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**ВИЗАНТИЙСКО
И ПОСТВИЗАНТИЙСКО ИЗКУСТВО:
ПРЕСИЧАНЕ НА ГРАНИЦИ**



**BYZANTINE
AND POST-BYZANTINE ART:
CROSSING BORDERS**

ART READINGS

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The Inner Portal of St Mark's Basilica in Venice between East and West

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Abstract: Above the main door of the inner portal of St Mark's Basilica in Venice there is a 16th century mosaic of St Mark in episcopal robes. This figure has been considered an invention of the mosaicists who renovated this part of the church during the Renaissance, when the Medieval decorations were changed. Nevertheless, after reconsidering local ideology, the inscription above the mosaic and the function of this part of the church, it is possible to demonstrate that this mosaic was renovated conserving the previous iconography, respecting the original decorative plan of the portal.

Key words: Byzantine Art, Western Art, Byzantine Mosaic, Renaissance Mosaic, Byzantine Iconography.

This paper focuses on the Renaissance mosaic of St Mark in episcopal robes placed above the main entrance in the narthex of the Dogal Chapel of Venice (**Fig. 1**), rebuilt in 1063, under Doge Domenico Contarini, according to the *Chronicle* of Stefano Magno². This mosa-

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2 *Stefano Magno*. *Annali*. Venezia, Museo Correr, Biblioteca, BMCVe, ms. Cicogna 3530, Vol. 2, c. 113 v.

ic, set in a gilded background, is placed in an apse above two rows divided into many niches (Fig. 2). In the row below the apse there are mosaic figures of the Virgin and Child between the Apostles. In the lower row, are placed the four Evangelists. These two rows received mosaic decoration in the late 11th or early 12th century³. In the opinion of the influential art historian Otto Demus, the current portrait of St Mark was a later addition which did not correspond to the original decorative composition of the church. The main argument used by Demus, followed by other scholars, was that it would be inconceivable for a Byzantine artist to place a portrait of St Mark above the figure of the Virgin and Child. Only the Pantokrator could be placed in this position. In the first part of the paper, this statement is put under discussion. In *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, the figure of Christ is depicted above the main gates of the churches, whilst local saints are often to be found above lateral, minor doors, forming a precise hierarchy. However, on occasion the icon of the patron saint of a church is found placed above the main entrance. Even if the architecture and the use of mosaic decoration laid out by Byzantine artists in St Mark's Basilica is still considered a copy of eastern models, in particular the copy of the Holy Apostles church (Apostoleion) in Constantinople, there are elements in this church which innovated away from Byzantine tradition and took into consideration local religious needs. In the second part of this paper the local western elements are considered in order to demonstrate that even if the main mosaicist was a Byzantine, a claim which Liz James has placed under fresh scrutiny⁴, there are also western elements that have previously been ignored. *First*: the frequent use of the figure of the patron saint above the gates of this church, which serves as a Cathedral church annexed to the Dogal Palace. *Second*: the Latin inscription above the mosaic of St Mark, restored in the 16th century, is a copy of an earlier medieval inscription. The paper finishes with a discussion about the role of the mosaic of St Mark's figure in the liturgical and funereal function of the space over which it commands.

Above the main inner entrance of the Dogal Chapel, is the standing figure of St Mark in episcopal robes, orant and pointing towards

3 Demus, Otto. *The mosaics of S. Marco in Venice, I, The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Volume One: Text. Chicago and London, 1984, 21.

4 James, Liz. *Mosaic Matters*. Questions of Manufacturing and Mosaicists in the Mosaics of San Marco, Venice. In: Henry Maguire, Robert S. Nelson (eds.). *San Marco, Byzantium and the Myths of Venice*. Washington, 2010, 227-243.

the central bay of the narthex, completed in 1545 by the brothers Francesco and Valerio Zuccati (**Fig. 1**). They had probably employed a cartoon, a large and very detailed drawing used to create paintings, frescoes and mosaics, drawn by their friend Tiziano Vecellio⁵ (**Fig. 2**).

The role of the 16th century figure of St Mark in this location was an important one, as the inner portal was used as the main entrance for the public processions into the Cathedral, when all citizens and important guests such as Emperors, Popes and Ambassadors, were invited to participate in religious feasts and civil events held there. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, the mosaic of St Mark was thought by some as the “most unforgettable, noble, perfect figure ever made in mosaic, in the opinion of everyone in every part of the world”⁶. There are now two main theories about the origins of St Mark mosaic. The first one is by Ettore Merkel⁷, Professor of History of Modern Art

5 *Suida*, Wilhelm. Tiziano. Roma, 1933, 67. *Merkel*, Ettore. Tiziano e i mosaicisti a San Marco. In: Tiziano e Venezia/ Atti del convegno di studi. Vicenza, 1976, 275-283. *Longhi*, Roberto. Calepino veneziano. – *Arte Veneta*, 1947, No. 3, 192-194.

6 *Sansovino*, Francesco. Venetia città nobilissima et singolare. Venezia, 1581, I, 98.

7 *Merkel*, Ettore. I mosaici del Cinquecento veneziano. Prima parte. – *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, 1994, No. 19, 73-140, 130.



Fig. 1. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal



Fig. 2. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal, apse, mosaic, detail, St Mark orant in episcopal robes

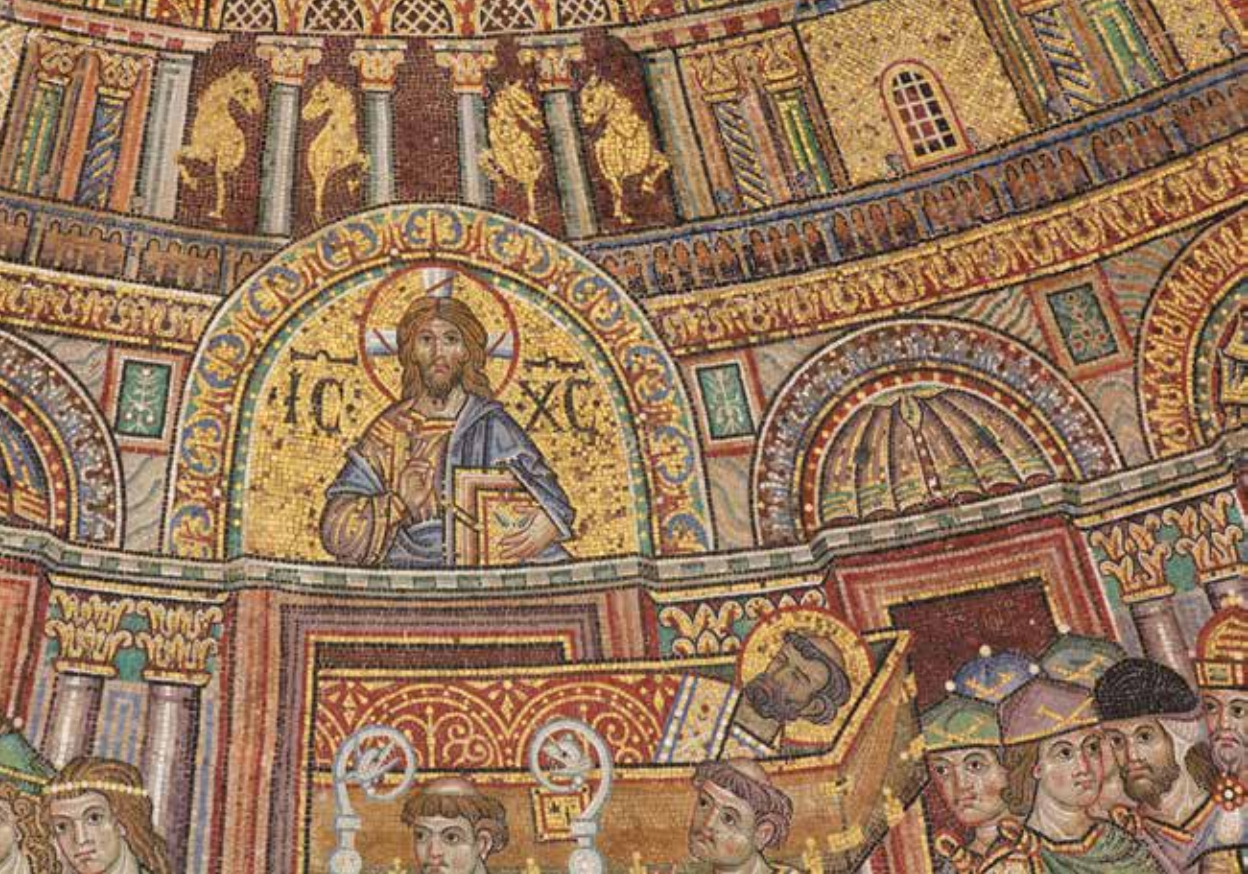


Fig. 3. Venice, St Mark, western façade, lunette above the door of St Alypius, mosaic, detail, *Traslato corporis S. Marci*

in Venice, who asserted that the mosaic was a copy of a 12th century figure, which in turn replaced the original image of the Pantokrator. The second theory was put forward by Otto Demus⁸ and Renato Polacco⁹, who thought that the actual mosaic was finished after a campaign of reconstruction which subverted the original architectural structure of the portal and its decorative plan by opening the large lightwell, called the “*pozzo*”, corresponding to the central bay of the atrium, once covered by a vault built in the 12th century. Demus and Polacco agreed that the original inner portal was lower than the current one and decorated by a mosaic of the Pantokrator placed at the top of the arrangement, above the Apostles and the Virgin Mary and Child, as shown by the 13th century mosaic above

8 Demus. *The mosaics of S. Marco in Venice*, I, 21.

9 Polacco, Renato. *La basilica d'oro. Venezia*, 1991, 31-32, 204.



Fig. 4. Hosios Loukas, atrium, lunette above the main inner door, mosaic, Christ Pantokrator

the door of St Alypius on the western façade of the church (Fig. 3)¹⁰. They came to this conclusion because of the hierarchy of the figures: only Christ Pantokrator could stay in this honoured position, in the lunette above the main inner door (Fig. 4), like in the catholicon of Hosios Loukas.

There is a long textual and symbolic tradition which assigns the figure of Christ to this particular position¹¹. Such examples include Christ as a Good Shepherd in the lunette above the entrance of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia¹², in Ravenna and Christ tread-

10 Tigler, Guido. La facciata ovest di San Marco a Venezia: progetto e decorazione. In: Flaminia Bardati, Anna Rossellini (eds.). *Arte e architettura. Le cornici della storia*. Milano, 2007, 60.

11 Spieser, Jean-Michel. Réflexions sur décor et fonctions des portes monumentales. In: Antonio Iacobini (ed.). *Le porte del paradiso: arte e tecnologia bizantina tra Italia e Mediterraneo*. Roma, 2009, 65-79.

12 Bovini, Giuseppe. *Edifici di culto di Ravenna di età preteodoriana*. Bologna, 1969, 176. Deichmann, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Ravenna Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes, Kommentar II*, 1.



Fig. 5. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal, first row, mosaic, detail, St Mark the Evangelist

ing on the snake and the lion in the mosaics above the door of the Archiepiscopal Chapel of Ravenna¹³, where he shows an open book in which it is written that he is the way and the truth and the life (John 14: 6), enhancing the symbolic meaning of the gate as a *transitum* toward salvation. In the illumination of the folio 2v (= p. 4) of the *Codex purpureus Rossanensis*, Christ himself opens the doors to the wise women holding the lamps, leaving the foolish outside the Garden of Eden (Matthew 25: 1-13)¹⁴.

Byzantine church doors were meant to represent

Teil. Die Bauten bis zum Tode Theoderichs des Großen. Wiesbaden, 1974, 71. Rizzardi, Clementina. Mosaici parietali esistenti e scomparsi di età placidiana a Ravenna: iconografie imperiali ed apocalittiche. – Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina, 1993, No. 40, 395.

13 Deichmann. Ravenna Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes, 199-204. Grabar, André, L'empereur dans l'art byzantin. Paris, 1936, 189.

14 De Maffei, Fernanda. Il Codice Purpureo di Rossano Calabro: la sua problematica e alcuni risultati di ricerca. In: Testimonianze cristiane antiche ed altomedievali nella Sibaritide/Atti del Convegno Nazionale. Corigliano – Rossano, 1978. Bari, 1980, 121-264. De Maffei, Fernanda. Il Codice Purpureo di Rossano Calabro. In: Atti del Congresso Internazionale su S. Nilo di Rossano, Rossano 1986. Rossano, 1989, 365-376.

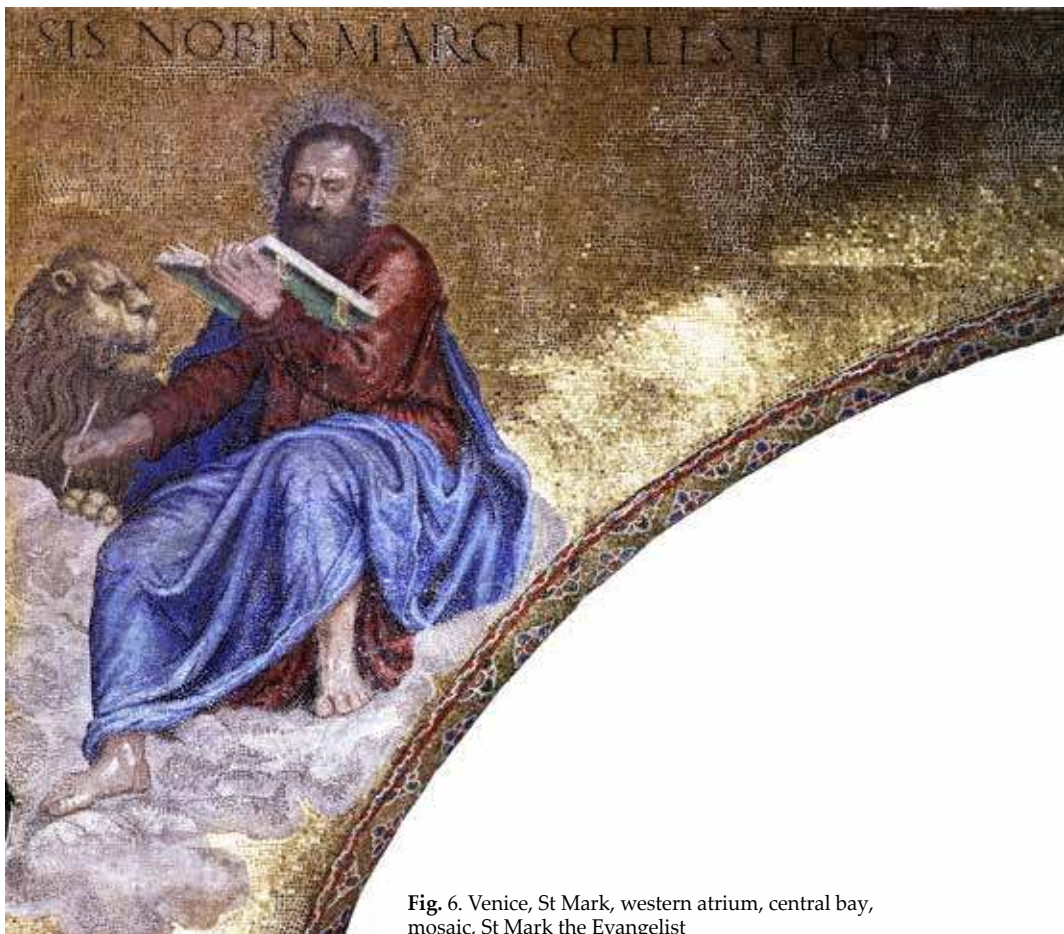


Fig. 6. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, central bay, mosaic, St Mark the Evangelist

the gate between two dimensions: the earthly one and the heavenly one; sin and mercy and between the Old and New Testaments. From this point of view, it is not difficult to understand the presence of the Virgin Mary above church doors post-Iconoclasm. She is depicted in this position in the frontispiece of the Lectionary in the Vatican Library, ms. Vat. Gr. 1156 (f. 1r) of the 12th century¹⁵; in the paintings of the Panagia Asinou (Cyprus)¹⁶; in the mosaics on the western wall of the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello (Venice)¹⁷, a few amongst many examples. Above the doors, it

15 D'Aiuto, Francesco. *Lezionario dei Vangeli. Greco (Vat. Gr.1156)*. In: Francesco D'Aiuto, Giovanni Morello, Ambrogio M. Piazzoni (eds.). *I vangeli dei popoli. La parola e l'immagine del Cristo nelle culture e nella storia/Catalogo della mostra* (Città del Vaticano, Palazzo della Cancelleria, 21 giugno – 10 dicembre 2000). Città del Vaticano, 2000, 244-248.

16 Weyl Carr, Annemarie. *Nicolaidès, Andréas. Asinou across time: studies in the architecture and murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus*. Washington, 2012.

17 Piano, Natacha. *I mosaici della cattedrale di Torcello: l'interazione fra architettura e iconogra-*



Fig. 7. Venice, St Mark, western atrium, main inner portal, door of Leo da Molino, panel, St Mark the Evangelist with the donor

is also possible to find other intercessors between the earthly and heavenly dimensions. This role could be assigned to a patron saint of a church, like for example at St George of Kurbinovo¹⁸.

In the above scholars' opinions¹⁹, it is necessary to consider that the

fia attraverso il tema della porta. – *Arte Veneta*, 2005, No. 62, 6-13.

¹⁸ *Hadermann-Misguich*, Lydie. Une longue tradition byzantine. La décoration extérieure des églises. – *Zograf*, 1977, No. 7, 5-10.

¹⁹ *Demus*. The mosaics of S. Marco, 21; *Polacco*, Renato. La basilica d'oro. Venezia, 1991, 31-32, 204.

portrait of St Mark (end of the 11th century – beginning of 12th century) was already present in the portal in one of the niches in the first register of the exedra (Fig. 5). They thought that the double portrait, one on the apse, the other on the niche, was evidence that the later Renaissance mosaic was an invention, which subverted the original decorative program. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider that this repetition of Mark's portrait is perhaps not an unusual exception in the church, as shown by the sheer number of the portraits of St Mark in the Dogal Chapel. In total, there are currently 44 portraits of the Evangelist, but that number is probably an incomplete one and the true, original number would have been higher.

Considering only the portraits above the gates of the Dogal Chapel, St Mark appears above five doors. In the vestibule of the atrium, in front of the inner entrance, there are four images of Mark: two on the exedra²⁰ (Figs. 1 and 5), one in the "pozzo"²¹ (Fig. 6) and one on the door of Leo da Molino (1117)²² (Fig. 7). Another portrait stands near the Virgin in the northern atrium (Fig. 8), above the Madonna's door (also called St John's door)²³, in front of the St Alypius' door, where the lunette was decorated with the mosaic depicting the *traslatio corporis* of Mark in the basilica²⁴ (Fig. 3). The mosaic of Mark giving a blessing is above the door in the southern transept²⁵ (Fig. 9). This door directly connected the church with the palace and was used by the Doge and their families. Mark replaced John the Baptist in the *Deesis* mosaic (13th century) above the main exit (Fig. 10), where the open book held by Christ declares his role as the gate for salvation, and reminds us that the door of the church is the *transitum* for the eternal life in the heavenly garden: "Ego sum ostium per me si quis introierit salvabitur et pascua inveniet" (John 10:9)²⁶.

20 Andaloro, Maria. *Da Villa Urbani, Maria et alii*. San Marco. Basilica patriarcale in Venezia. I mosaici, le iscrizioni, la Pala d'Oro. Milano, 1991, 149-150, fig. 3 and fig. without number on the left.

21 Andaloro, *Da Villa Urbani*, et alii. San Marco, 152, fig. 7a.

22 Paribeni, Andrea. Le porte ageminate della basilica di S. Marco a Venezia tra storia e committenza. In: Antonio Iacobini (ed.). *Le porte del paradiso: arte e tecnologia bizantina tra Italia e Mediterraneo*. Roma, 2009, 301-318. Vio, Ettore. *Le porte bizantine di Venezia: storia e restauro*. In: Antonio Iacobini (ed.). *Le porte del Paradiso*, 283-300. Forlati, Ferdinando. *Le porte bizantine di San Marco*. Venezia 1969.

23 Andaloro, *Da Villa Urbani*, et alii. San Marco, 178, fig. 8

24 Andaloro, *Da Villa Urbani*, et alii. San Marco, 209, fig. 4.

25 Andaloro, *Da Villa Urbani*, et alii. San Marco, 103, fig. 4.

26 "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture". Andaloro, *Da Villa Urbani*, et alii. San Marco, 121.

The ubiquitous presence of St Mark's portrait in the basilica, especially above the doors, suggests that between the 11th and 13th centuries his cult was considered as a gate to Christ, and his mercy was necessary to obtain salvation. From a Byzantinists point of view which considers Byzantine iconography as the model for the Dogal chapel, it is difficult to reconcile the high position assigned to St Mark in the church with a standard model of Byzantine iconographic practices.

St Mark's Basilica is decorated with more than 8000 m² of mosaic on a gilded background, like the most beautiful Byzantine churches, but it is vital to remember that the Dogal Chapel is not an Orthodox church. It used the Latin Catholic liturgy²⁷. The iconographic compositional design of the church takes Early Christian mosaic decorations from Rome and the Northern Adriatic traditions as a model²⁸. The iconography celebrates the heritage of Peter in the Italian peninsula and the role of St Clement, St Hermagoras and St Mark in converting the population, as shown in the main apse decoration in St Mark's Basilica, with the help of the local saints represented in the transept²⁹. Of course, there are some interesting elements derived from Byzantine Art, which were considered useful for the local ideology and incorporated into it. The mosaics of the church often show the portraits of the four Evangelists among the twelve Apostles, as in the portal, where St Mark, Luke, Matthew and John are in the lower row, and Philip, Simon, James, Peter, Paul, Andrew, Thomas and Bartholomew are in the second row. This is evidence that the mosaicists used the Greek list of the Apostles where the Evangelists are included³⁰. In Venice, the use of this list was very significant. During the 11th century, the relics of St Mark and St Luke (in the church of St Justine in Padua) were amongst the most

27 Arlt, Wulf, Cattin, Giulio (eds.). *Itinerari e stratificazioni dei tropi. San Marco, l'Italia settentrionale e le regioni transalpine/Testi d'un convegno e di sessioni di studio negli anni 1992–1995 presso la Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi. Venezia, 2008. Cattin, Giulio (ed.) Da Bisanzio a San Marco. Musica e liturgia. Venezia, 1997. Cattin, Giulio. Musica e liturgia a San Marco. Venezia, 1990.*

28 Zuliani, Fulvio. *Considerazioni sul lessico architettonico della San Marco contariniana. – Arte Veneta, 1975, No. 29, 50-59. Tigler. La facciata ovest, 47.*

29 Ødegård, Åse, Sinding-Larsen, Staale. *Osservazioni sul mosaico dell'abside maggiore di San Marco. In: Renato Polacco (ed.) Storia dell'arte marciana: i mosaici. Venezia, 1997, 56-73.*

30 Guignard, Christophe. *La tradition grecque de la liste d'apôtres "Anonyme I" (BHG 153c), avec un appendice sur la liste BHG 152n. – Apocrypha. International Journal of Apocryphal Literature, 2015, No. 26, 171-209. Dolbeau, François. Listes d'apôtres et de disciples. In: Prophètes, apôtres et disciples dans les traditions chrétiennes d'Occident. Vies brèves et listes en latin (Subsidia hagiographica 92). Bruxelles, 2012, 171-198.*

Fig. 8. Venice, St Mark, northern atrium, Madonna door (also called St John door), lunette above the door, mosaic, The Virgin and Child between St Mark and St John



Fig. 9. Venice, St Mark, southern transept, lunette above the door, St Mark the Evangelist blessing



Fig. 10. Venice, St Mark, central nave, western main door, lunette above the door, Deesis with Christ between St Mark and the Virgin Mary



important conserved in the North-Eastern area of Italy and became the building-blocks of local devotion and identity.

The comparison with the mosaic of the Pantokrator above the inner door of the narthex of the catholicon of Hosios Loukas, already shown by Otto Demus in 1931³¹, is an interesting one, but it is vital to examine the mosaics in their context; taking into account the inscriptions as well as the rituals and the architecture of the buildings in which they are displayed. This part constitutes the last paragraph of this contribution, in which I propose a new reading of the inscription above the monumental image of St Mark (Fig. 1). As the inscription demonstrates, the Renaissance mosaic of St Mark conserves the shape and the memory of the earlier Medieval one.

On the extrados of the arch of the semicircular space where the figure *expansis manibus* of St Mark is standing, there is an inscription with a metric composition, which corresponds to a double hexameter called leonine verse. Leonine verse was a type of versification, which rhymes in the middle, common to Latin verse in the 11th and 12th centuries³².

The original medieval inscription was copied by the Zuccati brothers when they completed the mosaic in 1545. The fact that the Zuccati's preserved this important and integral part of the original mosaic was not recognized by earlier scholarship of the mosaic. They considered the inscription to be a later addition, not a copy of a medieval prototype, just as they had with the actual image of St Mark.

The inscription from the 16th century written in capital letters was an invocation divided into two hexameters, separated by a rounded dark blue piece of glass. It says: ALAPIS MARCE DELICTA PRECANTIBUS ARCE UT SURGA[N]T PER TE FACTORE SUO MISERANTE. The internal rhyme underlies the salvific action of the Patron Saint with the invocation *Marce-arce*, which means "Oh Mark, remove the sins from those who are praying, so that they resuscitate through you thanks to the mercy of their creator".

There are two problems with the word *alapis*, which must be read àlapis. It is a plural Ablative of the word àlapa, which means "slap".

31 Diez Ernst. *Demus*, Otto. *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece*. Hosios Lucas & Daphni. Cambridge, 1931, 100.

32 *Brogan*, Terry V.F. Leonine rhyme, verse. In: Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman (eds.). *The Princeton Encyclopedia of poetry & poetics*. Princeton, 2012, 796.

Nevertheless, the word *à lapis* does not fit in at this point, because in hexameter it is necessary that the first accent falls on the second syllable. Maybe this is the reason why this short verse, attested in literary sources from the 17th century, is corrected in the Grant Allen's guide of Venice of 1902 as *A-lapis*³³. This solution corrects the right metric of the hexameter, but it makes no sense once translated, because it is incorrect from a grammatical point of view³⁴.

Even if scholars have already found that mosaicists made some mistakes when copying the medieval inscriptions during the 16th century, nobody has considered before this word as a corruption. All scholars working on this material from 1604 to 1984 accept this form³⁵, which was also curiously omitted from two important volumes on the mosaics of St Mark published in 1991³⁶, whose author does not translate this word.

A solution for correcting the verse might be to consider that the original words in the *incipit* of this hexameter were A LAPSIS not ÁLAPIS. A LAPSIS means "from the fallen" or "from the dead". In the hexameter, this works because of its rhythmic features and it makes sense considering the funeral function of the atrium of the Dogal Chapel. From the 11th century, the narthex of the church served as a burial place for the Doges and their families³⁷, who hoped for resurrection guaranteed by the patron saint. Moreover, this part of the Cathedral played an important role in the Easter procession of the *Visitatio sepulcri*, which precedes the celebration of the resurrection of Christ who guaranties the salvation of all believers³⁸. The funeral compositional design is confirmed by the other 16th century mosaics carried out by the Zuccati brothers which decorate the *pozzo*. The

33 Allen, Grant. Venice. Grant Allen's historical guides books to the principal cities of Europe treating concisely and thoroughly of the principal historic and artistic points of interest therein, New York, 1902, 262.

34 It should be *a lapide* (a + ablative).

35 See the literary tradition in *Cantone*, Valentina. *Deiana*, Rita. *Valenzano*, Giovanna. Nuove prospettive di ricerca sul portale centrale dell'atrio di San Marco, dalla storia dell'arte alle tecnologie applicate ai beni culturali. In: Ettore Vio (ed.). *La Basilica di San Marco, un libro aperto*. Venezia, pp. 401-410, in press.

36 *Andaloro*. *Da Villa Urbani et alii*. San Marco. Basilica patriarcale in Venezia.

37 *Brenk*, Beat. Zur Funktion des Atriums von San Marco in Venedig. In: Martin Büchsel, Herbert Kessler, Rebecca Müller (eds.). *The Atrium of San Marco in Venice. The Genesis and Medieval Reality of the Genesis Mosaics*. Berlin, 2014, 49-72.

38 *Cattin*, Giulio. Musica e liturgia a San Marco, 32. See also: *Rankin*, Susan. "Quem queritis" en voyage in Italy. In: Wulf Arlt, Giulio Cattin (eds.). *Itinerari e stratificazioni dei tropi*, 177, 309.



mosaics are placed inside the vestibule in front of the inner portal, where there are other leonine verses, too. They show the *Death of the Virgin*, *The Crucifixion* and the *Entombment of Christ*, iconographies clearly coherent with the funeral function of this part of the atrium.

The frequency of St Mark's portrait above the doors in the Dogal Chapel demonstrates the importance of local ideology in the mosaics of this Cathedral. Saint Mark was the saint who guaranteed Venetian fortunes in the Mediterranean and, at the same time, was the Patron who provided the gate for the Salvation of the Doges and their families buried in the narthex. To celebrate the church which represents the power of the Venetian State, which also conserves the relics of the patron saint, the Doges had used Early Christian models and the Byzantine tradition of mosaic decoration³⁹, but the decorative design of its composition only in part corresponds to the methods of Byzantine artists, as already demonstrated in the architecture and the sculptures of this church⁴⁰. The Latin inscription combined with the 16th century figure of St Mark above the inner door of the narthex conserves the original medieval plan, copying the previous iconography, renovating its style, and remaining coherent with the original funeral function of the narthex.

39 Demus, Otto. *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration. Aspects of monumental art in Byzantium*. Boston, 1955, 19, 27, 68-73.

40 See note 26.

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Вътрешната порта на „Сан Марко“ във Венеция между Изтока и Запада

Валентина Кантоне



Тази статия е посветена на част от резултатите от проучване, реализирано от Университета в Падуа, което беше координирано от автора. Мозайките в параклиса на дожите във Венеция, посветен на св. Марко, тук са преосмислени във всякакъв аспект като материали, техника, иконография, надписи, литургия и архитектурен контекст. Статията представя изводите от този подход към мозаечната декорация, като търси отговори, свързани със значимостта на вътрешната порта в базиликата „Сан Марко“ в граничната ѝ роля между византийската традиция и западното изкуство, фокусирана в изображението на св. Марко в молитвена поза над входа и придружаващия я надпис.

Въпреки че през периода XVI–XVIII в. портретът на св. Марко е възприеман като „най-незабравимата, изискана и перфектна фигура, правена някога с мозаечна техника, по мнението на всеки от всички краища на света“, през XIX в. изображението се приема за непохватно подобие на оригинала.

Византолозите смятат за сигурно, че мозайката, представляваща Пантократор, първоначално е била разположена в най-високата част на портала, над апостолите и св. Богородица с младенец. Причината да достигнат до това заключение е йерархичното достойнство на фигурите: само Христос Вседържител би могъл да се изобрази на това място, както е например в католикона на „Осиос Лукас“, т.е. в люнетата, над централния вход на нартекса. По тази причина в раннохристиянските и ранновизантийските църкви Христос се изобразява над основния вход на храмовете. Над тях се разполагат и портрети на Дева Мария, на местни светци, следващи прецизна йерархия.

Въпреки това не бива да се забравя, че параклисът на дожите не е православна църква. На място се отслужва латинска грегорианска литургия, а иконографската програма отбелязва появата на св. Петър на Апенинския полуостров, както и ролята на св. Климент, св. Хермагор и св. Марко в покръстването на местното население. Това е държавнически параклис, който би трябвало да изразява локалната идеология и нейното отстояние от византийската култура. Чрез анализа на промяната в надписа на мозайката и архитектурния контекст, сред който мозайките съществуват, авторът показва, че фигурата на св. Марко, независимо от ренесансовия си стил, запазва спомена за оригиналната декоративна програма, която е резултат от иконографски хибрид между източната и западната традиция, вкупом ангажирани да отбележат ролята на св. Марко в параклиса на държавниците – архитектурна метафора на венецианската мощ и идентичност.

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