Daudet (20 April), Fernand Gregh, José-Maria de Herédia (31 July), Paul Hervieu (15 February). Pierre Louÿs (14 March), Anna de Noailles (19 August), Henri de Régnier (31 July)<sup>122</sup>.

### *The Registers for the Marciana library*

To begin with I consulted the register of visitors to the *Biblioteca Nazionale di San Marco*<sup>123</sup>. In general those visitors came to see certain famous manuscripts, such as Marco Polo's will, autograph manuscripts by Benvenuto Cellini and the Grimani breviary decorated by Memling. In 1900, as it is today, the *Biblioteca di San Marco* was also called simply the *Marciana*. At that time it was not situated in its current location, on the *Piazzetta*. Originally it was in the building called *La Libreria vecchia*, the *Zecca* in Venetian, but from 1812 it was installed in several rooms of the Doge's Palace. The reading room was in the "*Quarantia*". The transfer of the library to its current location was inaugurated on 27 April 1905.

The visitors' register was reserved for well-known personalities: hence Proust does not feature in it in 1900. Out of simple curiosity I picked out three signatures<sup>124</sup>: Emile and Alexandrine Zola signed the visitors' book on 10 December 1894. Lady Layard, who possessed the portrait of Mehmet II painted by Bellini<sup>125</sup> (the importance of which we know in *Du côté de chez Swann*), and was a friend of Frederic and Caroline Eden, noted in her journal the next day, the 11 December 1894, these erroneous remarks about the writer for whom she had little appreciation:

*There is some excitement here over Zola's visit here. He is the son of a Venetian & only left here when he was 7 - but he denies his country & says he is a Frenchman - Some have made a fuss with him & a banquet has been given in his honour - others will have nothing to say to him*<sup>126</sup>.

118. 1<sup>st</sup> August 1905, pp. 449-463.

119. Pre-publication "À Venise", *Les Feuilles d'Art*, 15 December 1919 (with two drawings by Maxime Dethomas).

120. She also kept, from her château de Léry, in Burgundy, a visitors' book in four albums, between 1883-1902 (338 pages, 900 illustrations and 1250 photographs), in which featured above all drawings by Maxime Dethomas (auction Artcurial, Paris, 13 December 2012, lot no 63).

121. One can also see photographs taken by Mme Bulteau of her friends in Venice (amongst a series of photographs taken at other locations) on the Gallica website: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8432356x>

122. Auction "Autographes et documents", Bretagne Enchères, Rennes, 13 February 2003, lot no 193.

123. Currently called the *Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana*. My heartfelt thanks go to Carlo Campana, Uffici Archivi Storici, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, for his great help to me in consulting several registers from the library and furnishing me with precious historical information.

124. My photographs of these signatures are held in the documentation centre of the "Proust" team, ITEM.

125. See R. MAMOLI ZORZI, "Enid e Henry Austen Layard. Collezionismo e mondanità a Palazzo Capello", *Personaggi stravaganti a Venezia tra '800 e '900, Le Storie del FAI/1*, a cura di Fr. BISUTTI e M. CELOTTI, Treviso, Antiga Edizioni, 2010, pp. 75-171.

126. "11 December 1894 - Ca' Capello, Venice", *Lady Layard's Journal*, op. cit.

The following year, on 27 September 1895, Gabriele D'Annunzio signed the register in his turn. It seems that Proust may also have gone to see the manuscripts at the *Marciana*, even though he confused it with the library of Milan:

Dear Madame Violet, Hidden flower, sweet-smelling and wondrous, whose peduncle and efflorescence have been so minutely drawn by Leonardo da Vinci, drawings you might have seen at the Ambrosia Library in Venice, after a terribly long letter to your dear and teasing husband, I now want to add a few words for you<sup>127</sup>.

Proust persists in this confusion in a long passage in *La Recherche* comparing Fortuny's gowns to the palaces of Venice; in the middle of which there suddenly appears, completely off topic, a mention of the "bindings in the Ambrosian library"<sup>128</sup>.

So next I consulted the register of *readers* for the *Marciana*, which does not show signatures but lists. An employee of the library used to note down in it every day, under four columns, the following details: the number, in order of arrival, of the reader, their name, and sometimes their first name, the title of the work requested and the number of volumes. I picked out the register from 1 May to 10 December 1900 and I found, on the date of 19 May 1900, a Saturday, the name of Proust. He was the 45<sup>th</sup> reader and the work requested was "Ruskin - The Stones of Venice", in three volumes<sup>129</sup>. I noticed on the same page, on the subsequent date (the library must have been closed on a Sunday), the 21 May, that a certain "O. Weill" had also requested, twice, *The Stones of Venice* by Ruskin. The comparison with the maiden name of Proust's mother, which the librarian may have mis-spelled, is difficult to avoid here. Did it refer to a visit by Jeanne Proust (but why would she have given her maiden name?), just two days after Marcel's visit, in order to check a passage in Ruskin?

As well as that, I noticed that Fortuny had come twice on the 6 June to consult first the "*Dict. Larousse lett. A-Z*" (four volumes), then Coronelli's *Navi*. I also noted the name "Nahmias" on the 19 and 21 November, who consulted Carducci, *Rime Sec. Verse Odi Barbare* (three volumes) then *Rime nuove*. The name did not appear at any other date between 1 May and 10 December. Could this refer to Albert Nahmias, and could he have been Proust's companion at the time of his second trip to Venice in October? But did Nahmias read Italian, and would Proust have stayed in Venice for a month?

I then wondered if Proust had perhaps consulted an especially precious copy, bearing an autograph dedication by Ruskin, but I was unable to find any reference to such a copy<sup>130</sup>. So why would Proust have wanted to consult this work? Especially as, according to Marie Nordlinger, he had brought his own copy of *The Stones of Venice*, because she remembered that they had read passages from it together in the basilica one day of "storm and darkness", an expression that she has certainly taken from Proust himself<sup>131</sup>. Indeed, in his preface to his translation of *The Bible of Amiens*, Proust relates that he read a particular page of *The Stones of Venice* for the first time, in the basilica of St Mark's<sup>132</sup>. But he makes no mention of being accompanied by a friend. Nor is

127. Letter to Sydney and Violet Schiff [about 21 July 1922], *Corr.*, t. XXI, pp. 373-374.

128. *La Prisonnière*, RTP, t. III, p. 896. The editors point out that this refers to the famous library in Milan, but do not remark on the incoherence of this allusion in the middle of a passage about Venice.

129. A photograph of this page is held at the documentation centre of the "Proust" team, ITEM.

130. Carlo Campana confirmed to me that the library did not hold a copy containing an autograph by Ruskin.

131. M. NORDLINGER, "Au lecteur", *op. cit.*, p. IX. She takes up again this recollection in "Proust as I knew him" (article quoted above, p. 56). Her testimony is fluctuating because at first she relates in 1942: "We began, in the shadow of St Mark's, to correct the proofs of our translation of the *Bible*" (*Ibid.*), then, in 1956, that they corrected together "our first draft of *The Bible of Amiens* in the shadow of St Mark's" (*Marcel Proust 1871-1922*, *op. cit.*); whereas in a manuscript of her text, she writes: "We looked again, in the shadow of St Mark's, at our translations of *The Bible of Amiens* and we read in the Basilica (another Temple-Book), during an hour of storm and darkness, pages from *The Stones of Venice*, before which he felt himself lifted up in ecstasy [...]" (autograph manuscript seen in a private collection).

132. M. PROUST, "Préface", J. RUSKIN, *La Bible d'Amiens*, traduction, notes et préface par M. Proust, Mercure de France, 5<sup>e</sup> édition, 1910, p. 83.

there any mention of it in the manuscript, which presents some variations about this reading of a page of Ruskin: “I remember having read in St Mark’s itself <for> a day <an hour> of storm <and darkness> where under the dark sky the mosaics no longer glowed other than through their own <and material> light [...]”<sup>133</sup>. Perhaps Proust went to consult the three volumes of *The Stones of Venice* at the *Biblioteca Marciana* for a purely prosaic reason: because he had only brought one volume and wanted to check a passage in one of the other two. Or, a more poetic conjecture: for the simple pleasure of reading Ruskin in that prodigious library housed in the Doge’s Palace, just next to St Mark’s basilica. Indeed, a guide to Venice from 1900 enthusiastically evokes this enchanting place: “How many hours one may spend leafing through the marvels at the *Marciana!*”<sup>134</sup>. Besides, at least two of Proust’s friends were assiduous readers in this library: the composer Prince Edmond de Polignac<sup>135</sup>, and the writer Maurice Barrès, who exclaimed: “Venice has its caprices [...] How many hours have I spent in the library of St Mark’s or else at the *Querini*, looking for romantic interpretations in its collections of “caprices”!”<sup>136</sup>

The proof of Proust’s passage through the *Marciana* on 19 May 1900 adds a new little stone to the fragile edifice of our knowledge about his Venetian trips. His first trip was then very much “a Ruskinian pilgrimage”. As for the second, it could have been of a quite different nature, even if it also had its Ruskinian moments with the crossing - by gondola - of the *Bacino di San Marco* and the lagoon to the isle of San Lazzaro.

133. NAF 16617, f° 59 r°. Concerning this manuscript see Y. KATO, “La genèse de la préface de *La Bible d’Amiens*”, *Bulletin d’Informations proustiniennes* no 33, 2003 (pp. 29-40) and *BIP* no 36, 2006 (pp. 21-36).

134. V. FOURNEL, *À travers l’Espagne et l’Italie*, Tours, Alfred Mame et Fils Éditeurs, 1900, p. 245.

135. According to a letter from the prince to Augustine Bulteau, quoted by S. KAHAN, *In Search of New Scales: Prince Edmond de Polignac, Octatonic Explorer*, Rochester, NY, University of Rochester Press, 2009, p. 102 and p. 362, n. 12.

136. *Amori et Dolori Sacrum. La Mort à Venise*, ed. quoted above, p. 14.

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English translation: Chris Taylor.