

John Ruskin letters to John Henry Le Keux

MSS 37



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compiled by Victoria Hepburn ; edited by Francis Lapka

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	6
Selected Search Terms	15

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Center for British Art, Institutional Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MSS 37

CREATOR: Ruskin, John, 1819-1900

TITLE: John Ruskin letters to John Henry Le Keux

DATES: 1854-1860

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet (1 volume)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: This collection comprises 53 items, including 42 letters from John Ruskin to John Henry Le Keux, 1 letter from John James Ruskin to John Henry Le Keux, 7 stand-alone sketches related to Le Keux's engraving work for Ruskin, annotated printed proofs made by Le Keux for Ruskin and 1 letter from Henry W. Acland to John Ruskin which pertains to Le Keux's work on the frontispiece for Acland and Ruskin's *The Oxford Museum*. While the majority of the items are undated, the letters appear to have been authored between 1854 and 1860, with dated items ranging from 1855 to 1860. The items primarily pertain to Le Keux's engraving work for illustrations for Volumes 3-4 of *Modern Painters* and for *The Oxford Museum*

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

 vol. volume

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open without restriction.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright Undetermined

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Preferred Citation

John Ruskin Letters to John Henry Le Keux, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Biographical / Historical

John Ruskin (1819-1919), was an influential British art and architectural critic, social commentator, educator, and artist. Born in London to prosperous, middle-class Scottish parents, Ruskin began drawing lessons at a young age. As a teenager, he made several tours on the European Continent with his parents and he developed a special interest in Italy. After completing his studies at Oxford, Ruskin continued his European travels, including extended stays in Venice where he conducted research for one of his best-known written works, *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin was a prominent supporter of the artist J.M.W. Turner and, in the first edition of *Modern Painters*, he promoted his belief that contemporary British painters exceeded the old masters in the art of landscape by eschewing artistic conventions and looking, instead, to nature. *Modern Painters* was a major influence on the group known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The Pre-Raphaelites radically sought to reform British art through a return to the formal and ideological simplicity of pre-High Renaissance Italian and Netherlandish art, direct observation from nature, the use of luminous colors, and a focus on literary themes. Ruskin's many publications included *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *The Elements of Drawing* (1857), and *Modern Painters* (five volumes, 1843-1860). In addition to art and architecture criticism and history, Ruskin's writings ranged in theme from social issues, education, geology, natural history, and political economy.

The recipient of the letters, John Henry Le Keux (1812-1896), was one member of a well-known family of engravers. Born into a large Huguenot family in London, Le Keux was apprentice to both his father, John Le Keux, an architectural engraver, and the renowned engraver, James Basire. Like his father, John Henry Le Keux was famous for his architectural engravings and his work was featured in many prominent publications including the last three volumes of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice*, John Weale's *Studies and Examples of English Architecture* and C. H. Hartshorne's *Illustrations of Alnwick, Prudhoe and Warkworth*. Le Keux was commissioned by the Norwegian government to produce thirty-one large plates of Trondheim Cathedral. Between 1853 and 1865, Le Keux exhibited a number of architectural drawings at the Royal Academy.

It is unclear how Ruskin and Le Keux met, but it seems that Ruskin approached Le Keux in the early 1850s to commission engravings for the three-volume *The Stones of Venice*. Le Keux's father and uncle engraved several works after Turner, which Ruskin greatly admired, and Le Keux arguably became Ruskin's most trusted engraver. He was tasked with training Ruskin's students from the Working Men's College, including George Allen.

Scope and Contents

This collection comprises 53 items, including 42 letters from John Ruskin to John Henry Le Keux, 1 letter from John James Ruskin to John Henry Le Keux, 7 stand-alone sketches related to Le Keux's engraving work

for Ruskin, annotated printed proofs made by Le Keux for Ruskin and 1 letter from Henry W. Acland to John Ruskin which pertains to Le Keux's work on the frontispiece for Acland and Ruskin's *The Oxford Museum*. While the majority of the items are undated, the letters appear to have been authored between 1854 and 1860, with dated items ranging from 1855 to 1860. The items primarily pertain to Le Keux's engraving work for illustrations for Volumes 3-4 of *Modern Painters* and for *The Oxford Museum*. The letters reflect a cordial professional relationship between Ruskin and Le Keux and a close collaboration between critic and engraver on a variety of works and subject matters. In one letter, Ruskin describes Le Keux's etchings as "superb." (John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux, page 39.)

The correspondence reflects the scope of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, with the author asking his engraver to make prints of works by Claude Lorrain and J. M. W. Turner. Ruskin's writing process relating to the later volumes is also made clear, with the correspondence revealing Ruskin's decisions relating to the content, publication date and aspirations for the work. For instance, in one letter Ruskin discloses to Le Keux that he has decided to hold back certain text and illustrations for publication in the next volume of *Modern Painters*. Another letter reveals the complexity of Le Keux's work for Ruskin, who expresses his desire for one illustration, the multi-figured Plate 25 "Things in General," in *Modern Painters* volume IV, to reflect "Nature as far as [it] can, as she appears under Rembrantesque light and shade [...] the interpreting and explaining power of Dureresque art [and] the vulgarizing power of Blottesque or water colour art." (John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux, pages 17 & 43-47). The letters between the pair convey close collaboration on illustrations for Ruskin's texts and the great deal of attention the critic paid to the images appearing in his works. Ruskin gives detailed instructions to Le Keux regarding the depth and shading of his engravings and the color of ink to be used for trial proofs—most often grey, brown or blue. Often, Ruskin's letters include sketches of Le Keux's work in which Ruskin itemizes alterations to be made. In one of these, Ruskin makes a sketch of how Le Keux's rendering of tree boughs in a reproduction of a work by Claude Lorrain has deviated from the original, remarking that, though Ruskin thinks the boughs "improved by the change, the public will say [that Ruskin and Le Keux] have travestied Claude." (John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux, pages 9-12.) The correspondence also evidences the global scope of Ruskin's influence. In one letter, Ruskin asks Le Keux if he will pack for him a vignette by J. M. W. Turner for "Dr. Magoon" (Elias Lyman Magoon, 1810-1886, an American clergyman, theological writer and art collector) for whom Ruskin acted as purchasing agent. (John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux, pages 129 and 131). Ruskin's patronage of young and unknown artists is also clear in Ruskin's request that Le Keux train a young "workman" from the Working Men's College in engraving processes. (John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux, pages 101-102.) Ruskin made a similar request on behalf of his future publisher George Allen, whom Le Keux also trained. More quotidian matters are detailed in the correspondence, including attempts between Le Keux and Ruskin to arrange meetings. The letters also reveal the expansion of various printing technologies in the mid-nineteenth century. Ruskin's letters make reference to other important figures and entities to do with the printing and publication of the later volumes of *Modern Painters*, including the engraver James Charles Armytage and Ruskin's publisher, Smith, Elder & Co.

The last two items in the collection are not letters or sketches sent from Ruskin to Le Keux but relate to Henry W. Acland (1815-1900, British physician, educator and Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford) and John Ruskin's book, *The Oxford Museum*. Included is a printed proof of the title page of the book which is annotated with suggestions relating to text size, copy and authors. The last item in the collection is a letter from Acland to Ruskin in which Acland outlines a number of alterations and additions to be made to the frontispiece illustration for *The Oxford Museum* depicting a column capital decorated with British ferns.

Collection Contents

vol. 1, page 5	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin thanks Le Keux for managing things for him. He asks Le Keux not to send him any plates until they are finished but requests that he completes them in the following order: "1 the pine trunk large 2 the cross hatched trunks you [Le Keux] showed me [Ruskin] 3 The plate of trunks from Claudes L.U." [Possibly referring to Plate 2, Drawing of Tree Stems, or Plate 4, Ramifications According to Claude, in Modern Painters Vol. III.]</p>	between 1854 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 7	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin opens by saying "I am beginning to wonder what you are about." He enquires as to whether Le Keux received his last letter asking if Le Keux could work for him until Christmas. Ruskin tells Le Keux that he has a number of things ready for him to work on and asks if he can finish off some of the plates "at once." Ruskin ends by asking Le Keux to let him know that he is well.</p>	1855 September 25
vol. 1, page 9-12	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>4 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says he has another plate for Le Keux which he will send after finishing a "tiresome etching." He instructs Le Keux to alter a plate of "Claude boughs" by lightening it and rounding it. [Possibly Plate 2, Drawing of Tree Stems, or Plate 4, Ramifications According to Claude, in Modern Painters Vol. III]. He goes on to say that Le Keux has "a good deal missed the character" of works by Claude Lorrain and draws a sketch [measuring 3.5 x 9.4 cm] of how Ruskin believes Claude draws boughs. Ruskin then includes a sketch [measuring 2.7 x 6 cm] of how he believes Le Keux has rendered the boughs. Ruskin then sketches a two-pronged table fork [sketch measures 0.9 x 5.4 cm], indicating that Claude's boughs resemble the bended head of the fork. Ruskin tells Le Keux to let him know if he can "recover" the boughs, "for, if not, [he] must cancel this plate and get it etched and mezzotinted in Claude's way, for though [he] think[s] the trunks improved by the change, the public will say [they] have travestied Claude." He ends by saying that he has no desired changes for the other plates.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 13-14	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin asks Le Keux if the last plate he sent him was done by one of Le Keux's assistants, remarking that "it wants many alterations." He asks Le Keux to stop working on two plates, depicting a windmill [Plate 19, The Picturesque of Windmills, in Modern Painters Vol. IV] and mountain, to focus on "the Claude stems [Possibly Plate 2, Drawing of Tree Stems, or Plate 4, Ramifications According to Claude, in Modern Painters Vol. III] and the one with back of figure cutting rock." Ruskin says he wishes to publish them on January 1 and asks if Le Keux can visit him in person when they are ready so that he can show Le Keux any alterations. In a postscript, Ruskin asks if Le Keux can send another proof of a "long fellow" which he sketches [sketch measures 7.4 x 5.6 cm; appears to be Plate 32, Aiguille Drawing, from Modern Painters IV], stating that it is not needed until after Christmas.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 15	<p>Sketch of tree</p> <p>Sketch of multi-branched tree in black ink. Appears to relate to Plate 28, Aspen Unidealized, engraved by James Charles Armytage in Modern Painters Vol. IV. Sketch measures 4.5 x 2.3 cm.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?

<p>☰ vol. 1, page 17</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says he will not use Le Keux's double plate of rocks [Plate 32, Aiguille Drawing, in Modern Painters IV] until the next volume of Modern Painters but asks that Le Keux finish the "little long one" as fast as he possibly can and send it to "Mr. Armytage" [James Charles Armytage] to be lettered. Ruskin sketches the "little long one" [sketch measures 1.5 x 6.2 cm; appears to be Plate 13, First Mountain Naturalism, in Modern Painters Vol. III].</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 19-20</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says he is very pleased with Le Keux's work and that he is "especially delighted with my [Ruskin's] own etching violet and azure in distance." Ruskin has sent a request to a "Mr. Brooker" to send Le Keux the plate as soon as it is lettered and asks if Le Keux could print the plate in two tints. He says he would like to see one print with the black in the foreground and blue black in the distance as Ruskin "is not quite sure about the violet." Ruskin says that Le Keux's unfinished print is so good that he "need not touch it any more." He goes on to say that the plate Le Keux altered is "now quite nice" and asks if it could be sent to "Mr. Armytage" [James Charles Armytage] to be lettered.</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 33-34</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin asks how Le Keux is getting on with printing. He says that he has been comparing two impression of Le Keux's plate of "Early Mountain Naturalism", commenting that he likes the darkest the most. [Probably referring to Plate 13, First Mountain Naturalism, in Modern Painters Vol. III; see Ruskin's sketch in letter p. 17.] He instructs Le Keux to print the remainder of the plates in black ink. Ruskin remarks that "it don't matter a bit having a difference between early and late copies of the book -- people may choose which they like best." He states that if there is any difficulty printing in black, Le Keux should print in grey. Ruskin asks Le Keux to finish 2500 impressions of Ruskin's own etching as soon as he can "after supplying Messrs Smith & Elder [Ruskin's publisher] with what they want...." In a postscript, he wishes Le Keux a merry Christmas.</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 35</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 11 x 20 cm</i></p> <p>"Many thanks for your kind note and kind wishes. Accept mine, very sincerely, in return. Could you come out & take tea with me tomorrow evening -- or perhaps better, if convenient to you, at 1/2 past one o'clock to lunch, as I rather want daylight to show you one of the things I want done -- but either time will do well for me, and if not tomorrow, next day."</p>	<p>1856 January 11</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 37</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John F Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"I forgot to say, the two towns are quite right. Want nothing but a little darkening, all over, of the horseman and his guide on the bridge in the lower one. They are a little indistinct. When this is done, please send that plate to Messrs. Smith & Elder, 65 Cornhill, who will see to lettering. Perhaps this had better be done at once so as to get the plate out of hand." [Probably referring to Plate 18, The Transition from Ghirlandajo to Claude, in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>

<p>☰ vol. 1, page 39</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"I have another long job for you -- ready I hope tomorrow -- if you can do the other thing as it is begun -- do -- but this must be done as well as you can. Your etchings are superb. I will give due orders about printing. I sent for Windmills [Plate 19, The Picturesque of Windmills, in Modern Painters Vol. IV] a day or two ago."</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 41-42</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says he has not yet been able to examine Le Keux's recently sent prints but that he thinks there will be little to be altered in them save for a lightening of "the right hand trunk." Ruskin asks if Le Keux thinks he can complete another plate before Christmas which would contain two towers. Ruskin indicates the size of the wall to be featured between the two towers via a sketch measuring 6.3 x 4 cm. The image is to be copied from a daguerreotype and to feature "a little bit of mountain top and three shaded pillars." Ruskin says he does not think the plate should be troublesome but that it will involve a good amount of work. [Ruskin's sketch and reference relates to figure 2 in Plate 25, Things in General, in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	<p>22nd; between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 43-47</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>5 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin writes that he has "at last" sent the plate [referring to the sketches for Plate 25, Things in General, in Modern Painters IV; see previous letter on p. 41-42.] Ruskin describes the numbered "bits of paper" that make up the various figures in the plate and indicates that he has included a sketch of the whole plate with the various figures "in position." Ruskin writes that the pen and ink drawing for figure 1 [The Towers of Fribourg as Durer would have drawn them] should be "copied carefully." Ruskin draws small sketches of leaves to indicate "the freedom of the spray." Ruskin writes that the daguerreotype for figure 2 [the Towers of Fribourg from a daguerreotype, figure 2 in Plate 25, Modern Painters IV; see also letter on p. 41-42] has been "also sent." Ruskin describes his goals for the plate, to "show Nature as far as I can, as she appears under Rembrandtesque light and shade (which you know the dag. a photograph always gives)." Ruskin describes figure 1. As "interpreting and explaining [...] Dureresque art," and figure 3 "the vulgarizing form of modern Blottesque or watercolour art." Ruskin implores that Le Keux should copy "the photograph exactly," and "[imitate] the blots [for fig. 3] as well as [he] can." Ruskin includes drawings to indicate how Le Keux should correct Ruskin's perspective in fig. 1. Ruskin includes instructions for the gradation of the columns in figs. 5-7. [See drawing on page 49]</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 49</p>	<p>John Ruskin sketch for John Henry Le Keux</p> <p>This sketch, labelled as "No. 15", refers to figures 5-7 in Plate 25 in Modern Painters Vol. 4, about which Ruskin gives Le Keux detailed instruction in his previous letter [p. 43-47]. The sketch depicts gradations of shading moving horizontally from letters "x" to "z" and vertically from letters "a" to "b". On the sketch, Ruskin has written "you are not up to the mark yet." Sketch measures 5.4 x 17.7 cm.</p>	<p>between 1855-1856?</p>

<p>☰ vol. 1, page 51-53</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>3 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin gives Le Keux instructions to make a "delicate bite" over the tower and bushes of a certain plate [probably Plate 25 in Modern Painters IV discussed in letters on p. 43-49]. He also asks Le Keux to make alterations so that a pillar in the same plate comes up "as black as velvet," instructing Le Keux to therefore "let the [etching] acid hiss again." Ruskin instructs Le Keux to create ten proofs without figures and then add in the figures "1, 2, 3 -7," making sure that "1 & 3 are at the same height and equidistant" from the plate margin. Ruskin asks Le Keux to then "report" the plate to Smith and Elder "as ready." Ruskin ends by saying that he has sent a plate to guard another and that he is not sure whether the guarding plate has anything on it. Ruskin instructs that, if it does not, Le Keux should put an etching ground on it.</p>	<p>between 1855-1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 55</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin enquires after a plate he sent to Le Keux to be cleaned and grounded. He instructs him to trace "the ink lines" of a piece enclosed with the letter and to "roll them off on the ground" as they are on the paper, and reverse them in the plate impression. Ruskin tells Le Keux to trace items marked A, B, C and D in the middle of the steel and to send all of the finished pieces to him when they are complete.</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 57</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"No wonder you are in arrears -- those plates must have cost heavy work. But I want my plate now; not with that tracing on it ; but merely a ground. Please let any body put it on, & send it me as soon as you possibly can. If the tracing is done -- it don't matter -- just send it as it is."</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 59</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin thanks Le Keux for his speedy work and asks for 50 copies of Ruskin's etching in brown, with no more copies of the same in blue. He tells Le Keux that he will send him lettering the following day. Ruskin gives Le Keux the following instructions for the "Tree plate": "The Tree plate is all right except Turneresque for Turneresque. The Sque must be taken out & esque put in: All else then will be [in] time for on Wednesday, when I will give you as much as you can carry for conversation [?]." In a postscript, Ruskin says that once the Le Keux has made the instructed changes, he can go on with the tree plate. [Letter probably in reference to Plate 27, The Aspen Under Idealization, in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 61</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 13 x 18 cm</i></p> <p>Includes sketch at top of letter which indicates layout of lettering for Plate 32 in Modern Painters IV. "I forgot this morning to enclose the above lettering for the double plate. The "Aiguille Drawing" must be smaller in letter -- and the "Turnerian" more so -- follow the Windmill title for pattern." ["Aiguille Drawing" refers to Plate 32 in Modern Painters Vol. IV. "Windmill" refers to Plate 19, The Picturesque of Windmills, in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 64</p>	<p>Sketch of rocks related to Aiguille Drawing</p> <p>Sketch, measuring 15 x 23 cm, in pencil and watercolor of plate engraved on following page. Sketch is of Plate 32, Aiguille Drawing, in Modern Painters Vol. IV. This plate is discussed in letters on pages 13-14, 17, and 61.</p>	<p>between 1855 and 1856?</p>

vol. 1, page 65	<p>Engraving of rocks related to Aiguille Drawing</p> <p>Engraving of rocks related to sketch on p. 65. Is of Plate 32, Aiguille Drawing, in Modern Painters Vol. IV. This plate is discussed in letters on pages 13-14, 17, and 61.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 67	<p>Sketch of windmills related to The Picturesque of Windmills</p> <p>Rough sketch in pencil of windmills. Sketch measures 11 x 20.8 cm. Related to Plate 19, The Picturesque of Windmills, in Modern Painters Vol. IV. Discussed in letters on pages 13-14, 39, and 61.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 69	<p>Sketch of arches</p> <p>Sketch in pencil of architectural arches in perspective measuring 14.9 x 24.3 cm.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux</p> <p>Includes a full-size sketch of the layout for Plate 37, Crests of the Slaty Crystallines, in Modern Painters Vol. IV [a Study by Ruskin of a section of J.M.W. Turner's Pass of Faido]. Ruskin includes a note to Le Keux regarding the lettering that he should make sure not to make Ruskin's name larger than Turner's, which he had done in "the Bolton etching."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 71-72	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux</p> <p><i>3 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 23 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin instructs Le Keux to tell Smith, Elder & Co. that plate 32 is ready to "go on with it as fast as possible." [Referring to Plate 32 in Modern Painters IV, see letters on pages 13-14, 17, and 61; sketch on page 64, and print on page 65.] Ruskin tells Le Keux that he has sent him a pattern for the lettering of an etching but that he has made some mistakes in the numbering of the plates. Ruskin gives Le Keux instructions on the numbering and lettering of the plates.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 75-79	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux</p> <p><i>5 pages : autograph letter ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin is delighted with Le Keux's work on "the mountain," declaring it a "triumph of [his] geology and engraving." Ruskin says he needs to alter the top of the pine trees and includes a sketch of how they should now look [sketch measures 3.6 x 7.8 cm]. He enquires whether Le Keux received his letter detailing the lettering for the plates. He asks Le Keux to make twelve proofs of "this" plate "and the other mountain bank one." Ruskin recommends changes for the mixed plate [possibly referring to Plate 25 in Modern Painters IV, see previous letters on pages 41-53], sketching some suggested alterations for the "wall in blotted one" [probably referring to the wall in figure 3 in Plate 25; sketch measures 6.7 x 1.8 cm]. He goes on to say that Le Keux's "trees look better than [Ruskin's] through magnifying glass, but are not so good in reality. Try if you can't get them liker [Ruskin's]." Ruskin sketches Le Keux's trees in comparison to his own [sketches measure 3.5 x 2.8 cm and 4.3 x 3.4 cm]. He ends by stating that contrary to his previous instructions, Ruskin wants Le Keux to lightly include the lines in the tiles. He tells Le Keux that "the middle one" is now quite right.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 81-82	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux</p> <p><i>2 pages : autograph letter ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin writes that he sends Le Keux two sketches and two daguerreotypes. He asks Le Keux to "facsimile the effect" of the darkest of the daguerreotypes. Ruskin says he will not include a sky as he is too busy to etch one. He instructs Le Keux not to attempt the daguerreotype if he does not feel he can finish it quickly as the entire project must be completed within five weeks. Ruskin asks Le Keux to create fifty additional impressions of the Bolton etchings in purple and blue "for myself before sending on the plate."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?

vol. 1, page 83	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>3 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin gives Le Keux further instructions for rounding out the pine trees against the sky in his latest plate. He writes that he encloses a number of other works to be worked up by Le Keux, which will be the final commissions for the present volume of Modern Painters and gives Le Keux instructions for these last sketches. Ruskin thanks Le Keux for some pebbles he has sent him. In a postscript, Ruskin gives further instructions for the sketches.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 85	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"What are you about -- Are not the plates all done -- that things in general at any rate. I want them all now in very great haste." [Things in General is the title of Plate 25 in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 87	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 14 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Keep the numeral out of the lettering of the Buttresses of an Alp. I may want to make it 46 instead of 47." [The Buttresses of an Alp is Plate 46 in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 89	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Best thanks about wave -- Touched plate and will come directly. Meantime -- Buttresses of Alp is to be plate 46. Please get on with it." [The Buttresses of an Alp is Plate 46 in Modern Painters Vol. IV.]</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 91	<p>Sketch of clouds and mountain related to Plate 46 in Modern Painters Vol. IV Faded proof of "The Buttresses of an Alp," Plate 46 in Modern Painters Vol. IV, with clouds added in pencil, measuring 12.7 cm x 18.6 cm.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 93	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"I forgot to ask you if you had got on with & could finish the other subject -- the grey mountain with white quarry on side. Please send me word immediately as I am numbering my plates and please send me an impression in black, and one on blue-black of that vignette." Ends with a sketch measuring 4.3 x 3.7 cm.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 95-96	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says that he has never experienced so little difficulty with an engraver and asks if Le Keux will make amendments to an engraving produced for Ruskin by another engraver. He instructs Le Keux to print plate 27, "The Aspen &c." [referring to Plate 27 in Modern Painters Vol. IV, The Aspen Under Idealization] now that it is correct. Ruskin asks Le Keux to send him the steel of plate 37 as there is now no time to have it mezzotinted in time. Ruskin asks Le Keux to coat it with tallow to protect it.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 97-98	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin gives Le Keux instructions for lettering for plates 25, 40, 46 and 49 in Modern Painters Vol. IV, Ruskin includes two guiding sketches of Plates 40 and 46, The Mountains of Villeneuve and The Buttresses of an Alp. [measuring 2.4 x 4.6 cm and 2.4 x 4.5 cm].</p>	between 1855 and 1856?

vol. 1, page 99	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"I want two impressions of plate 18, one of p. 27, one of 32 and -- if you print them -- one of 22 and one of 23, but I rather think you don't print them. Would you kindly send me the steels, when they are done with." In a postscript: "I keep both plates but thanks for them."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 101-102	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin asks Le Keux to tell him how long the "St. Bernard" could be loaned to him. Ruskin says that he intended that only the Indian ink, as opposed to the coloured copy, to be worked upon and is upset that the coloured "one" to be redone. He asks Le Keux to "bite in" the etching for him as he wants it quickly. Ruskin asks if Le Keux could show a "workman" of Ruskin's from the Working Men's College to bite a copper plate and carry out other etching processes. He reassures Le Keux that the "workman" will not be a rival of his for some time but that Ruskin plans "to make an engraver of him if [he] can." In a postscript, Ruskin promises to meet any business terms Le Keux determines regarding training the workman.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 103	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Put your mind quite at rest. The ten days will be ample time for me to do what I want. There is no harm done, for it will be better on the whole that I make this new drawing -- and I am profoundly obliged to you in the matter of my workman."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 105	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin says he has not yet received a parcel that has been forwarded to him and assures Le Keux that he will not work on a certain plate at present. He asks Le Keux to "make the best [he] can of it" and gives him instructions on how to label the plate: "drawn and engraved from photograph by H.L. Le Keux." Ruskin says he has more work for Le Keux which he will soon give him details of.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 107	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"No parcel has arrived it must have got into some wrong carrier's hands -- please see to this. Letter the Quarry of Carrara [Plate 47 in Modern Painters IV] as soon & as you possibly can it ought to be at press, and go on with the Frontispiece and the Goldau [Plate 50 in Modern Painters IV] in grey; as they will want delicate printing and time presses."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 121	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 16 x 19 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin instructs Le Keux on the colours of prints, stating that "the greys won't do so please print Goldau [Plate 50 in Modern Painters IV] in brown." He tells Le Keux to "get on as fast as [he] can." Ruskin says that his latest review of the Appendix was submitted the previous day and that his book will soon be ready for the binder. Ruskin admits that he has only just found out that there was a "Compo[?] Cottage" in London and apologizes for his hastily written letter on foolscap paper. He tells Le Keux that the lettering and numbering for plate 25 [Plate 25 in Modern Painters IV, Things in General] is correct.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?

vol. 1, page 123	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Please send me 7 [the number 6 has been written and then scored out] proofs of enclosed plate in the state it is at present. I have been making some scratches on it with the dry point of which I want to see the effects. The etching ground on it is an old spoiled one, I don't want anything bitten in."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 125	<p>Etched proof after Turner[?]</p> <p>Etched proof vignette after Turner [?] of river scene [Rhine?], including figures with various trading goods and barrels and a small boat pushing off the river bank. In the background, buildings stand upon a hill and in the foreground a number of women gather on the road. Underneath the etching, Ruskin has noted "When bitten, please clean off the Burr before sending me proof." Measures 7.6 x 11.3 cm.</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 127	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"It will do well enough now, let it go on."</p>	between 1855 and 1856?
vol. 1, page 129	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"How are you, and what are you doing, and when will you like to do something for me? I have a drawing for Dr. Magoon [Rev. E.L. Magoon] -- a Turner -- needs most careful packing. I shall keep it till you are ready to pack it. Please tell me when to send it you."</p>	November 18
vol. 1, page 131	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>Ruskin asks after Le Keux and says he has finished with Dr. Magoon's [Rev. E.L. Magoon] drawing and that he would like Le Keux to pack it for him. He asks when he can send the drawing to Le Keux but that he will pack it himself if Le Keux is too busy to do it. Ruskin ends by remarking that he has been "sadly busy and this thing has been awfully difficult."</p>	April 4
vol. 1, page 133	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"I have written to Dr. Magoon -- and it will be all right. I have been so busy at Marlborough House, etc., that I couldn't get the vignette copied so quickly as I expected -- nor will it be ready yet for some time. But make up your case: and put in the little parcel I send, which is a small [illegible] -- an apologetic offering to Dr. M. I have written about it."</p>	undated
vol. 1, page 135	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 18 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"How you must be wondering at not hearing from me. Can you come out here on Monday evening?"</p>	January 17
vol. 1, page 149	<p>Proof of Capitals of Fondaco dei Turchi</p> <p>Proof of Plate XII in the Venetian Appendix in volume 3 of <i>The Stones of Venice</i>, Capitals of Fondaco de' Turchi. With lettering by pencil in Ruskin's hand. Engraving measures 20.7 x 13.4 cm.</p>	between 1852 and 1853

<p>☰ vol. 1, page 151-152</p>	<p>John James Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>2 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 20 x 13 cm</i></p> <p>John James Ruskin [Ruskin's father] tells Le Keux that he has received Le Keux's letter and proof of the capital of The Oxford Museum [frontispiece for The Oxford Museum, 1859, titled British Ferns.] He says that his son is away and may not return within the next ten days. John James Ruskin tells Le Keux that his son would expect him to send the engraving to the publisher, Smith & Elder Co. John James Ruskin has informed his son that Le Keux's proofs have arrived and has sent Le Keux's letter on to his son for his response.</p>	<p>1859 July 23</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 153</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 17 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Just wrote to Henry Acland by M. D. [Oxford?], sending him a proof of the plate to ask if he likes it and ask him if he will send you its title -- and then Smith & E. will settle the rest."</p>	<p>March 2 [1859?]</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 155-156</p>	<p>Annotated proof of title page for Oxford Museum <i>2 pages; 18 x 12 cm</i></p> <p>Annotated proof of title page with handwritten list of contents. Possibly by Henry Acland</p>	<p>1859</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 157-160</p>	<p>Henry Acland letter to John Ruskin [?] <i>4 pages : autograph letter, signed ; 19 x 12 cm</i></p> <p>Acland thanks Ruskin [?] for his "beautiful vignette." He tells him that he thinks that they should make few additions. Acland asks him to compare the section of his sketch of the column frontispiece vignette labelled "A" with its photograph asking "is not the dark stone above too much arched in the engraving[?]" Acland requests that he ascertains from Messrs. Smith and Elder the particulars of [...] "striking off" and the size of the page.</p>	<p>March 1859</p>
<p>☰ vol. 1, page 161</p>	<p>John Ruskin letter to John Henry Le Keux <i>1 page : autograph letter, signed ; 17 x 11 cm</i></p> <p>"Received of J. H. Le Keux, Esq. One Pound one Being the amount of his subscription to the Seddon Memorial."</p>	<p>1860 February 2</p>

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Genres / Formats

Albumen prints
Correspondence
Drawings (visual works)
Photographs

Preferred Titles

Ruskin, John, 1819-1900. Modern painters
Ruskin, John, 1819-1900. Oxford Museum

Subjects

Engravers -- Great Britain
Engraving -- Great Britain
Illustration of books

Names

Acland, Henry W. (Henry Wentworth),
1815-1900 -- Correspondence
Le Keux, John Henry, 1812-1896 --
Correspondence
Lorrain, Claude, 1600-1682
Ruskin, John, 1819-1900 -- Correspondence
Turner, J. M. W. (Joseph Mallord William),
1775-1851

Contributors

Ruskin, John, 1819-1900
Ruskin, John James
Acland, Henry W. (Henry Wentworth),
1815-1900