Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Student Research Papers

Research, Scholarship, and Resources

Summer 7-2021

Byzantine and Islamic Influences on the Art and Architecture of the Basilica di San Marco in Venice

Suzie Hanny
Lindenwood University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/student-research-papers

Part of the Classical Archaeology and Art History Commons

Recommended Citation

Hanny, Suzie, "Byzantine and Islamic Influences on the Art and Architecture of the Basilica di San Marco in Venice" (2021). *Student Research Papers*. 7.
https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/student-research-papers/7

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Research, Scholarship, and Resources at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact phuffman@lindenwood.edu.

Byzantine and Islamic Influences on the Art and Architecture of the Basilica di San Marco in Venice

Suzie Hanny
ARTH 55800: Medieval Art
Instructor: Dr. James Hutson
July 7, 2021

More than any other building in Venice, the Basilica di San Marco (figure 1) incorporates many Byzantine and Islamic architectural, artistic, and design elements. These stylistic elements were not only intended to glorify God but to promote the Venetian Republic's political and religious ideologies. The Venetian Republic held the belief that it was divinely ordained to be the rulers of the Adriatic. It was no coincidence that the founding of Venice is said to have occurred on March 25th, the feast day of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. While there are no surviving records of this, Venice claims this date in 421 A.D. as the date of its "birth," meritoriously uniting the city metaphorically with the announcement of the Immaculate Conception by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. This belief, along with the arrival of the body of St. Mark from Alexandria in 829, formed the basis of what would become known as the "Myth of Venice." The "Myth of Venice" is the self-aggrandizing creation myth of the city "going back to the fourteenth century and celebrates its providential destiny, constitutional excellence, and political wisdom of the city-state."[1] The significance of the Basilica di San Marco (the Basilica of St. Mark) as a religious symbol for the Venetian Republic cannot be understated, and neither can its political connotations. It is vital to understand the origins of Venice to understand the intended meaning of the art and architecture of the basilica and how Byzantine and Islamic influences helped promulgate Venetian ideologies.

The earliest inhabitants of Venice were mainly fishermen who lived in the marshy lagoons that provided them with their livelihoods. These fishermen had been Romans who fled their existing lands as early as the fourth century due to corruption and civil war. The next wave of occupants came from the mainland and were fleeing the increasing number of attacks by the barbarians, including the Huns and the Goths, occurring around the beginning of the fifth

[1] Robert Finlay, "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1994-1530)," *The Sixteenth Century Journal,* 30, no. 4 (1999): 932.

century. After the invasions were over, most who fled to the lagoon islands returned home to rebuild their lives, but some stayed behind and became the first official Venetians. After the breakup of the Roman Empire in 476, the province of Venetia came under the rule of the Byzantine empire, which at that time was ruled from Constantinople. However, Venice and its lagoon islands were still little more than small groups of fishermen and their families. It was not easy to live in the marshes of the lagoon and they endured daily hardships. As Medieval historian Thomas Madden states, "No one with options would willingly build a city on a group of marshy islands set in the middle of a brackish lagoon. Venice was a child of necessity, built by the survivors of an ancient world that was quickly passing away."[2] It was in these early years that the independent Venetian character was created. They were determined to resist the changes occurring across Europe and wanted nothing more than to remain free and be loyal to their Catholic faith.

Early in its foundation, Byzantine influences on Venetian art and architecture were established and the Byzantine style and aesthetic would endure longer in Venice than any other place in western Europe. The oldest surviving examples of the Veneto-Byzantine style are found on the refuge islands of Murano and Torcello, with the most important early example being the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta (also known as the Torcello Cathedral) (figure 2). An inscription discovered during excavations in 1895 dates the church's founding in 639 by the exarch Isaac of Ravenna. According to art historian Deborah Howard, "it is assumed that the seventh-century church, dedicated to the Virgin, was a simple triple-nave rectangular space with a single apse at the eastern end and was a typical early Christian basilica."[3] The church underwent a second

---

[2] Thomas F Madden, *Venice: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books Australia, 2015), 9.

[3] Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 9.

phase of construction in the latter part of the 800s and another in 1008 when the Byzantine-style mosaics were installed (figure 3). Although the cathedral underwent transformations in the ninth and eleventh centuries, the structure still retains "much of the character of its sixth-century early Christian prototypes such as Sant' Appollinare in Classe and Sant' Appollinare in Nuovo in Ravenna."[4] The brick exterior of the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta is humbly decorated with concentric layers of brickwork around the blind arches and windows, and the original stone shutters still hang on their stone hinges. Inside, finely carved capitals sit atop marble columns, and the golden tesserae of the mosaics shimmer when catching rays of sun beaming in through the small upper windows of the nave. Howard asserts that these elements, along with "the heightened profile of the stilted arches, show that the contact with the eastern Byzantine empire were beginning to leave their mark on the architecture of the Venetian lagoon."[5]

As previously stated, Venice became a Byzantine province in 476. However, in 497 Venice became a republic by electing its first doge, even though it was not yet a self-governing entity. Venice was to remain under Byzantine rule until 814 and the signing of the Pax Nicephori when it gained its independence and the rights to trade along the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Archeologist Erica D' Amico in her article *Approaches and Perspectives on the Origins of Venice* establishes a "connection between the self-construction of Venice during this time and the so-called Western World due to the Venetian's desire to remain sovereign, ruled by an elected government instead of a king or emperor, and its foundational core republican values."[6]

---

[4] Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, 10.

[5] Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, 10.

[6] Erica D' Amico, "Approaches and Perspectives on the Origins of Venice," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 62 (2017): 210.

Wanting to establish itself as one of the principal cities of Europe, Venice desired to obtain an object that would speak to its spirituality, power, and politics. The city of Alexandria in Egypt was along the republic's trading route and they had both seen and heard of the treasures and holy relics that existed there. With Alexandria becoming a Muslim city, the Catholic Venetians decided that the body of Saint Mark, an apostle of Christ, would be the perfect relic to pillage to create such a reputation. Per the "Myth of Venice," two Venetian merchants smuggled the body of Saint Mark out of Alexandria in 829 by placing him in a basket covered with pork (figure 4). The Venetians knew the Muslims would not touch it as pork was considered dirty and avoiding it was a divine commandment according to the Muslim faith. Erica D'Amico points out that "upon the arrival of Saint Mark's relics in Venice, he was named their patron saint, and his symbol, the winged lion, became the symbol of the Venetian Republic."[7] The adoption of Saint Mark as the new patron saint of Venice sent a political message to the Byzantine empire. Under Byzantine rule, the city's patron saint had been Saint Theodore, a Roman soldier and Christian serving in Amasea (which is now part of Northern Turkey) who was martyred for refusing to worship pagan gods in the early fourth century during the Diocletian persecutions of Christians. With the displacement of Saint Theodore by Saint Mark, Venice was "symbolizing the Venetian state's break-away from Byzantine rule."[8]

The construction of the earliest version of the church of San Marco began shortly after the arrival of the body of Saint Mark in Venice. Originally built as a cappella palatina (Palatine Chapel) for Doge Giovanni Partecipazio (r. 829-37), it was modeled after the Byzantine churches on the island of Torcello, which were modeled after the Byzantine churches in Ravenna. Early

[7] D'Amico, "Approaches and Perspectives on the Origins of Venice," 210.

[8] Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice,* 18.

chronicles on the history of Venice show records of the church being badly damaged in a fire in 976 and restored, but in the year 1063, San Marco was rebuilt on a much grander scale, resembling the Apostolieion (Church of the Holy Apostles, now destroyed) (figure 5) in Constantinople. The renovation also served a political purpose. According to historian Daniel Savoy the placement of these two building were "to convey a message of ducal continuity (between God and state), thereby expressing the mythographic vision of the Venetian state at San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale, the unified chapel and palace of the Doge,"[9] thereby uniting the sovereign with the sacred and in effect, God and the Venetian government. The church as it is seen today can be attributed to the construction of the eleventh century, absent the mosaics, marble columns, and the rooftop sculptures.

Even someone who is not well versed in Medieval art and architecture can distinguish San Marco's stylistic departure from the Romanesque and Gothic churches and cathedrals that were popular in Europe in the early eleventh century. Eclectic in nature, San Marco's façade is an amalgamation of Byzantine, Gothic, and Islamic styles. This mixing of styles is symbolic of the Venetian Republic's trading power and its position as a postern between the east and the west. In addition, the architectural elements were not only metaphorically related to the trading of goods between the east and the west, but were also symbolic of the mixing of the Catholic and Orthodox religions and the differing political ideologies as Venice was influenced as much by Byzantium as it was Rome. In the article *Venice and the Two Romes,* independent scholar Debra Pincus asserts that Venice was "alone among the Italian states as it had developed strong and

[9] Daniel Savoy, "Keeping the Myth Alive: Andrea Dandolo and the Preservation of Justice at the Palazzo Ducale in Venice," *Artibus Et Historiae* 36, no. 71 (2015): 10.

complex ties to both Romes (Rome and Constantinople), drawing on the authority of the *imperium* (Holy Roman Empire) to legitimize its economic and political ambitions."[10]

Before entering the Basilica di San Marco through the west facade, the viewer is confronted by the nine Byzantine influenced mosaic lunettes, numerous multicolored marble columns and capitals, and the *Triumphal Quadriga*, also known as the *Four Horses of San Marco* (figure 6). Most of the adornments on the façade were spolia pillaged during the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople in 1204. The four smaller lunettes to the side of the main portal tell the story of Saint Mark's arrival in Venice and include the *Recovery of Saint Mark's Body* (ca. 1660), the *Arrival of St. Mark's Body in Venice* (ca. 1660), the *Reception by the Doge of Lords* (ca. 1728), and the *Processional Transfer of the Saint to the Basilica* (13th century), which is the only antique mosaic of the iconographical program.

As impressive as the mosaics are, it is perhaps the *Triumphal Quadriga* that sits atop the balcony of the main façade (the originals are now located inside the museum of San Marco) that makes the boldest political statement. Like the columns, they were looted by the Venetians during the Fourth Crusades. The bronzes were taken from the Hippodrome of Constantinople, but modern scholars believe they may date back to the fourth century BCE and may have adorned a triumphal arch either in Greece or Rome. The *Triumphal Quadriga* stands in eternal watch over the Republic as an icon for Venetian power and conquest and symbolizes Venice as the "New Constantinople." It is important to note that while the Venetian Republic saw these items as recompence for their role in the victory in the crusade over Constantinople, there is always a dark side to war. When discussing the Venetian soldier's behavior during the sack of Constantinople, English Byzantinist Donal M. Nichols states that:

[10] Debra Pincus, "Venice and the Two Romes: Byzantium and Rome as a Double Heritage in Venetian Cultural Politics," *Artibus Et Historiae* 13, no. 26 (1992): 101.

> The treasured monuments of antiquity, which Constantinople had sheltered for over nine centuries, were overthrown, carried off, or melted down. Chalices, stripped of their jewels, became drinking cups, and icons became gaming boards and tables. The church of the Holy Apostles (the prototype for San Marco) was ransacked, and the imperial tombs were robbed of their riches. Even the corpse of Justinian was desecrated.[11]

It is a lugubrious thought to think of the incredible treasures that might still exist today if they had not been destroyed in the name of conquest.

The Byzantine Apostolieion church in Constantinople, as reconstructed by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, served as the prototype for the design of the Basilica di San Marco. It follows a cruciform Greek cross plan with a longitudinal nave slightly longer than the transept due to the limitation of available space because of the existing surrounding structures. There is one central dome and four subsequent domes over the equal arms. Art historian Deborah Howard explains that like other Byzantine reliquary chapels, "the Byzantine cruciform plan was chosen for the great new shrine to house Saint Mark's body. The choice of the Greek cross plan places San Marco in the tradition of the apostles' churches."[12] Each of the domed interior spaces creates an individual smaller-scaled Greek cross with barrel vaults to bolster the lateral thrust of the dome. The interior spaces are not efficiently compartmentalized; instead, they are interconnected by colonnades and arched openings.

The beauty of the interior of the Basilica di San Marco (figure 7) is not due to its design, but rather the 8,000 square feet of mosaic decoration created in the Byzantine tradition that seemingly covers every available space that it can. Most scholars agree that the iconographical plan for the interior mosaics were in place by the twelfth century. According to art historian Patricia Fortini Brown, the "mosaics throughout the main areas of the basilica depict three

---

[11] Donal M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice,* (New York: Cambridge Press, 1999), 143-144.

[12] Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, 22.

narrative themes: the lives of Christ and the Virgin Mary, the mission of the Apostles to spread the word of Christian salvation, and the life of Saint Mark, including the theft of his body from Alexandria and its arrival in Venice."[13] Golden background tesserae have purposely been set at differing angles to catch the sunlight and bathe the space in glowing amber tones, giving the visitor a feeling of being surrounded by the presence of God.

In addition to the religious purpose of the basilica's mosaics, they are also indicative of the Republic's cultural and political concerns at the time in which they were created. The mosaics in the baptistery and chapel of Sant' Isidoro exhibit a "visual dualism that has generally been understood as symptomatic of the underlying artistic orientations of mid-fourteenth-century Venice, still hesitant to relinquish Byzantine forms, but also drawn to the pictorial innovations and increased naturalism of Italian art."[14] Commissioned by Doge Andrea Dandolo during his rule, the political connotations of the works are worthy of discussion. Scholars agree that Doge Dandolo used the mosaics as a form of political propaganda showing the Republic's sacrosanct history and political hegemony.

The baptistery's narrative iconographical mosaic program combines episodes from the life of Saint John the Baptist and the infancy and Passion of Christ. The Chapel of Sant' Isidoro is smaller than the baptistry and is a one-bay room in which the body of the saint (Isidoro) lies within a highly sculpted shrine at the chapel's east end. A mosaic inscription above the shrine commemorates the translation of Saint Isidoro's relics from the Aegean island of Chios to Venice in 1112 during the Venetian Crusade. The mosaic cycles of the chapel and baptistry can

[13] Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2005), 26.

[14] Stefania Gerevini, "Art as Politics in the Baptistery and Chapel of Sant'Isidoro at San Marco, Venice," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 74 (2020): 243.

be considered refined, but they are not visually unlike other religious programs. It is when viewed within a political context that the dualism of their meaning becomes evident. "The most obvious of which is the representation of a doge within the scene of the Crucifixion on the east wall of the baptistery. The inclusion of the doge injects the scene, and therefore the entire iconographical program, with local significance and political overtones."[15] Also included in the scene are two kneeling individuals who wear Venetian civil clothing, identifying them as public officers.

The Chapel of Sant' Isidoro contains another example of political propaganda. Doge Domenico Michiel (r. 1117-1130), dressed in a ceremonial robe, "appears in several scenes of the translation of Saint Isidoro, simultaneously acting as a witness of the holy theft in 1125 and as guarantor of its legitimacy."[16] The commission of these mosaics occurred when Venice was attempting to expand and consolidate its territorial and commercial presence in the Mediterranean. The Republic of Venice was engaged in an open military confrontation with Genoa over control of the eastern Mediterranean region. The inclusion of the images of the doge and chancery officers praying at the foot of the crucifixion cross identify Venice as protected by holy patrons, including the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist. (figure 8). These images, along with the ownership of the body of Saint Isidoro, establish Venice as worthy of divine protection. They also "implicitly challenge the legitimacy of Genoese authority over Chios and, by extension, the eastern Mediterranean."[17]

---

[15]Henry Maguire and Robert S. Nelson, "San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice," *In Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia,* (2010): 253.

[16] Maguire and Nelson, "San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice," 253.

[17] Maguire and Nelson, "San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice," 257.

Of all the objects in Basilica di San Marco, the *Pala d'Oro* (the altar retable) (figure 9) "epitomized Venetian attitudes toward the use and display of Byzantine artifacts and must be considered as one of the most ambitious attempts to bring together Byzantine artifacts of different periods and contexts, and present them within a single Venetian frame."[18] It is one of the finest examples of Medieval Byzantine enamel work still in existence today. This elaborate but small-scale iconostasis (a wall or screen of icons or religious paintings) is assembled of gold and silver, and the ornamentation consists of around 250 cloisonne enamels and almost two thousand jewels, including precious emeralds, sapphires, rubies, and pearls, most of which were looted during the Fourth Crusade. The original *Pala* was commissioned from Constantinople by Doge Pietro I Orseolo in 976. Two fourteenth-century engravings on the lower portion of the *Pala* visually document two proceeding phases of renovations, one in the early thirteenth century and one in the mid-fourteenth century. The large enameled *Christ Pantocrator* (also brought to Venice from Constantinople) sits all-knowingly in the center of the lower panel surrounded by prophets, apostles, evangelists, and angels. The small border surrounding the panel depicts episodes from the lives of Saint Mark and Christ.

Whereas the Venetians felt religious and civic pride towards the *Pala d'Oro*, for the Byzantines, it elicited the contrary. In the memoirs of the Grand Ecclesiarch of the Hagia Sophia, Sylvester Syropoulos, he writes about seeing the Pala d'Oro during a visit to Venice with other Byzantine delegates in 1438:

> These objects were brought here according to the law of booty right after the conquest of our city by the Latins, and were reunited in the form of a very large icon on top of the principal altar of the main choir (of San Marco). Among the people who contemplate this icon of icons, those who own it feel pride, pleasure, and delectation, while those from who it was taken- if they happen to be present, as in our case, see it as an object of sadness, sorrow, and dejection. We were told that these icons came from the templon of

[18] Maguire and Nelson, "San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice," 196.

> the most holy Great Church. However, we knew for sure, through the inscriptions and the images of the Komnenoi, that they came from the Pantocrator Monastery.[19]

The Pala d'Oro is an opulent homage to God, to Venice, and St. Mark. However, it, along with other spoliated objects from Constantinople used to decorate the basilica, "became signifiers of Venetian cultural heritage, linking Venice's victory in the Fourth Crusade to the claim of St. Mark's relics. Sacred objects that once shaped the authority of the Byzantine Empire were stolen by the Venetians as a sign of political hegemony."[20]

As discussed, the stylistic elements of the art and architecture of the exterior and interior of the Basilica di San Marco can be attributed to Byzantine and Islamic influences. The connection of the Republic of Venice to the Byzantine empire is well known and has been often discussed and researched by past and present scholars. The Islamic connection is also known but is less often the focus of art-historical exploration. In addition to art and architecture, one of the most significant links to the Islamic empire was the acquisition of the body of Saint Mark. By the year 829 Alexandria was under the control of the Islamic Abbasid Caliphate. According to art historian Stefano Carboni:

> The feat of bringing Saint Mark to his final resting place in Venice gives the city he identification as the New Alexandria and represented a great boost in the city's ability to expand her trade in the eastern and southern Mediterranean, to become an important point of departure for pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and to establish herself as what has been aptly defined as the "hinge" between Europe and the East or as the "liquid frontier" between these two seemingly antithetical worlds.[21]

---

[19] Maguire and Nelson, "San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice," 194.

[20] Janna Israel, "A History Built on Ruins: Venice and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 9, no. 1 (2012): 119.

[21] Stefano Carboni, *Venice and the Islamic World* (Gallimard: Yale University Press, 2007), 15.

This statement illustrates just how consequential the possession of Saint Mark's body was to the vast trading empire of the Venetian Republic and the immense wealth that it would bring it.

The Islamic influence is a critical factor in creating a Venetian aesthetic that differs from other Italian cities. Nevertheless, the two empires could not be more juxtaposed in their religious beliefs and ideologies. From its inception, the Republic of Venice positioned itself as a fervent defender of the Christian faith, and religion was very often at the center of the confrontations between the east and the west. The Venetians launched a crusade (the Venetian Crusade) in 1122 to aid King Baldwin II of Jerusalem in recapturing the territory he had lost in the Battle of Ager Sanguinis under the Islamic leader Ilghazi three years earlier in the Holy Lands. King Baldwin had requested help from Pope Callixtus II and the pope sought help from the Venetians. For agreeing to assist, the Venetians who participated were given crusader privileges as well as indulgences for the forgiveness of their sins. Flying under the flag of the pope, the Venetian fleet set sail in August (1122) and before reaching the Holy Land, paused in Byzantine Corfu due to a dispute they had over privileges. When they received word of the capture of Baldwin II by Muslims, they moved towards Jerusalem and reached the coast of Palestine at Acre in May of 1123. After winning a battle at sea against the Egyptian fleets of the Fatimid caliphate and aiding in the victorious siege of Tyre, Baldwin II was released from captivity. Baldwin II then granted Venice extensive trading rights in the region, adding to the Republic's wealth and power. There is little doubt that the exposure to Islamic architecture during the crusade and subsequent trading with the east influenced the architecture (and art) of the Venetian Republic, even if the relationship between Venice and the Islamic empire was less than hospitable.

It was John Ruskin in his seminal work "The Stones of Venice" who identified the Islamic (which he called Arab) influence on Venetian architecture. Ruskin argues that it began

around the year 1180 when, as he claims, “the Byzantine-Roman style was succeeded by a transitional one of a character much more Arabian; the shafts became more slender and the arches more consistently pointed.”[22] While Ruskin was not explicitly writing about the Basilica di San Marco, other scholars feel it serves as the foremost example of the Islamic influences on Venetian architecture. In the article “Venice and Islam in the Middle Ages,” University of Cambridge art historian Deborah Howard states that the Basilica di San Marco “is probably the most conspicuously oriental building in Venice, with its glittering mosaics, shimmering marbles, and exotic skyline.”[23] Along with other art historians such as Otto Demus, Howard draws attention to the basilica’s Moorish qualities and how they connect the Alexandrian aesthetic to the relics of Saint Mark. The elements of the basilica that are the easiest to point to for their Moorish virtues are the outer domes (figure 10). It would be difficult to imagine the Basilica di San Marco without envisioning the onion-shaped domes that have sat atop the structure since the thirteenth century. Most scholars agree that Egyptian domes served as exemplars as they serve a comparable function and exhibit the same form. It is difficult to ignore the obvious similarities, both in shape and purpose, of the raised domes of the Ibn-Tulun mosque in Cairo and the domes of San Marco. The function of the domes of the Ibn-Tulun mosque was to mark the location of important tombs found inside. The largest dome of San Marco marks the site of Saint Mark’s tomb. Deborah Howard states that “since Saint Mark himself had been martyred in Alexandria, it would have appeared entirely appropriate to give the shrine of Venice’s patron saint the attributes of an Egyptian mausoleum.”[24]

---

[22] John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (New York: John Ruskin, 1851), 28.

[23] Deborah Howard, "Venice and Islam in the Middle Ages: Some Observations on the Question of Architectural Influence," *Architectural History* 34 (1991): 61.

[24] Howard, “Venice and Islam,” 63.

Venice is a city founded on religion, politics, and willpower, born of the sea, and protected by God. But it is also a city whose art and architecture exemplify an aesthetic convention informed by its history and connections to eastern countries through trade, rule, and conquest. The Venetian Republic was fiercely independent, and its architectural divergence from the traditional Gothic and Romanesque elements popular among other European major cities of the Middle Ages reveals its openness to the influences of other cultures, including the Byzantine and Islamic Empires. For today's art historians exploring the art and architecture of the Venetian Republic, the story, or as it is commonly referred to, "the Myth of Venice," must be taken into consideration as it is the foundation upon which Venice sprung forth and is how the city can be most fully understood, including its Eastern aesthetic. Some of the "myth" is true, and some of it is legend, but all of it is relevant to who the Venetians are and how they desire to be perceived. The history of Venice is beautiful but flawed, much like the human spirit, which cannot be judged solely on the mistakes of the past. The Byzantine and Islamic influences on Venetian art and architecture are what makes it stand out as the jewel of the Adriatic, and the Basilica di San Marco shines as its most vibrant gem, forever glorifying God, St. Mark, and the sea herself.

Bibliography

Brown, Patricia Fortini. *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Carboni, Stefano. *Venice and the Islamic World*. Gallimard, France: Yale University Press, 2007.

D'Amico, Erica. "Approaches and Perspectives on the Origins of Venice." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 62 (2017): 209-30. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26787026.

Finlay, Robert. "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494 - 1530)." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 4 (1999): 931-44. Accessed June 22, 2021. doi:10.2307/2544605.

Gerevini, Stefania. "Art as Politics in the Baptistery and Chapel of Sant' Isidoro at San Marco, Venice." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 74 (2020): 243-68. Accessed June 20, 2021. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26979084.

Howard, Deborah. *The Architectural History of Venice*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Howard, Deborah. "Venice and Islam in the Middle Ages: Some Observations on the Question of Architectural Influence." *Architectural History* 34 (1991): 59-74. Accessed June 15, 2021. doi:10.2307/1568594.

Israel, Janna. "A History Built on Ruins: Venice and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople." *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 9, no. 1 (2012): 107-22. Accessed June 5, 2021. doi:10.5749/futuante.9.1.0107.

Madden, Thomas F. *Venice: A New History*. New York, US: Penguin Books Australia, 2015.

Nelson, Robert and Maguire, Henry. "Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice." *In Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia.* Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Nicol, Donald M. *Byzantium and Venice*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Pincus, Debra. "Venice and the Two Romes: Byzantium and Rome as a Double Heritage in Venetian Cultural Politics." Artibus Et Historiae 13, no. 26 (1992): 101-14. Accessed June 4, 2021. doi:10.2307/1483433.

Ruskin, John. *The Stones of Venice*. Reprinted (date unknown) New York, NY: John Ruskin, 1851.

Savoy, Daniel. "Keeping the Myth Alive: Andrea Dandolo and the Preservation of Justice at the Palazzo Ducale in Venice." *Artibus Et Historiae* 36, no. 71 (2015): 9-29. Accessed September 15, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24595926.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Exterior of western facade Basilica di San Marco, ca. 1063, Venice, Italy.

Figure 2. Interior of Santa Maria Assunta, ca. 639, Torcello, Italy.

Figure 3. *Last Judgement Mosaic*, Interior Santa Maria Assunta, ca. 639, Torcello, Italy.

Figure 4: *Recovery of Saint Mark's Body*, Exterior Mosaic, Basilica di San Marco, ca. 1660, Venice, Italy.

Figure 5. Illustration of the Apostolieion (Church of the Holy Apostles, now destroyed), 4th Century A.D., Constantinople, Eastern Roman Empire (now Istanbul, Turkey).

Figure 6: *Triumphal Quadriga,* Exterior of Basilica di San Marco (originals now housed inside the San Marco Museum, 4th Century B.C., Venice, Italy.

Figure 7: Interior of Basilica di San Marco, ca. 1063, Venice, Italy.

Figure 8: *Crucifixion with Venetian Doge and Chancery Officers,* Chapel of Sant' Isidoro, Basilica di San Marco, ca. 1120, Venice, Italy.

Figure 9: *Pala d’Oro*, Altarpiece Basilica di San Marco, commissioned 976 from Constantinople, Venice, Italy.

Figure 10: Domes of Basilica di San Marco, Thirteenth Century, Venice, Italy.