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**Re-inventing the East: the interpretation of Eastern Architecture in
Venetian Renaissance painting.**

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Introduction

I chose the present research topic due to my own great personal interest and longstanding need to make sense of the implicit causes of the appearance of the conceptual notion of the 'Other' in human representational thought. As a student in the art history department at the Lomonosov Moscow State University, observing the shifts in public perceptions of the world in its contemporary stage, I began my search for historical material on the basis of which to construct a model, without extrapolation but by analogy, with which to gain better insight into current tendencies. The guidance of Renaissance art professor Ivan Tuchkov and professor of Byzantine and Ottoman history Rustam Shukurov helped me onto the right path and so my attention was turned to Renaissance Venice as an example of one of the earliest meeting points between 'East' and 'West' in modern history.

The investigation was originally envisaged as a more in depth continuation of my graduation dissertation. However, as I assimilated the material, it became clear how wide this theme was, and how numerous were the potential aspects and angles to take in its interpretation. Also, as a result of this, the fact that any deep examination of its fullness would, if not carried out as a mere superficial overview, be impossible even in the scope of a doctoral work. The works that I published at this time ('The physical object world of the East in pictures by Venetian painters of the era of the Renaissance'[1]; 'At the sources of the historical genre'[2]; 'Images of

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[1] Chechik L., 'Predmetny mir Vostoka na polotnakh venetsianskikh zhivopisetsev epokhi Vozrozhdeniya', in *Dekorativnoye iskusstvo i predmetno-prostranstvennaya sreda. Vestnik MGKhPA.*

[2] Chechik L., 'U istokov istoricheskogo zhanra. Vostochny protivnik v Venetsianskoi zhivopisi XVI veka', *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta,* Series 8, Istoriya, No. 6, 2012.

"Jews" and "Muslims" in the Venetian religious painting of the Renaissance'[3]),
and work on reports and presentations at various international academic
conferences, round tables and discussions ('Relations between Venice and Iran in
the late XVI century through the history of a single painting: Doge Marino
Grimani receiving the Persian ambassadors by Gabriele Caliari'[4]; 'Image of Gran
Turco and other muslims in Venetian painting of XV-XVI centuries'[5]; 'The man in
oriental dress in the Renaissance painting of Venice'[6] ; 'Iconological context of
Hebrew inscriptions in the religious painting of the Italian Renaissance'[7]; 'The
actualization of the concept of the Crusades and its reflection in the iconography of
Venetian art of the Renaissance'[8]; 'Friend-or-foe' in the 'diplomatic' paintings of
Renaissance Venice'[9]; 'The East as a setting for biblical events and its presentation
in Venetian painting at the end of the fifteenth century'[10]; 'The Image of the Gran

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[3] Chechik L., 'Obrazi "iudeev" i "musulman" v venezianskoi religioznoi jivopisi epohi
Vozrojdenia', in *Rituali i religioznie praktiki inoverzev vo vzaimnih predstavleniah,* Moskva,
2016.

[4] Chechik L., 'Relations between Venice and Iran in the late XVI century through the history of a
single painting: Doge Marino Grimani receiving the Persian ambassadors by Gabriele Caliari' at
the international conference "Iran and the West: Converging Perspectives', University of
Warwick, 2015.

[5] Chechik L, 'Image of Gran Turco and other muslims in Venetian painting of XV-XVI
centuries', lecture at the seminar "Facing the Muslim East: Latin Europe in Middle ages.
Narrations, discourses, terms", Laboratory of Medieval Studies, State University - Higher School
of Economics, 2014.

[6] Chechik L., 'The man in oriental dress in the Renaissance painting of Venice', at the 3rd
Global Conference 'Fashion: Exploring Critical Issues', Mansfield College, Oxford, 2011.

[7] Chechik L., 'Iconological context of Hebrew inscriptions in the religious painting of the Italian
Renaissance', at the conference "The Jews in Italy: Their Contribution to the Development and
Spread of Jewish Heritage in Europe", Universities of Bologna and Florence, 2011.

[8] Chechik L., 'The actualization of the concept of the Crusades and its reflection in the
iconography of Venetian art of the Renaissance', at the interdisciplinary workshop and
conference 'The Crusades, Islam and Byzantium', The German Historical Institute, London,
2011.

[9] Chechik L., Friend-or-foe' in the 'diplomatic' paintings of Renaissance Venice', at First
Annual International conference 'Topical problems of Art History', Saint Petersburg State
University, 2010.

[10] Chechik L., 'The East as a setting for biblical events and its presentation in Venetian painting
at the end of the fifteenth century'. at the Annual Moscow Intercollegiate conference, 2009.

Turco in Renaissance Italy'[11]) have helped me to formulate a more narrowed-down topic that would make a good basic for a doctorate research project.

This research dissertation is dedicated to the problem of the perception, interpretation and representation of eastern architecture in the works produced by masters of the Venetian school of painting. The main reason behind the selection of such an at-first-glance narrow and marginal aspect, was the idea that architecture in particular, as a creative medium with a symbolic and structure-forming function, is able to accumulate within itself a system of spatial and temporal coordinates to become the basis for a synthesis, not only of the arts, but also of ontological concepts of time. Analysis of works by the Venetian masters through the lens of the architectural forms of the Orient allows us to examine a whole series of artistic phenomena pertinent to the period as a whole (such as the development of the system of perspective in painting), and simultaneously specific to Venice.

Without getting too deeply into the complexities of the chosen theme, the expansion of which will form the substance of the remainder of this discourse, it should be emphasised here that there is an indissoluble link in the figurative arts between emotional mood (and, in our case, the religious experience), intellectually perceived content and iconography, which goes beyond the boundaries of the storyline or subject. To a considerable degree, the philosophy of comprehension of the internal coordinates of images created by artists is directly connected with a spatial model that appears in a picture as the inevitable background or main 'hero'. Architecture specifically is an intrinsic part of such depicted space. The sources of the conception of the present dissertation text include not only theoretical works, but also practical observations from art history that have exerted an influence on its general composition. Research into the semantic and emotional peculiarities of the

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[11] Chechik L., 'The Image of the Gran Turco in Renaissance Italy', at the Annual International conference of young researchers 'Lomonosov', Moscow State University, 2009.

language of figurative art employed by Venetian Renaissance painters through the prism of specific imagery (Eastern architecture) is conditioned by the fact that it features not only in the work of selected artists, but with almost systematic consistency. And while the research into iconography through the prism of worldview permits conclusions to be made on the basis of the transformation of the typology of durable models regarding the change of general stylistic and, mainly, the ideological preferences of the period.

My studies continued to develop while moving between several different countries, including Great Britain, Russia and Italy. I have been awarded several research grants which have allowed me to work in such places as the Fondazione Cini and the National Library of Saint Mark's in Venice, the Warburg Institute in London, the University of Warwick in Coventry, the Russian State Library in Moscow, the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, and the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. As mentioned above, while having been a BA student at Moscow State University, an MA student at Warwick University and continuing work on my doctorate dissertation at Ca'Foscari University, I took part in numerous international conferences, sometimes as a contributor and sometimes as a listener. I was lucky enough to meet in person such prominent scholars as Hans Belting, Victor Stoichita, Deborah Howard, Peter Humphrey, Paul Hills and Patricia Fortini Brown, and be inspired by their bright ideas and distinct vision of Renaissance Venetian art. Consultations and advice that were crucial to the formation of my research skillset and investigation methods were kindly given me by the Warwick professors Lorenzo Pericolo, Louise Bourdua, Donal Cooper and Giorgio Tagliaferro. Their infinite interest in the subject and sincere concern about my work even after graduation was very much appreciated. One of my first visits to Venice as a young researcher has given me the chance to meet with Ca'Foscari professors Giuseppe Barbieri, Silvia Burini and my future tutor Xavier Barral-i-Altet, who have defined my decision to follow the PhD path with Ca'Foscari University on situ of the place of my research interest. Their wisdom, patience and

It is quite clear that, despite the abundance of literature concerning the presence of Eastern topoi fulfilling highly complex figurative functions in Venetian Renaissance paintings, the theme is far from exhausted. And so there exists a pressing need for research to continue, not only in summarising, but also in discovering new factual and interpretative information, including for such a 'peripheral' aspect as the representation of so-called 'Oriental' architecture in the paintings of Venetian artists.

Venice enjoyed firm contacts with the East for a uniquely extended length of time and to a uniquely all-encompassing degree. The reality of mercantile Venice implied the presence in her of the East, and her attachment to it. For an entire millennium of the history of European culture, Venice stands as a distinct image, formed in parallel with *il mito di Venezia* ('the myth of Venice'), whose origins are dated by scholars to the thirteenth century and its heyday to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among the main components of this state-cultivated myth (which would in turn come to form the raw material for the cult of the republic, determining its policies), the main ingredient was the concept of Venice as a connecting link, a bridge between East and West;[12] and later, the social

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[12] A unified concept of 'the East' appeared for the first time in late mediaeval European common usage in the XII c. in Fulcher of Chartres' History of the First Crusade. "With Fulcher, we also meet with the terms "East" and "West", hardly casually dropped phrases, where the "East" is not

stability of a mercantile-aristocratic republic, defending the rights and liberties of every citizen, as well as its own special, refined culture. The first aspect of this organically interfused triad was widely reflected in the third: the images of the East were reclaimed by Venetian culture (and wider still, by its way of life) on many planes. Even now, it is easy to pick out the Eastern traits in the appearance of the city itself (in its plan, facades, detailing, etc.). Eastern plastic reflections are presented just as frequently and diversely in painting, to the point that we may speak as much about topoi as about simple images. And it will be maintained with justification that the eastern connotations in Venetian culture are a sign of the phenomenon that was the Venetian mentality. The Venetian school of painting is renowned in the history of world art first and foremost for its special richness of coloristic discoveries; and though the other shared characteristics uniting various Venetian Renaissance masters are not so striking, one further aspect may be noted that distinguishes them from other painting schools. This is the unprecedentedly common use of iconographic motifs and personages connected with the East. At the same time we should bear in mind not only the diversity of Eastern imagery, represented in one way or another in Venetian culture, but also the diversity of this concept in a geographical sense, which contained primarily a sacral meaning for art (Biblical loci), followed by the secondary aspect of ethnographic exotica. Eastern architectural motifs take their own special place in this range of features.

In the present work we shall keep the focus on architectural motifs bearing Eastern traits, as well as on architectural decorations of Eastern loci in Venetian

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simply a land that must be conquered, but an object of love, ambition and dreams". (Cardini, F. *Yevropa i islam. Istoriya neponimaniya* ['Europe and Islam. A history of misunderstanding']. Saint Petersburg, 2007, p. 107. Henceforth - Cardini). However, it is likely that, in the context of interest to us, it cannot be dismissed that, in the words of Sh. Shukurov, "The Greeks, as the heirs of their wisdom, looking into the mirror of the East, were persuaded of the existence of another different world, an ideal and utterly unclouded version of their 'own'" (Shukurov, Sh. Mir Aleksandra. Istolkovaniye prostranstvennoi modeli ['The world of Alexander. Interpretation of a spatial model']. \\ Shukurov, Sh. Smysl, obraz, forma ['Meaning, image, form']. Almaty, 2008, p. 66).

Renaissance paintings, and it is with regret that it must be acknowledged that any determinacy is always limited by the broad panorama of phenomena, in our case the vivid reality of Venetian art, being compressed into a certain one-sided perspective. Though it is true that, without having examined in detail at least a partial spectrum of the questions touched upon, even if only in the marginalia, it is impossible to objectively evaluate the true character of the distinctive traits of Venetian painting.

The theme defined by this dissertation work comprises problems of both a particular and a general order. Primarily, if it is recalled that "the chain linking West and East" was, never the less, a Christian and European state, something which is revealed in stark relief in the archetypical juxtaposition of 'Us-Them'.[13]

Throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Europe positioned itself as a symbol of Christianity in opposition to Islam (in distinction to today's situation of a multi-confessional Europe). The expression of the fifteenth century humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II) in his *History of Europe*: "... Europeans or those who are referred to as Christians" – demonstrates the situation of things with full clarity. In this context, Islam (and the Islamic East) may be interpreted as a kind of means of self-identification for Europe. It was precisely in this contradistinction that the long and torturous process took place of forming a European-wide self-consciousness as a unified whole. At the same time, the sole state in Europe to have been Christian from the very outset, as Giovanni Botero

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[13] On this, see the paper "Chuzhoye: opyty preodoleniya. Ocherki iz istorii kul'tury Sredizemnomor'ya" ['The alien: experiences of overcoming. Sketches from the history of the culture of the Mediterranean']. Edited by R.M. Shukurov. Moscow, 1999; and the paper by Sh.M. Shukurov "Teologiya i geshtal't" ['Theology and the Gestalt'] in the collection Shukurov, Sh.M. Smysl, obraz, forma. Almaty, 2008, pp. 9–37. We note that the problem of the "alien in culture" had been set out in the French 'Annales' school of history as far back as the 1950s.

noted, was Venice,[14] and in the long term perspective the interrelations of the European consciousness with the Muslim East the Lagoon Republic also constitute a unique precedent for intellectual tolerance.

While it was only crusading that would fully open up the world of the 'other reality' for all other Western European Christians, for Venetian merchants this was a world they had known and become familiar with long before the Crusades, and the 'mode' for all things eastern had existed for many long years in Venice prior to spreading elsewhere.

"The attitude of Western Europe towards the Muslims combined deep fear with an equally strong fascination" – as one modern scholar put it. [15] "We, Europeans, still do not realise how much we owe to Islam in the field of culture".[16] Such statements, however, are only really applicable to the awareness of the 'general public'. Members of the European intelligentsia have long been interested in researching the relationship with the lands of the East, as witnessed in the development of the precursors to modern Arabistics, Turkology and Islamic studies from the sixteenth century onwards. Guillaume Postel, an erudite and polyglot, was the first to generate a revolution in the methodology of the European approach to Islam in his 1544 work *De orbis terrae concordia*. In Venice, Postel preached the necessity of merging the religions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity into one. In this way, a historical precedent was made for the objective understanding of Islam. Equally, the Venetians themselves (in the persons of Da Lezze, M. Sabellico, G. B. Egnacio, A. Cambrini, B. Ramberto, and N. Zen) had already done much in the sixteenth century to expand knowledge about the Islamic world. The last three

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[14] Ciccolini, L.S. Venetsiya na rubezhe XVI-XVII vv ['Venice on the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries']. // Ot srednikh vekov k Vozrozhdeniyu ['From the middle ages to the Renaissance']. Saint Petersburg, 2003, p. 93. Henceforth – Ciccolini.

[15] Watt, M.U. Vliyaniye islama na srednevekovuyu Yevropu ['The influence of Islam on mediaeval Europe']. Moscow – Saint Petersburg, 2008, p. 96. Henceforth – Watt.

[16] Ibid., p. 9.

hundred years have naturally seen a burgeoning interest in the matter and, reflecting this, in self-reflection on the examples of Eastern influence (in its widest possible sense, and not only in relation to the Islamic world). In cultural studies and art history, the concept of exoticism has been formed as has, in particular, that of Orientalism. The enlightened European consciousness, in the words of Edward W. Said, understands the East as "an intrinsic part of European material civilisation and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents this part culturally and even ideologically as a form of discourse with its corresponding institutions, lexicon, scholarly tradition, series of forms and doctrines..."[17]. In such a situation, Venice and, particularly, the specificity of her culture, possessed of perfectly obvious Eastern genetics revealed in the appearance of the city and, less blatantly, in its figurative art, could not fail to attract specialists' attention. The historiography of the problem thus presents an expansive collection of literature, replete with many a striking page, with a systematic scholarly tradition having now formed around its study in the West. Recent decades have brought to light a series of publications permitting us to acquaint ourselves in some detail with the contextual material of interest to our research. [18] With regard to the theme with which the present dissertation is concerned (the paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), however, most of these works only touch upon it tangentially, in brief overview, leaving it without special examination. And where there is closer examination, it is restricted to too limited a range of monuments, hindering any sense of the full picture.

Venice's links with the East have come under investigation many times in recent years, and with regard to many of their aspects. The last half-century has

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[17] Said, E.W. *Orientalizm, zapadniye konteptsii Vostoka* ['Orientalism, western concepts of the East']. Saint Petersburg, 2006, p. 8.
[18] Several collections of a general cultural scope are worthy of mention here, such as *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Edited by A. Pertusi. Florence, 1966, and *Venezia e l'Oriente vicino. Primo simposio internazionale su arte veneziana e arte islamica*. Edited by A. F. Grube. Venice, 1986.

seen attention focus ever more intensively on the presence of forms and artefacts of the East in her painting, and a systematic tradition for their study has come into being.

Nevertheless, attempts at a complex examination of the basic problems characterising the peculiarities of the realisation of Eastern decoration in Venetian Renaissance painting have yet to be undertaken, thus resulting in the relevance and academic originality of the topic. In this dissertation, existing scholarly conclusions will be elaborated and examination made of the typology and variety of Eastern architectural motifs in Venetian paintings of the period specified. Analysis of their diverse manifestations in the art will, on the one hand, enable a sufficiently comprehensive definition of the characteristics of creative methods employed by Venetian artists, and on the other, survey once more, through the lens of individual vision, the whole field of painters' predilections, rooted in the Venetian mentality, whose distinct features were formed in the most varied spheres.

When considering cultural and image-forming components of Venetian history, as well as when attempting to trace the sources, development and establishment of these images, it is necessary to bear in mind the historical aspects. This is needed first of all in order to ascertain the iconological basis of the painted works selected for analysis. The history of contacts and the denotation of the 'East' in the mental field of the Venetian, and the interrelations Venice enjoyed with the real and notional East, can be examined in an 'us-them' perspective. In the context of the declared theme, it is vital to trace the phases and variants of familiarity and contacts of Venetian intellectuals and artists with actual manifestations of Eastern culture, and particularly architecture, as well as to give attention to the state interpretation and acceptance of the varied East in various periods from the second half of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century as the basis for painting

programmes. It is precisely the immediate study of specific forms that allows us to reveal the specifics of the Venetian artistic mentality regarding the East.

The subject of research is the paintings by Venetian artists of the Renaissance period.

The object of research is the forms of Eastern architecture featured in paintings by Venetian artists of the Renaissance.

The aim of this dissertation is the comprehensive and integrated examination of architectural motifs in paintings by Venetian Renaissance artists that connote Eastern forms and images. In connection with this, the specific **tasks** of this work are:

– to determine the range of interests of Venetian painters concerning the East, and the role and place of architectural forms of the East in their paintings;

– to determine the range of works in which Eastern architectural motifs are present;

– to examine the principles and mechanisms of visual construction and deflection of information concerning Eastern architecture;

– to investigate the problem of the genesis of the Eastern architectural forms in Venetian painting;

– to attempt to reconstruct the creative thought of artists of the late 1400s and 1500s to reveal their underlying aims with regard to Eastern architectural motifs;

– to give an idea of the typology of Eastern architectural motifs in paintings by Venetian Renaissance artists;

– to investigate the varied functions of Eastern architecture for Venetian painters – decorative, compositional, and symbolic;

–   to supplement the existing notions of the connections between the artistic programmes of Venetian painting and various spheres of spiritual life of the period under consideration;

–   to analyse the factors behind and means of interpretation and perception of Eastern forms by Venetian Renaissance masters, and to examine the artistic techniques of their transformation by means of the surrounding reality;

–   to clarify the selective principles regulating the choice of Eastern architectural motifs, and the relations of these preferences with dominant aesthetic positions and ideological programmes;

–   to analyse Eastern forms in the works of Venetian masters in the context of the general tendencies of Venetian culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and

–   to demonstrate the differences in artistic interpretation of Eastern architectural motifs at various different developmental phases of Venetian Renaissance painting.

Research methods include the principles of complex and systemic analysis. It is precisely the systemic examination of the material that will have primary significance in this work. Additionally, the following will also be employed during the research process:

–   *the socio-historical method,* enabling investigation of the problem of social procurement and the ideological programmes of Venetian paintings in which Eastern architectural motifs are present; and to reveal the general and the particular in Venetian art;

–   *the iconological method*, relying on sources, enabling the reconstruction of the ideological and artistic programmes behind Venetian paintings;

–   *the iconographic method,* enabling the determination of a whole series of long-lasting figurative motifs in Venetian painting of the Renaissance period that are associated with the East;

- *the cultural historical method,* as an instrument with which to determine the characteristics of the political, social and religious context of Venetian culture;
- *the method of artistic and stylistic analysis,* used in the detailed study of the works of each Venetian master whose work is examined in this investigation; and

Research sources comprise:

- *pictorial materials*: painted works featuring Eastern forms created by the masters: Jacopo Bellini and his sons Giovanni and Gentile, Andrea Mantegna, Cima da Conegliano, Vittore Carpaccio, Titian, Paolo Veronese, Tintoretto and others, kept at the museums and churches of Venice, in the Louvre, the National Gallery in London, the Uffizi in Florence, the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, the National Gallery in Washington, the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, and the Museum of the History of Art in Vienna.

- *documental materials*, including those found in the care of the Fondazione Cini and the library of St Mark's.

- *textual materials,* chronologically coinciding with our selected period (Marcantonio Michiel, Giorgio Vasari, Giovanni Botero, Francesco Sansovino, and Paolo Paruta).

Extent of previous research

In its geographical aspect, the concept of the East has taken on various different semantic shades and symbolical meanings in different historical periods, beginning with the Ancient Greeks in their writings about the warlike and mysterious Persians and closing with the Cold War of the last century, in the context of which the Socialist bloc was associated precisely with this concept.

For the West, the East has always been something mysterious and incomprehensible, and thus dangerous, exotic – and attractive. In the analytical and descriptive literature, the 'East' has been interpreted in the context of the 'alien' and the 'other'. However, all ages have seen those who sought to deeply penetrate not only the territory of the 'East', but also the numerous, and occasionally contradictory perceptions of it. The prehistory of the problem of Venice's relations with the East dates to an earlier period than that in which we are interested here, and is discussed in Alviso Zorzi's book *Venice and the East: art, commerce and society in the age of Marco Polo*.[19] The art scholar Rosamond Mack, who lived for an extended period in the Middle East, published a book in 2002 entitled *From Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic trade and Italian art, 1300-1600*, one chapter of which examines the Islamic artefacts present on Italian territory that unwittingly found themselves depicted in Renaissance artworks. The information of most interest to our theme can be drawn from works that are not specifically connected with Venice's relations with the East. The history of the intentions and execution of the frescoes in the Palace of the Doges was given an illuminating overview by Walter Walters in the album *History and politics in the pictures of the Palace of the Doges: aspects of self-celebration of the Venetian Republic in the sixteenth century*.

The most recent summary of the various approaches and current theories on the complex interrelations of West and East is that of James Harper in his introduction to the essay compilation *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750, Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, from which the main ideas of such authoritative specialists as Robert Schwoebel, Edward Said, Bernard Lewis and Fernand Braudel may be garnered to set the basic parameters for subsequent consideration in this field. In particular, the work of the latter served as the basis for development of the concept of the 'Global Village' which, in the opinion of

[19] Zorzi, A. *Venezia e l'Oriente: Arte, commercio, civilta al tempo di Marco Polo*. Milan, 1989.

Harper, has influenced many research works of recent years which aim to trace the mutual exchange of ideas, visual models, habits and knowledge. This all came about as a result of the general desire of researchers at the turn of the millennium to survey world culture in a wider context of mutual understanding and mutual enrichment. Right at the start of the new millennium, a large number of such works were published, among which we may note the following: Mack, Rosamond, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Brotton, Jerry, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jardine, Lisa, and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East & West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); *Re-orienting the Renaissance: cultural exchanges with the East,* edited by Gerald MacLean, foreword by William Dalrymple (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, edited by Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini (London: the Warburg Institute, 1999).

The attention paid by the West to its Eastern neighbour was conditioned, among other things, by its own striving for self-identification. One of the most commonly cited examples of such an attempt at self-definition is that of medieval and Renaissance Venice. Thanks to her geographical position and historical circumstances, relations with the East were always a pressing matter here. This was expressed not only in the political and economic development of the city, but also in the specific traits of its visual and material culture. These oriental genes expressed themselves in the appearance of Venice and, less obviously, in her figurative art, which has inevitably attracted specialists. The historiography of the issue comprises an expansive collection of literature. It therefore behoves us to explicitly state the circumstance that any attempt to provide an overview cannot pretend to be exhaustive.

Venice's links with the East have been researched in the very widest context. Examination has been given to the city's commercial, military, and

political relations, as well as its links with specific Eastern countries (the Ottomans, Arabs, Mamelukes and Persians, etc.). The histories of Venetian travellers and pilgrims, and her diplomatic missions and embassies in the East and vice versa have also been traced.

First of all we may turn our attention toward several compilations that have been of key importance for our research. They were published at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s by the Cini Foundation, which has a special centre for the study of relations between Venice and the East: *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, edited by A. Pertusi (Florence, 1973) (the collection includes papers examining the contacts with the Levant, in terms of the understanding of the term current in the fifteenth century, i.e. the entire eastern Mediterranean, including Dalmatia and Greece), and *Venezia el'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*, also edited by A. Pertusi (Florence, 1966). Another important compilation is the two volume *Venezia centro di mediazione fra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV-XVI)*, edited by H.-G. Beck, M. Manoussacas, and A. Pertusi (Florence, 1977). All three books were published to follow up on academic conferences and cover the most varied aspects of the problem, together creating a unified picture of the diversity of approaches, questions and problems.

The key role played by substantial exhibition projects on topics of interest to us (though regrettably few in number) should also be emphasised, not only within the framework of exposition concepts, propagandistic and educational activities, but also, primarily, of preparatory research work. The scientific catalogues that accompany such exhibitions are becoming a real game changer in the field, reflecting the contemporary state of knowledge of a certain phase of the history of art and its specifics. As such, a large exhibition of portraits of sultans was held in Istanbul in 2000, for which a catalogue was prepared which featured

essays by Julian Raby, Jürg Meyer zur Capellen and Serpil Bağci on the portraits of Ottoman sultans painted by European masters.[20]

A general panorama of the problem was presented by the large-scale exhibition that took place in 2006 in Paris's Institute of the Arabic World, "Venice and the East: 828-1797",[21] the concept of which had been formulated by prominent specialists on the basis of a wide range of materials. However, like most exhibition projects, it was incapable of capturing all the details of the 'picture', without which it is impossible to evaluate the bases of the character and peculiarities of Venetian culture. Still, the catalogue for this exhibition has a lengthy bibliography at the end, for which its compilers deserve great praise.

Up until recently, the steadfast interest of researchers in the Venice-East problem has been drawn to decorative and applied art and architecture. The goal of the symposium "*Venezia el' Oriente vicino. Primo simposio internazionale su arte veneziana e arte islamica*", held in Venice in 1986, was to summarise the accumulated knowledge and propose new, more productive, avenues and methods of research into Venetian-Islamic relations. We might make particular mention of the paper by Lorenzoni, in which the author traces the development of notions of the "Eastern" in the appearance of the city itself from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, i.e. from the works of Selvatico and Ruskin, coming to the conclusion

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[20] Raby, J. Opening gambits // The Sultan's Portrait. Picturing the house of Osman. Edited by F. Çağman. Istanbul, 2000. pp. 64-80. Meyer zur Capellen, J. and Bağci, S. The age of magnificence // The Sultan's Portrait. Picturing the house of Osman. Edited by F. Çağman. Istanbul, 2000, pp. 96-109.

[21] In this case, the fundamental catalogue was published in French and edited by the head of the Islamic art section at the New York Metropolitan Museum, Stefano Carboni. The exhibition then moved to the Palace of the Doges (the catalogue being translated into Italian and renamed "Venice and Islam: 828-1797"). Along with introductory historical notes based on archive documents, it included sections by Jean-Claude Hocquet on Venice and the Turkish world, Giovanni Curatola on Venice and the Islamic world, Julian Raby on the art of diplomacy in relations between the Serenissima and the Sublime Porte, as well as separate sections on applied art and architecture, and a brief overview of the 'orientalist' painting of Venice in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries by Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli. For a comprehensive treatment of Venice and the Islamic World, with extensive bibliography, see Carboni 2007.

that all previous research had been built solely on formal documentation and comparison of the decorative elements of Venetian buildings, including the Basilica of Saint Mark, while these parts should also be analysed from a constructive point of view. Having presented such an analysis (rather briefly, we note), he is persuaded that Venetian architecture shares with its Islamic counterpart a rejection of tectonism, which, in turn, may derive from the shared late classical past.[22]

Almost a quarter of a century later, Deborah Howard returned to the issue of the Eastern aspect in Venetian imagery, covering the period from 1100 to 1500 in her book *Venice and the East. The impact of Islamic world on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500*. The substance and competence of Howard's research deserves note, particularly the fruitfulness of her method. Unlike a great many other works employing the comparative method, the author sets herself the task of tracing the means by which the migration of forms and circulation of ideas were effected. She calls attention to the Venetians' varying degree of awareness of Islamic architectural forms, some having seen then in situ, and others having learnt of them from the accounts of eyewitnesses. Connecting this up with the scholarly conclusions of specialists on the psychology of human perception and memory, she differentiates between visual and written sources, as well as oral accounts, which may have been of some influence, being in her opinion a very widespread phenomenon.

Having taken on such an intricate labour, a researcher is bound to encounter a mass of problematic points, which each author must resolve by themselves. Realising this, Howard articulately and persuasively argues in favour of her own opinions on disputed matters, making clear what precisely it is that she is going to discusses and from what point of view. This does not exclude the

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[22] p.105

possibility of our differing on some of the author's postulates or widening the field of interpretation on having familiarised ourselves with her work.

Howard investigates the Venetian sense of space in order to uncover a new level of the urban environment and the Eastern impression it bears. Under the term 'Eastern', we understand here the Biblical world, namely Egypt, Syria and Palestine. Examining Venice as a pilgrimage destination in its own right, located on the route to the main holy places, Howard finds the traits of Jerusalem and Alexandria in the city. Limiting her concept of the East to the Biblical world alone, pre-1453 Constantinople is left outside the field of comparison as a still Christian city, though it also features as a Muslim one within the time frame set by the book (up to 1500), with all its 'ensuing' characteristics. Additionally, Venice strove, on the fall of the Byzantine Empire, to become its successor, absorbing all the traits of Constantinople. In the foreword to her book, Howard spells out this limitation, pointing to that aspect as one already well-studied. However, the thought comes to mind that it would be interesting to carry out a similar comparison in the context of this book too, as the limitation of scope to the Biblical world corresponds to the chapters dedicated to Saint Mark and the city of pilgrims, while the remaining chapters discuss the Arab cities. That is, the East becomes a synonym of the Arabic world.

Howard's work, bringing together the diverse contexts of life in Venice, namely the commercial, diplomatic, pilgrim, religious and touristic, constitutes a fundamental piece of research. A unified image emerges from these varied contexts of the unique urban environment of the city with its Eastern 'savour'. Discussing the background and conditions of Venetian-Eastern intercourse, Howard concentrates on the influences exerted by these connections on architecture and the Venetian environment. She traces the emergence of separate architectural elements and motifs, and town planning structures that imitate the sacral schemes of Biblical sites. However, making an analogy on the last point

with other European cities where the imitation of Jerusalem as the most sacred of earthly sites was very widespread in the Middle Ages, particularly after the crusades, Howard gives no examples of the urban structure of other mediaeval European towns which, if such a comparison were to be made, would reveal similar schemes. Apart from that, while remaining the key hub for sending pilgrims off to the Holy Land, Venice was still not the only Western city to trade with the East. Pisa, Genoa and Amalfi were all still active, and fully capable of absorbing Eastern flair themselves, so it would be interesting to at least mention how each of these cities came to reflect this area of activity of their citizens.

Having concentrated on travellers' accounts as the chief means of transmitting information, on the process of *translatio* itself, and taking a rather broad corpus of Venetian monuments for analysis, Howard does not succeed in fully penetrating into the artistic consciousness of artists and architects to answer the question as to why this should have been the case...

Having undertaken a truly heroic action – the first attempt to describe in detail the unique Venetian urban setting and its character from the point of view of Eastern reminiscences – Deborah Howard encompasses the widest range of materials, and although she has been widely praised, a vast field still remains beyond the scope of her work for future researchers.

The Eastern traits that have been noticed in the Venetian urban environment by historians of architecture could not have failed to impact the creative consciousness of those painters who absorbed the impressions of its marketplaces rich in Eastern goods and the Eastern character types of the merchants and diplomats present in the city and which they had seen on their own rare journeys.

In the latter case, we must refer first of all to Gentile Bellini's time at the court of Mehmet Fatih. Unique in nature, this first experience of a European artist

at the court of an Eastern monarch has many times piqued the interest of scholars, and several papers were published in the early twentieth century concerning the discovery of portraits of Turkish rulers that had clearly been painted by the hand of a Western master. Recalling how Vasari had written back in the sixteenth century of Bellini's time at the court of Mehmet II, art historians linked these discoveries with the work of this member of the renowned artistic family.[23] In 1985, the first monograph by Jürg Meyer zur Capellen was published on this artist, who had previously been overshadowed by his brother Giovanni. The chapter "Der Orient" detailing his residence in Istanbul takes its deserved place here. Immediately after this, the book *Gentile Bellini et Sultan Mohammed II* by L. Thuasne was released in Paris in 1988. An attempt to summarise many years of research into the work of the Venetian artist at the Ottoman sultan's court is made in the catalogue of the exhibition "Gentile Bellini and the East",[24] published to mark the eponymous exhibition of 2005-2006 at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and the National Gallery in London. This too, however, fails to uncover the full picture of the artist's time in Istanbul, or, most importantly, indicate the way in which this visit had an impact on his subsequent work or on those close to him in Venice. Nevertheless, the problem has recently grown a monographic aspect and taken on a more intricate context. This includes the formation of a certain Eastern identity and of stereotypical external characteristics and notions of the Eastern person in the eyes of Europeans. In this perspective, the most interesting work is the book by Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: print, the city, and early modern identity* (University of Toronto Press, 2005). The issue of the accuracy of the likeness of

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[23] Martin, J.R. 'A portrait by Gentile Bellini found in Constantinople', *The Burlington Magazine,* Vol. IX, June, 1906. Pp. 148-150; Gray, B. 'Two portraits of Mehmet II', *The Burlington Magazine*. July, 1932. Vol. LXI. Pp. 4-6; Loftus Hare, W. 'The portrait of Muhammad II by Gentile Bellini', *Apollo*. Vol. 20, No. 115, July, 1934. Pp. 249 – 250; Sakisian, A. 'The portraits of Mehmet II', *The Burlington Magazine*. Vol. 69, April, 1939. Pp. 172-181; Babinger, F. 'Un ritratto ignorato di Maometto II. Opera di Gentile Bellini', *Arte Veneta* XV. 1961. Pp. 25-32.
[24] Campbell C., Chong A., *Gentile Bellini and the East*, exhib. cat., National Gallery, London, 2005.

Mehmet II's portrait was raised by Elizabeth Rodini in her article "The sultan's true face? Gentile Bellini, Mehmet II, and the values of verisimilitude", developing the idea of mimesis or the "constructor of a defined identity".

Gentile's residence in Constantinople and his first hand sketches of what he saw there had an undoubted impact on the development of the 'Oriental mode' and Eastern stereotypes in figurative art. And it was not only the image of the Eastern person that then took shape. The never before seen transformation of virtually all Biblical heroes into Eastern personages occurred. Artists more and more frequently employed Eastern details in their compositions when shaping the spatial setting, architectural background and forestage for their subject's action. And it was here that the unique fusion of genuine realia and artistic fantasy displayed itself to the full. That which Deborah Howard had said of the urban environment of Venice itself was now revealing itself in its own peculiar way in art too.

It is quite clear that, despite the abundance of literature on the presence of Eastern topoi, with their complex formal functions, in Venetian Renaissance art of the period of the republic's heyday and gradual loss of power, the problematics of the issue have not yet been exhausted. There is a pressing need to continue research,[25] not only in summarising, but also in discovering new factual and interpretational information. To give an example, one of the most frequent aspects is the representation of 'Eastern' architecture in Venetian artists' paintings. An affinity for Eastern architectural themes is displayed not so much in the frequency and verisimilitude of the reproduction of architecture on canvas, as in a whole range of new features, meanings and formal functions. The architectural motifs in Renaissance painting reflected the ideal concepts of Renaissance artists and architects regarding the architecture of the ancients and sacral architectural forms, including, of course, those present in the East.

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[25] It is worth recalling that the overwhelming majority of these on Venetian painting, the appearance of a new hero, for example, is not mentioned at all.

This theme was of virtually no interest to Colin Eisler, author of a full monographic work of 1988 on Jacopo Bellini, an experimenter in the field of depicted architecture and, moreover, the virtual founder of the Venetian Renaissance school. And yet Julian Raby had established in 1982 in his book *Venice, Durer and the Oriental Mode*,[26] that the Oriental mode in Venetian art was first put consciously on display in the work of Jacopo Bellini, and not that of his son Gentile, as is customarily believed. However, this theory did not find any subsequent development. The author of a single publication fully dedicated to the Oriental mode in Venetian painting, Raby not only examines those Venetian artists in whose work Eastern motifs are found, but also traces their influence on Albrecht Durer. Julian Raby was also the first to formulate the concept of the artistic 'Oriental mode' in Venice, linked with the heyday of the cult of the early Christian martyrs that flourished in the eastern territories. As a pioneer, he only analyses the information lying on the surface, classifying material by the periods in which a given Eastern tendency (the Ottoman, Mamelukes, etc.) was predominant. It is hard to agree completely with the author's opinion that the sole sources of inspiration for most Venetian masters were the residence of Gentile Bellini at the court of Mehmet Fatih and the painting *Reception of an Ambassador* at the Louvre. Patricia Fortini Brown is probably more correct in considering that, while the *Reception* had served as an orientation mark for artists working in the Guild of the Silk-Weavers (Mansueti, Cima da Conegliano and Bellini), whose works represented the full-blown arrival of orientalism in Venetian painting[27] on a par with those of Vittore Carpaccio, there were far more other sources available too. Brown traces various Eastern topographic elements and comes to the conclusion that "fantasy was made factual by the insertion of authentic elements into a larger

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[26] Raby, J. *Venice, Durer, and the Oriental Mode*. The Huns Huth Memorial Studies I. Islamic Art Publications. London – New Jersey, 1982.
[27] P. 69

exotic setting that was defined as much by its 'nonwesternness' as by its authentic 'easternness'".

Concerning the Eastern architectural motifs in Carpaccio, P. Zampetti points out that 'the Eastern question' was born simultaneously with the very appearance of the artist in the world, in so far as he was a native of Dalmatia or Istria.[28] And although this opinion has been overturned or had doubt cast upon it many times, of interest for our purposes is the simple fact of the appearance of such a work as a sign of the relevance of the question of Eastern motifs in the work of Carpaccio. David Marshall characterises Carpaccio as the "innocent eye". He suggests that the artist merely mixed motifs from different sources out of naivety. Patricia Brown counters this with the assessment of Gian Lorenzo Mellini, who characterised Carpaccio's artistic approach "as a visionary alternative, in which existing (things) are extended, integrated, and surpassed"[29] and, after a painstaking analysis of his paintings, comes to the conclusion that Carpaccio well understood the role of the artists as a creator of "visionary alternatives", as opposed to the stage-sets of Mansueti or the montages of Gentile Bellini. Right at the end of the twentieth century, Augusto Gentili returned once more to Carpaccio's East in his book *The history of Carpaccio: Venice, the Turks, and the Jews*.[30]

A special category of investigations is that formed by the works of Russian authors on Venetian art – B.R. Vipper, I.I. Tuchkov, V.N. Golovin, S.S. Bodrov, and Ye. Yailenko. However, the problem we have set ourselves does not figure in the focus of their interests. An exception is Smirnova's monograph on Carpaccio,[31] in which the Eastern connotations in his compositions are accentuated, as well as

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[28] Zampetti, P., 'L'Oriente del Carpaccio', in *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. A. Pertusi. Florence, 1966.
[29] *La pinacoteca di Brera*. Edited by G. Nannicini, Milan, 1970, pp.102-3.
[30] Gentili, A. *Le storie di Carpaccio: Venezia, I Turchi, gli Ebrei*. Venice, 1996.
[31] Smirnova, I.A. *Vittore Carpaccio*. Moscow, 1982.

M.I. Sviderskaya's paper "The 'three philosophies' of Giorgione: subject and image".[32]

__The structure of the dissertation__ is made up of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography.

In the first chapter of the present work we considered it possible to give an overview of the key tendencies in the Venetian Republic's links with the lands of the East, given that historical and political events and social factors naturally played a decisive role in the development of cultural contacts. And although the degree of determinism and dependence on the above-listed factors is rather high in the formation of Venetian culture, I had no intention in the following chapters of the present work, concerning religious painting (chapter II) and various aspects of the reflection of Eastern motifs and forms outside the sacral sphere (chapter III), to define artworks merely as the product and direct reflection of economic, social or political circumstances. However, these will inevitably have to be taken into account during the analysis of the works themselves (in specific terms where the presence of historical materials allows, and with regard to probabilities where the facts have yet to be ascertained).

The fundamental theses to be defended:

- In Venetian Renaissance painting, the forms of the East are presented so frequently and in such diversity that we may speak of the phenomenon as one of topoi;
- Eastern connotations in Venetian Renaissance painting were a sign of the phenomenon of the Venetian mentality, which was bound to find reflection in the depiction of the architectural environment on the canvases of the Venetian masters;

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[32] http://sviderskaya.philos.msu.ru/index.php?id=461

– the forms of the East 'inhabit' Venetian paintings at different phases of the period in question. When it comes to the depiction of architectural decoration, however, it is precisely here that the confirmation of Renaissance ideas may most easily be discerned, and even in the depiction of Eastern forms, including those of Biblical loci where classicising forms are to be found, taking on more and more of a classical appearance as Renaissance art developed;

– in their programmes, including architectural motifs, Venetian artists responded to current dramatic contexts of connections with their Eastern neighbours, as historical and political events combined with the social background to play a decisive role in the development of Venice's contacts with the East. And even though artistic works do not constitute a direct reflection of economic, political or social circumstances, these factors should be taken into account in the analysis of such works (in specific terms where the presence of historical materials allows it, and with regard to probabilities where facts have yet to be ascertained). Many historical events were apt to find immediate reflection in iconography; though, in the case of architectural decoration, artists lacking first-hand acquaintance with real structures included fantastic motifs into their depiction of the buildings of the Eastern world;

– the concept of the East, primarily associated in the overwhelming majority of monuments with the stage for the actions of Sacred History and the acts of the early Christians, initiates its perception as the entourage of metahistory. That said, it is interesting to examine this phenomenon in the context of changing attitudes towards historical consciousness, and the interpretation of the concept of time during the Renaissance period when the latter is seen as a transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era;

– In so far as architectural decorations are one of the most important conditions for the formation of artistic space, the characteristic features of

style-formation are encountered in the transformation of the appearance of architecture and its forms, in our case – the evolution from the Early (with its pronounced interest in the Byzantine and Oriental in general, including the fantastical) to the High Renaissance.

The theoretical significance of this work consists in the fact that:

– the dissertation brings the issues raised in it up to date;
– it supplements and expands knowledge of the development of Venetian painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries;
– the conclusions and syntheses formulated as a result of this research may serve as the basis for the further study of Italian Renaissance art.

The practical significance of this dissertation consists in the fact that the research materials and conclusions may be used:

– in the educational process: in composing lecture courses and textbooks, as well as seminar activities on Renaissance art and history, and the theory of Italian figurative art, in institutions of higher and middle education covering the humanities;
– in the scientific and practical work of arts scholars, in the process of further investigation into the creative legacy of Italian artists; and
– in scientific and practical work in the humanities, researching international and inter-confessional links.

Chapter I.
Venice and the East: The Appropriation of the Other.
A History of Contacts and the Signification of the "East"

Venice's de facto "betrothal" to the sea took place long before Pope Alexander III symbolically married the Doge Sebastiano Giani to the marine element, and it was precisely this element that became the space and condition to which the republic, throughout her entire existence, owed not only the natural neighbourhood she acquired with Byzantium and adjacent Muslim states in the Mediterranean, but also the constant rivalry with them that this brought. At the same time, the exclusive ability of *la Serenissima* to display loyalty in relation to the "other" should be noted; something which was praised early on by the thinkers of the Renaissance.[33] The latter also welcomed her skill in ruling "by the art of confrontation", manoeuvring through complex political circumstances, - a quality for which Venice would be hailed in the twentieth century as an unsurpassed virtuoso in political balancing.[34]

Neither of these "abilities" was formed overnight, but both were built up during the whole series of circumstances that accompanied the city state's history. It was precisely thanks to these qualities that the Venetian Republic, which had virtually no inland possessions prior to the fifteenth century, built a flourishing economy and played a leading role in world politics, economy, and then culture too, while preserving its independence (*venetiana libertas*) for over a millennium.

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[33] The political writer and learned abbot Giovanni Botero thus underlines in his "Narratives on the Venetian Republic" that Venice had always graciously accepted refugees. (See the essay by L.S. Ciccolini, "Venetsiya na rubezhe XVI-XVII v.v." in the book "Ot srednikh vekov k Vosrozhdeniyu", Saint Petersburg, 2003, p. 84)

[34] Varburg, A., Velikoye pereseleniye obrazov, Saint Petersburg, 2008.

Having agreed with the opinion that "the East is an intrinsic part of European *material* civilisation",[35] it should be acknowledged that this statement was most applicable of all to mediaeval and Renaissance Venice (after Spain, naturally). It is perfectly clear that its culture too was formed in intimate dependence on "Eastern" influences.

The Venetians' partners, trade allies and political opponents were Egypt, Syria and the Arabian caliphates, Tunis, Morocco, Trebizond, Persia, and Ottoman Turkey. Pride of place should go, however, to the blood ties shared with Byzantium, to which the island state was subject for several centuries. The inhabitants of the lagoon archipelago first felt themselves to be a single people – the Venetians – while defending their rights in the context of the conflict waged between two empires (the Carolingian and Byzantine) in the early ninth century. It was at this point in the formation of a national self-awareness that the relics of Saint Mark were brought from Arabic Alexandria[36] and the first basilica built in Venice in honour of the Evangelist, thereafter the city's patron.[37] And here the Saint's remains would repose, lending the republic a special ideological status as one of the centres of the Christian world, making the city itself a place of pilgrimage. By the early 1100s, its basilica cum mausoleum had already taken on much of that majestic appearance still familiar to us today. The largest ecclesiastical construction in contemporary mediaeval Europe (remodelled in the late eleventh century in the likeness of Constantinople's Church of the Holy Apostles,[38] with an interior finished with marble and mosaics to rival Hagia Sophia) and the first among several great future temples, the Basilica of Saint

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[35] Said, E.W. *Orientalizm. Zapadniye kontseptsii Vostoka*. Saint Petersbur, 2006, p. 8.

[36] This event, of such significance for Venice, took place in 828.

[37] Worth mentioning here is the resolution of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 (summoned to tackle the iconoclasts) on the necessity of dedicating new churches to the relics of saints. The transferal of the remains of the Evangelist signalled the possibility of independence from Constantinople.

[38] Howard, D. 'Venice, the Bazaar of Europe', in Campbell, C. and Chong, A. (ed.) *Bellini and the East*. London, 2005. pp. 16, 49.

Mark or "Capella of the Doges", as it was known in Venice (San Pietro di Castello served as the cathedral church from 1451 to 1807) became a visible embodiment and symbol of the wealth and might of Venice. (For our purposes it must be emphasised how the art and knowledge of the masters of Eastern civilisation were employed in this task, given that it fell to Constantinopolitan artisans to build and decorate the shrine to the city's heavenly guardian). And so the city's distinct image took shape, bearing many traits of the foreign "East". One of the problems of the present investigation is that of how to interpret, for example, the depiction of the cathedral in the cycles of Venetian artists. For this edifice's architecture, so Byzantine in spirit, came to be adopted by the Venetians as their own, and though it may have been associated with the concept of the East, this was no longer an East that was so foreign. The architectural dress of dozens of Venetian buildings of the late middle ages, both lost (albeit recorded by artists) and still standing today, religious and secular, bears such an obvious imprint of Byzantine influence that it has been termed *veneto-bizantina* in the specialised literature. In the tenth century, by a special edict that would go down in history as the Chrysobull or "Golden Bull", Byzantium granted special customs privileges to Venetian ships sailing into the *aquatorium* of the capital, and permitted Venetian merchants to found trading factories in other cities of the Eastern Roman Empire. In the late eleventh century, a new Golden Bull would free Venetian traders from all taxes and duties anywhere in the Empire, save for the islands of Crete and Corfu, followed by another in the middle part of the following century which extended their privileges to the maximum.[39] This Chrysobull of 1319 recognising the extraterritorial nature of the

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[39] "At the time, all these concessions seemed fit payment for the Venetians' aid in the emperor's wars with the Normans" (Davis, N. *Istoriya Yevropy*. Moscow, 2005, p. 250). It is worth recalling here the runic inscription on one of the lions kept in Saint Mark's, brought here by the Venetians from Athens.

factories "as the property of the Venetian seigniory, subject to the administrative and judicial system and protection of the Republic" .[40]

The Venetian colony in Constantinople, governed by a special commercial and diplomatic representative, the *podesta* or *bailo*,[41] was assigned certain local neighbourhoods of the capital. And Venice became the most active intermediary for Byzantium's international trade. Of course, deprived by the rulers of the Empire of a considerable share of their profits, it was difficult for Venice to count on the historical alliance of their two countries remaining untroubled forever,[42] yet nevertheless, the Republic continued to prosper from the relationship despite numerous conflicts and obstacles raised by Constantinople. And this profit was not only "material". Thus, having raided Corfu when the latter was still Byzantine, Venetian ships brought the relics of Saint Donatus to their home city. These were placed in the Basilica of Saint Mary on the island of Murano, which was immediately rechristened Santa Maria e Donato.

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[40] Karpov, S. 'Administrativnoye ustroistvo i status venetsianskoi faktorii v Trapezunde', in *Vizantiiskii vremennik*. p. 5. http://vremennik.biz/sites/all/files/63_01

[41] Bailo, title of the Venetian ambassador to Constantinople, – Baiulus Venetorum in Constantinopoli et in toto imperio Romano, or baiulus Constantinopolis ac totius imperii Romanie ("Venetian legate in Constantinople and in all the Roman Empire). The position appeared in the eleventh century. Unlike other ambassadors, appointed by the Senate, the candidature for the bailo was confirmed by the Grand Council (with no less than 1,200 members being required to participate in the election).
S.P. Karpov elaborates further: "The term derives from the Mediaeval Latin baillivius or balius and signified the deputy of a ruler or the administrator of a given territory granted discretionary powers" // Op. cit., p. 8.

[42] One contemporary researcher of Venice's maritime affairs states that "From time to time, serious military conflicts occurred between the maritime republics and Byzantium and the Empire of Trebizond". (Karpov, S.P. Putyami srednevekovykh morekhodov. Moscow, 1994, p. 33). And it would be absolutely incorrect to reproach Venice herself for foul play in this respect. By way of example, in 1392, Emperor Manuel led the Turkish fleet of Sultan Bayazid against Sinope, prompting the Venetians to believe quite reasonably that this was actually a Greek expedition, supported by the Turks, against the Venetian colonies in the South Dardanelles Archipelago. However, once the Emperor fell out with the Sultan, he was forced to seek friendly aid from the West. Venice provided the hungry citizens of Constantinople, besieged by the Turks, with grain. It is quite clear that had the previous events not taken place, the help given would have been more generous.

While remaining nominally subject to the Eastern Roman Empire, Venice consistently and purposefully built up its own colonial empire, first in the eastern Mediterranean (up until the mid-1200s), and then moving further into the East, penetrating the Black Sea. Venice's unstable relations and successful competition with Byzantium were decisive factors behind the Empire's gradual weakening, decline, and subsequent collapse under the pressure of that force which would later become such a serious threat to the "Ruler of the Seas" herself. The most striking episode in this tragic confrontation has to be that of the Venetian fleet and soldiers' participation and leading role in the Fourth Crusade when, on the initiative of the Venetians, Constantinople was taken by force (1204) and its inhabitants slaughtered and plundered. This resulted in Venice receiving "one fourth and one eighth" of its former territories and being filled with treasures and holy relics, as well as the adding of the famous equine *quadriga* to the facade of Saint Mark's.[43]

By the time Byzantium managed to resurrect the Empire in 1261,[44] Venice had not only come into possession of all the key positions in the seas of the Levant, but also exercised a firm control over the straits providing access to the Black Sea,[45] leading in several decades to the intensive colonisation of its shores. Furthermore, to add to the ports and islands bringing immense trading wealth,

[43] In the prelude to the formation of the Latin Empire (a later name) – the slaughter of the Italian colony in Constantinople of 1171 on the immediate orders of the emperor. This was when the Venetian Ambassador Enrico Dandolo was taken captive and blinded. Dandalo would subsequently, as Doge, lead the Fourth Crusade. It should be remembered that such a flare up of xenophobia was not an isolated case. In 1183, the Italian community was totally annihilated. On the orders of Manuel I Comnenus, all Venetian merchants found on imperial territory (10,000 were in the capital alone) were to be arrested. This order had been given in response to the disorders that had broken out on the event of the Venetians' attack on the Genoese quarter of Constantinople; this incident had, however, been provoked by the Byzantines themselves, incensed by the prosperity of the Venetians.
[44] Michael Palaeologus, ruler of the Nicaean Empire, took advantage of the momentary absence of the Venetian fleet in Constantinople to bring the City under his sceptre. At that, he ordered the Venetian quarter to be burnt and the detained Venetians blinded.
[45] Karpov, p.6.

Venice acquired Crete, considered to be the most vital stopping point for ships sailing to Egypt and the countries of the Levant.

In the meantime, during the peaceful years which saw Venice's wealth and glory multiply, Byzantium became her ally and commercial partner. It was natural, therefore, that the Byzantines first approached Venice, and then Rome, with appeals for help against the Turks in the fateful early 1450s.[46] Though their hands were tied by a peace treaty with the Sultan, the senate nevertheless sent word urging the Pope to take strong action against the Turks, and once Constantinople fell in 1453, Pope Nicholas V received the news in a letter from the Venetian Senate (apart from its native inhabitants, the Imperial capital had also numbered Roman Catholics among its defenders - a united force of Genoans and Venetians).

The consternation, despair and horror that gripped Christian Europe forced many to look for the reasons behind this "end of the world" that had taken place, going beyond that of divine punishment to give a place for destructive human will. The Milanese ruler Francesco Sforza summed it up as follows: "In all these misfortunes, the Venetians are the guilty party and we trust that God will punish them for it". Such a verdict was not quite fair, in so far as the accused had been among the few Europeans who had actually taken part in the defence of the Byzantine capital.

With the fall of Constantinople, the interrelations of the Venetians with the Greek world were not broken off completely. One of the first Orthodox churches in Italy (Saint George's) had long been in operation in Venice. It should be recalled that the Republic had accepted up to four thousand refugees from Constantinople

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[46] In 1452, the Venetian Senate sanctioned the shipment of gunpowder and cuirasses to Constantinople in response to the request of Emperor Constantine II, conveyed by the Byzantine Ambassador Andronicus Vriennius Leonartis. And when it was proposed in the Senate that Constantinople be left to its fate, this proposal was defeated.

to add to its cosmopolitan citizenry and make a hefty contribution to its cultural development. It was in Venice that the greatest quantity of Byzantine relics was concentrated. But Venice had become a hotbed for the worldwide spread of Greek culture in its own right.[47] And the most famous "refugee", Cardinal Bessarion, named the city in which he had found sanctuary a second Byzantium.[48]

While Byzantium and Venice had been linked by a shared Christian faith (not riven by sectarianism until the eleventh century), the basis for relations with the Muslim countries of the Levant and Maghreb was that of diplomacy, occasionally cynical, due to Venice's simultaneous obligation to intercede in word and deed as protector of Christianity. Europe took its concept of "the Saracens" from Byzantium.[49] Not by hearsay, but in putting its own existence at risk, standing many times on the shifting "front" with the Islamic world: the military threat in the East that was first presented by the Arabs (the Saracens of North Africa and the Near East) and later by the Turks, constituting a constant source of anxiety for the European states. It is quite obvious, however, that Venice, on reaching its maturity as a state in the late first millennium, had striven to establish some kind of link with its Arabic neighbours, valiantly defending its own interests, whether in armed conflict or diplomatic or commercial negotiations (both secret and open). And the prerequisites for the complex relations that Venice would cultivate with the Muslim East for over a thousand years were being laid as far

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[47] The activities of Arsenius the Greek may be given as an example. He had been commissioned to work as a "corrector" and translator of liturgical books in Moscow by Patriarch Nikon, where he was the supposed founder of the local Greco-Latin academy, and had received his initial education in the Greek gymnasium in Venice. During the theological disputes which arose over Nikon's reforms, "the Greeks explained that although their church books were printed in Venice due to their lack of printing facilities, they all accepted these books". In the Moscow Synodical Library of today, a Venetian edition of the Greek Eukhologia is preserved that had served as the service book in Nikon's day. As it happened, it was the twelfth century Venetian Jacobus Veneticus Grecus who became the first systematic translator of Aristotle.

[48] Campbell, C. and Chong, A. (ed) *Bellini and the East. London*, 2005, p. 7.

[49] Saracens – from the Greek Σαρακηνός – "eastern people". During the Crusades, the term was used for all Muslims, alongside the synonymous "Moors".

back as the early ninth century. The small number of documents surviving from the end of the first millennium AD does not permit us to trace in any detail this initial stage of coexistence with the aggressive Muslim world, in which the Arabs played the leading role, but indirect indications confirm that the Venetians' knowledge of seafaring and shipbuilding, as well as the profits of trade, enabled some degree of commerce, despite antagonistic confessional differences.[50]

In his research into the relations between Christian Europe and the Muslim world, Franco Cardini thus writes: "... There is nothing surprising in Pope Leo III's message to Charlemagne concerning the travelling of several Saracen envoys to Sicily on Venetian vessels (in navis Beneticorum)".[51] And the story of the acquisition of the relics of Saint Mark in Alexandria bears witness to the direct breach of the ban on trade with the Muslims that was widespread in ninth century Europe. The necessity of officially restating this prohibition (which took place more than once) only serves to demonstrate the reality of its regular contravention.

Venice was engaged in brisk trade with Alexandria, Syria, Palestine and other Arab states by the tenth century. And, unlike other European powers, it had permanent diplomatic representatives as well as a commercial presence in all the key cities of the Near East.

Venice supported unbroken trade connections with Cairo (beginning with the Fatimids in the tenth century and continuing with the Mamelukes)[52] for the entirety of the period, in spite of the extremely fraught political circumstances and intense Arab piracy. From the later tenth century, the growing commercial traffic

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[50] It ought to be said that the profits of trade supposed a mutual learning process. And while the Egyptians would occasionally use the services of Venetian ships and captains, the Venetians took much from Arabic seafaring and technology. Even the word for the main shipyard and dock of the Venetian fleet – arsenale – is of Arabic etymology: Arabic (dār)as ṣas as ("house of preparation" – workshop, arsenal).

[51] Cardini, F. *Yevropa i islam. Istoriya neponimaniya*. Saint Petersburg, 2007, p. 40.

[52] The Mameluke lands, Egypt and Syria, were only brought under Ottoman rule in 1517.

between Western Europe and the Islamic world came to depend heavily on Venice and Amalfi, which first forged the sea lanes across the Mediterranean, not only to Tunis, but also to Egypt and Syria".[53] And it was Venice which became the main state through which Eastern goods flowed into Europe.[54] (It should be noted that the city itself was filled with them too).

In the first few centuries of the new millennium, the general economic rise of Europe took on a vast significance. The intermediary role played by Venice in the East-West trade reinforced the growing volume of trade and, for the first time ever, involved a reverse flow (i.e. from West to East). And when the Venetian fleet broke the back of the Egyptians at the battle of Ascalon (1123), la Serenissima enjoyed a long period of unrivalled naval mastery, earning by popular acclaim the title "Queen of the Seas". When Venice found herself isolated in the early thirteenth century, due to the excommunication of the republic by Pope Clement and the prescription that "the merchants of Venice could only sail from Rialto in one direction", one historian of Venice wrote: "how the citizens of the republic must have blessed that day in 1297 when they signed a trade agreement with the Sultan of Egypt, who had controlled all Palestinian waters since the fall of Acre. This was their sole "life line", and the Pope was powerless to shut it off". It was also in the thirteenth century (around 1275) that the marine compass first came into use, followed by the rudder with an extended tiller, which enabled the construction of larger ships, making sailing a year-round affair. Trading galleys appeared, shipping greater loads and powered by larger teams of rowers (up to 200 men).

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[53] Montgomery Watt, W. *Vliyaniye islama na srednevekovuyu Yevropu*. Moscow – Saint Petersburg, 2008, p. 36.

[54] The Arabist Montgomery Watt suggests that "the traffic of goods over the Mediterranean Sea was in the hands of the Italians, and not of the Arabs", and that the Arabs were uninterested in such trade, conceding their rights in it, perhaps due to their considering it to be of insignificant volume. (Ibid., p. 37)

By the fifteenth century, Venice's commercial contacts with the Syrio-Egyptian empire of the Mamelukes had been firmly established. Twice a year, in spring and autumn, convoys of Venetian vessels arrived in their ports, subject to strict regulation. It should be stated that such a profitable commodity exchange was none the less accomplished against dangerously high levels of corruption, with Venetian goods and ships often being subject to wrecking, false weight and excessive fees.

Although the crusading idea had lost its momentum by the time of the fall of Constantinople, after its vigorous floruit in the first centuries of the second millennium, it should not be forgotten that the factors behind its emergence had owed much to the constant raiding of Christian Europe by the Arabs over the course of four centuries. The Crusades were thus considered a form of counter attack, setting as their aim the bringing to a halt of Islamic expansion. Figuring among the authors of the early tracts "on the recovery of the Holy Land" (*de recuperatione Terrae Sanctae*) were such men as the Grand Master of the Order of Templars Jacques de Molais, Phillip IV's lawyer Pierre Dubois, the Genovese admiral Benedetto Giaccari, and the Venetian Mariano Sanudo Torsello. Venice, as we have seen, came to play a prominent role in these historical circumstances, which created unique conditions for the Venetian entrepreneurial and intercessorial genius. This would mean both participation in military operations and providing services to the immense flows of people involved.

In their expeditions to liberate the Tomb of the Lord, European knights regularly sailed on Venetian craft, and where fleets were mixed they would be headed, as a rule, by a Venetian. The previously mentioned situation with the Fourth Crusade well demonstrates how consistently Venetians looked to their own interests, not being averse to settling scores with fellow Christians (Catholics as well as Orthodox, as with the Pisans at Rhodes in 1099) while simultaneously

fighting the Muslims. Naturally, this only took place whenever the threat arose of Venice's trade monopoly being broken.

In the agreements concluded with the leaders of the crusading armies, the Venetians fastidiously defined their negotiated for privileges should the military operations be crowned with success.[55] They also demanded to be released from the obligations of "shore rights".[56]

Trade factories were organised in the cities of the Kingdom of Jerusalem to trade both with the crusaders and the Arabs. In addition, the Venetians established themselves firmly throughout Syria. Venetian military achievements were unfailingly linked to trading and civil privileges.[57] Shrewdness in the art of diplomacy enabled the Venetians to successfully come to terms with the rulers of the sovereign dukedoms (Antioch, Armenia Minor, etc.) and trade with Jaffa, Arsur, Caesaria, Kaifa, Acre, Scandelion, Tyre, Sarepta, Sidon, Byblos, Tripoli, Arad, Tortosa, Laodicea and other cities. As historians of Venice have concluded, it is abundantly clear that a scattered colonial state arose on the territories of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, not recognising even a feudatory dependence on its monarch.

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[55] In the cities, their merchants were to be presented with a marketplace and freedom from all taxes and duties. And these are just the conditions specified when the Venetians hadn't personally taken part in military actions. When they did do so, they demanded a third of the towns taken and all booty.

[56] I.e. goods lost in shipwrecks.

[57] Among the latter we may note the points in the agreements signed with the Latin dukes, according to which justice in the Venetian colonies was to be dispensed according to Venetian laws; charges made against Venetians by subjects of the Latin rulers (both criminal and civil) were to be dealt with by a Venetian court; the property of Venetians who died intestate was to become the property of Venice; and Venetians were to use their own weights and measures when selling goods to foreigners.

"The blood spilt by Venetians in the name of the Cross," writes another researcher of this period of mediaeval history "was a thousand times compensated for by the vast commercial expansion gained in the countries of the East".[58]

It should be borne in mind, however, that alongside the market squares, *fondacos* for storing wares and the sites for building residential quarters that the Venetians negotiated for in the cities of the East (not even conquered or garrisoned by themselves), there were churches too, in the fullness of their organisational structure, well appreciating the way in which the values of the Christian ideology for which they had taken the field in defence against the infidels would also serve the ever growing prestige of the republic. Apart from the above mentioned "migration" of the relics of Saints Mark and Donatus to Venice, another example of this is given by the acquisition by Venetian participants in the 1099 Crusade of the remains of Saint Nicholas in Lycia. To be fair, the matter is disputed, as they had already been transferred to Bari (1087). Notwithstanding, Saint Nicholas of Myra was also made a heavenly patron of the city. Then the relics of another Saint Nicholas, uncle of the former, were also shipped to Venice, along with those of the martyr Theodore. In 1267, the relics of Theodore Stratilates were taken to Venice (from Latin Constantinople, to which they had been brought from Mesembria, now Nesebar in Bulgaria, by the captain of the Venetian fleet, Giacomo Dandolo). Transported to Venice in 1267 by Marco Dandolo, a kinsman of Giacomo, the relics were placed in the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord (la Chiesa di San Salvador), where a multitude of miracle cures occurred, and beside which the building of a scuola dedicated to the Saint was then erected on the square. A sculptural depiction of the Saint is suspended on a column at the Doges Palace beside that of the lion of Saint Mark.

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[58] Errera, C. *I crociati veneziani in terra santa (Dal concilio di Clermont alia morte di Ordelafo Falier)*. AV, v. XXXVIII, parte II, p. 276.

The spiritual piety of Venice was thus always combined with concern for its material prosperity. A further example of this is furnished by the fact that, in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, the Venetians organised "regular voyages" for the ever-growing torrent of Europeans making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. And consider too that, apart from their commercial activities in the East and the Mediterranean, Venice was a vital node and stopping point for numerous pilgrim missions on the way to the Holy Land, representing a "frontiere liquide", in the words of the historian Stefano Carboni.

However, in order for this to become possible, we must iterate that it was necessary to constantly and by all means – diplomatic negotiations, decisive military action or generous gifts – forge relations with a new and formidable power – the Ottoman Empire – that had been founded by diverse nomadic Turkic tribes and had ultimately forged a unified people, absorbing representatives of conquered nations, and was in the process of expansion across great swathes of Asia, Europe and North Africa.

It may be confirmed that, for a certain period in the historical past of the Christian *Serenissima*, relations with the Muslim Sublime Porte played the leading role in its foreign policy and economy. At the same time, these relations constituted a chain, as has already been said, of a whole series of armed conflicts, defeats and victories, as well as periods of sustained peaceful equilibrium, which often incurred serious displeasure among other Christian countries, who regarded such state policy as a betrayal.

Thus it was that, in 1389, the Venetians withstood a barrage of righteous indignation for their refusal to aid the Byzantines against the Turks, being linked to the latter by a peace treaty; and in the early fifteenth century there took place constant clashes with the Genoese, whose attacks prompted the Venetians to seek

alliance with the Turks.[59] In 1443, the Venetian senate led by the Doge Francesco Foscari, refrained from supporting a new Crusade proclaimed by Pope Eugenius IV. And although the following year saw the Venetian flotilla come under the command of Alvise Loredana and the Pope's nephew Cardinal-Legate Francesco Condulmer in an expedition against the Ottomans, this expedition proved unsuccessful, and several Venetian captains even helped the Sultan's fleet to make its way through the Bosphorus to defeat the crusaders at Varna.

In 1451, Mehmet II, having come into full power on the death of his father, confirmed all previous agreements in favour of Venice and thus secured a peace treaty that forbade her to act against the construction of Turkish fortresses on the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, whose garrisons would soon control the passage of ships through the Straits (a circumstance that would later prove fateful for Venetian prosperity). When Mehmet II took Athens in 1456, driving the entirety of European humanist society into desperation, the Sultan was received on the Venetian island of Negroponte (Euboea) with all honours. Diplomatic servility merely postponed the inevitable – the Ottomans "appropriated" the island in 1470.

The peace treaties concluded between the Senate and the Porte were severely breached several times.[60] There were also years in which a fragile peace enabled the republic to flourish, as the Turkish court renewed intensive activity in Venice and the Venetian quarter in Galata briskly came to life. The first foreign embassies in Istanbul were those of the Genoese and the Venetians.[61]

During the reign of Doge Andrea Gritti in the early sixteenth century, a loose agreement was made between the dukedom and the Muslim superpower (the

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[59] For the sake of fairness, it should be recalled that Genoa also signed a treaty of alliance with the Turks shortly afterwards.
[60] In September 1499, the burning environs of Vicenza, torched by Turkish horsemen, were visible from the bell tower of Saint Mark's.
[61] The embassies of France and England dated to the sixteenth century, and the Dutch to the seventeenth.

Sultanate granted special privileges to the Venetians for the right to enter Turkish territorial waters), in support of which the Doge had to devote great efforts, including in connection with the constant pressure applied on him by members of the Senate who wished to continue the war. When the "war party" was in the majority, in the late 1530s, the Venetians took part in a naval battle as part of a joint Papal and Imperial fleet. For Venice, defeat in the Bay of Preveze (28th September 1538) was one of the key links in the chain of events leading to the loss of her colonies and factories. According to the separate peace with Turkey that followed fifteen years of hostilities, she was to pay the Porte an immense indemnity and cede her ports in the Morea. She had already, on the fall of Constantinople, lost her colonies in the Black Sea. How much of an impact contemporary political events had on the artistic milieu of Venice is revealed in numerous aspects. The presence of Gentile Bellini at the court of Mehmet the Conqueror has been interpreted not only in terms of the need to earn the patronage of the Sultan to produce works of art, but also as an act of diplomacy, as an ambassadorial mission to foster political, commercial and cultural connections. Likewise the meeting on the 24th January 1567 of the Spanish poet García Hernández and the Turkish ambassador Albain-Bey, which resulted in the subsequent conclusion of the peace Venice needed between Maximilian I and Selim II, took place at Biri in the home of Titian, a setting that was not just the centre of educated Venetian society, but one of worldwide renown (including at the Sublime Porte). (We may note here too that the oldest surviving painting of the young Titian bears the inscription: "Portrait of one of the members of the household of Pesaro of Venice, made generals of the Holy Church, Titian (made this)" (1519-1526), and depicts the bowing head of an Ottoman, having been executed on the occasion of the naval victory won over the Turks in the August of 1502, in which this member of the Pesaro family had taken part.)

The numerous battle canvases commemorating Venice's victories (including that of Lepanto in 1571, so grandiose in its moral and symbolical

significance) decorated not only the main official institution of the city – the Palace of the Doges – but also many scuolas and private palazzos.

Historical events often found reflection in allegorical compositions too. So it is that, among the iconological versions of the Titian painting "The Punishment of Marsyas" a trembling Europe bore witness to the agonising execution by the Turks on the 5th August 1571 of the commander of the Venetian fortress of Famagusta, Marcantonio Bragadin, who so stoically bore the torments which culminated in his being skinned alive.

In their constitutional arrangements, the two powers were polar opposites: a republic on the one hand, and a strict vertical of power on the other, in which all submitted to a single, secular and spiritual, ruler. What they had in common was their striking ability to absorb into their state organism representatives of many different ethnic groups,[62] and a tolerance towards such differences. But, while noting this commonality, we may also be struck by the peculiar expressions of it: Turkish culture's particular affinity, in the opinion of Arnold Toynbee ("A Study of History"), for Italian influences (for instance the way in which Italian served as the official language of the Ottoman navy, and Venice's openness to Eastern cultures (and others besides).

So, Arab artisans, glassblowers, potters, and mosaicists migrated northwards from Sicily (1282), some of whom found their new home in Venice, where they flowed into the local craft *fraglie*. The immigration of Greek craftsmen has already been mentioned. The glassblowing technology of Egypt and Syria contributed to the perfection of the existing local tradition to make "Venetian glass" a global brand.

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[62] "The citizens oppose the non-citizens, foreigners and "inhabitants" or habitatores, as long-term resident aliens were termed in Venice; although these too would ultimately become "citizens", particularly those of them who belonged to the "free professions" — doctors, lawyers, and educated people in general". (Sokolov, Obrazovaniye Venetsianskoi kolonial'noi imperii).

The diverse and multivalent manner in which new Eastern "information" was reflected in the culture of Venice is demonstrated at a glance in the city's very architecture, where the "East" had made its imprint from the very beginning, lending a highly original accent to the articulation of the Gothic and Quattrocento buildings. This concerns both structural details [such as the wooden roof terraces, the *altana* seen in the paintings of Vittore Carpaccio, internal courtyards and entrance gates] and the dazzling decoration of the buildings (windows in the forms of a *mihrab*, or the so-called "Venetian windows", i.e. with their wide balconies, richly ornamented mullions, columns, woodcarving and so on). A term now current in the architectural world is "Venetian Gothic", denoting the presence of an oriental "accent" in the architectural forms seen in the city. This includes two of its main edifices: the Cathedral of Saint Mark, combining several distinct eastern influences at once, and the state's chief government building, the grand Palace of the Doges, with its "carpet style".

As such, it is quite clear that "eastern fashions" in Venice architecture were highly enduring, virtually continuing to define the city's own style and image into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. [We may add to our list of "Eastern" palaces and houses those built or given new facades in the "current" era, - the Ca' d'Oro (begun in 1421), Ca' Dario (facade of 1480); Ca' Arian (14th-15th centuries), Ca' Foscari, Casa Giustiniani, (c. 1450), and the Fondaco dei Turchi (a later name of a building from the 13th century), etc.] Besides this, sculptural figures and reliefs continued to appear on Venetian facades, referring the casual viewer to images of distant lands [including those on the buildings of the Ships' biscuit bakery on Riva degli Schiavoni (1473); the marble reliefs with camels on the western facade of the Ca' Zen, (1526/33-1553) and on the Ca' Mastelli on Rio della Madonna dell'Orto, the so-called Camel Palace – Palazzo Camello; the portrait of Mehmet II on the facade of the Scuola degli Albanesi, connected with the defence of the city of Scutari in Albania; and the reliefs by Pietro Lombardo (15th century) on the facade of the Scuola dei Calegheri].

Special mention is due to the buildings erected in imitation of "Eastern" monuments (such as San Pietro di Castello – a peculiar analogue of the Pharos of Alexandria, or the Torre dell'Orologio (1496-1504).

In addition to this, there were older "personages" with a "presence" in the urban topography, "illustrating" the Islamic connections of the local inhabitants, such as the statue of a bearer, or a turbaned figure, or the forgotten "malignant and turbaned Turk" (Shakespeare), on the house of Tintoretto on the Campo dei Mori. Moors were natural feature of the mythology of the city long before Shakespeare's day, and local speech has inserted them into the sculptural figures in the very centre of the city: The "Tetrarchs" of San Marco, like the figures of the shepherds which were added to the Clock Tower right at the end of the fifteenth century (by the sculptor Simone Campanato), were christened "the Four Moors" and "the Moor" by the locals (perhaps due to the tarnishing of the bronze over time, or else as a kind of *memento mori* to refer to the constant threat from the world of Islam). Sometimes sculptures brought from the East were set into the walls of houses, along with Muslim funerary monuments, reused here as columns.

In this state, with its mighty infrastructure for distant marine trade, headed by the Senate of Sea Trade, the rank of captain of a galley was considered among the most prestigious, to the extent that the Grand Council forbade the consecutive re-election of any person to this post within a time period of five years, that the maximum number of *nobili* might enjoy it. This circumstance might also signify that almost all noblemen, with rare exceptions, were personally familiar with the lands of the East. Naturally, the same could be said of the members of the *mercantante* who took part in foreign trade (moreover, many from this class will have spent time living abroad in conjunction with their activities in the East – the term *i residenti mercatanti* is met with from the fourteenth century onwards, referring to "merchant residents"). During intervals of peace, aristocratic youths learnt languages in the Levant, where they made the necessary and useful

connections for their future commercial, diplomatic or political careers. Cases are also known of Venetians possessing private estates in the East, unconnected with their other activities there. Thus we have Baimonte Tiepolo retreating to his villa in Morocco in the early thirteenth century as a result of political vicissitudes.

Special attention is due to the presence of a Jewish community in Venice, which played an active role in its financial and cultural life. The Jewish script occasionally features in paintings by Venetian artists, perhaps indirectly pointing to contacts with members of this diaspora. Jewish culture itself flourished in Venice. Around 200 Hebrew language books were published here in the first half of the sixteenth century alone.

Incidentally, book printing was developing at such a rate in fifteenth century that the republic was publishing three times as many books as Rome, Florence and Milan put together. And there were translations of Arabic texts among these too. So, as far back as the sixteenth century (1547), the publisher Andrea Arrivabene was publishing the first non-Latin vernacular translation (in Italian) of the Koran, and then, in 1521, a translation of Avicenna's "Canon".

For those who, for whatever reason, did not have the opportunity to travel, it was possible to find visual depictions in Venice that could inform the viewer of the customs and appearance of distant lands and their inhabitants. And while Europeans, for almost half a millennium prior to the twelfth century, had regarded the world beyond Christendom to belong to the Muslims, merchants and travellers, including Venetians, would thenceforth vigorously promote the European concept of the Oikumene. A major contribution to Europeans' informational piggy bank about the East was made by Marco Polo, who was the first to tell us of "obscure" China. Polo's work went on to be republished with various illustrations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In 1543, the typography of Manutius published a compilation of the works of Venetian travellers – "*Viaggi fatti da Vinetia*".[63] Only its final section, "*Viaggio in Costantinopoli con la descrittione della Porta, intrate, spese et forze del gran Turco*" (this was how the section was named in the contents though it was actually named in the text itself as "*Libri tre delle cose de Turchi. Nel primo si descrive il viaggio da Venetia a Costantinopoli, con gli nomi de luoghi antichi e moderni. Nel secondo — la Porta, cioe la corte de soltan Soleymano, signer de Turchi. Nel terzo — il modo del reggere il stato et impero suo*"). The remaining "chapters" were the work of Josafato Barbarigo, whose accounts "A Journey to Tana" and "A Journey to Persia" deal with the late 1480s; of Ambrogio Contarini's "Journey to Persia" ("*Viaggio del magnifico messer Ambrogio Contarini, ambasciator di Venetia ad Ussuncassan, re di Persia, hora chiamato Sophi*"); and the sixteenth century traveller Aluvigi di Giovanni's "*Viaggio di messer Aluvigi di Giovanni in India*", "*Viaggio del detto in Colocu*t", and "Viaggio et *impresa che fece Soleyman Bassa del 1538 contra Portoghesi per racquistar la citta di Div in India*".

A new edition of the same was printed two years later in 1545. The works of Barbaro and Contarini were then included in a compilation of travel writings selected by the secretary of the Senate and later Council of Ten, Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485-1547). Ramusio's book was widely known and more popular and accessible in comparison with such texts as the "Journeys" of Barbaro and Contarini; their works, along with those of many other authors (Marco Polo and later Alberto Campense, Pavel Iovius, Giorgie Interiano, Pietro Quirini and others) were compiled into a second volume of "*Navigationi et Viaggi*", of which several new editions were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under the

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[63] Full title: "Viaggi fatti da Vinetia alla Tana, in Persia, in India et in Costantinopoli: con la descrittione particolare di citta, luoghi, siti, costumi, et della Porta del gran Turco: et di tutte le intrate, spese, et modo di governo suo, et della ultima impresa contra Portoghesi. In Vinegia MDXLIII".

title "*Secondo volume delle Navigationi et Viaggi. In Venetia nella stamperia de Giunti, 1'anno MDLIX*".

Among the several Venetian travellers of this era to leave written accounts, some of which would later be published and accompanied by artists' illustrations, were Niccolo Conti, who crossed southern Asia between 1424 and 1449, visiting the islands of the Indian Ocean, Sumatra, Java and Southern China; Alvise Cadamosto, who explored the coasts of Africa down to the mouth of the Gambia in 1445-46 on a commission from the Portuguese Infante; and Alvise da Mosto, who discovered the archipelago of Cape Verde. In 1502, Venice saw the publication of the first monographic description of the Caucasus in European literature, by the traveller and ethnographer Giorgio Interriano.

The Venetians controlled trade with Egypt, from whence the caravan trails led to India. Enterprising citizens of other states often passed through Venice on their own voyages, returning homeward via the Lagoon Republic and impressing its citizens not only with their spoken accounts but often with the wonders they brought with them too.

In the mid sixteenth century, the books on the Ottoman Empire written by the Serb Varfolomey Georgievic, translated into international Latin, was as resoundingly popular in Venice as it was in other European countries. One of them, "*De origine imperii turcorum*", was reprinted in 1553, 1560, 1562 and 1578. Richly illustrated, it displayed the most distinctive traits of Ottoman life.

The contemporary technological innovation that we refer to as the information revolution, that of printed books, greatly sped up the transmission of information, including in the field of material culture. Bernard von Breidenbach's chronicle "*Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctum*", published in Mainz in 1483, presented the European reader and viewer a whole range of depictive materials with views of the towns laying on the pilgrim's route – from Venice to Jerusalem.

The book was well known to Venetian artists, as was the 1493 "*Chronique de Nuremberg*" with its xylographic illustrations. And a century later, in 1590, Cesare Vecelio, a nephew of Titian, published the book "*De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*".

Particularly noteworthy in the context of interest in Eastern exotica are the drawings of professional artists. First and foremost stands the most iconic figure of the Venetian Early Renaissance, Jacopo Bellini. The sketches in his albums, now kept at the Louvre and British Museum, of personages in turbans, exotic animals and architectural fantasias became a kind of reference material for the master's students and disciples, overturning the current opinion of Gentile's priority in consolidating the depiction of Oriental details in Venetian painting. It is quite clear that the presence of Eastern artefacts and persons in many of the "inhabited" pictures of Venetian artist seems perfectly natural a thing in such a cultural matrix. Such depictions may remain a matter of convention for some painters, however. Their greater part demonstrate the artists' excellent command of the "material".

The major territorial changes that took place with Venice from the fifteenth century, as the republic turned towards *terraferma*, ceasing to be an island state,[64] enable us to extend the range of our research locus to take in the works of masters from the Venetian "provinces", to varying degrees infected with the cultural universalism of the Serenissima.

In this way, even the supposedly the fragmentary history of Venice's contacts across the centuries, as an international crossroads and the "bazaar of

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[64] From 1405, the Venetian Republic included Vicenza, Padua and Verona, and, from 1426, Brescia and Bassano, some of which, together with their occasionaly expansive extra-mural territories, had formerly been separate political subjects. In the context of our theme, this circumstance enables us to analyse the works of those other artists who also came from the Venetian mainland.

Europe",[65] of mutual influence and unceasing connections between Venice and the East, reveal the basic factors behind not merely the presence, but also a solid foundation for the East and its resonance in the mental field of Venetians by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Venice passed along her "path of individuation" (to quote Jung) while orienting herself, among other things, on Eastern cultures and civilisations, while in her cultural eclecticism and diversity she acquired and reinforced her matchless integrity and uniqueness.

[65] Venise et Orient, p. 30

Chapter II.
Architectonic motifs in the representation of Biblical loci in Venetian Renaissance paintings

In the history of art, the problem of the connections between religious ideas and the creative consciousness of the artist is one of the most difficult to conceptualise. Touching upon the very essence of the artistic image and the most fundamental characteristics of its structure, this problem needs to be examined in its general sense and with regard to various historical cultures. The semantic and formal significance of architectural motifs in Renaissance painting, and in Venetian art in particular, are vast. From the point of view of formal changes in the depiction of architectural decoration observed throughout the period, the gradual perfection of the perspective system is simple to establish, moving from geometric to a later aerial perspective, thus signifying a step by step mastering of the means by which to convey real space.

Architectural motifs in Renaissance painting always act as the generator of spatial and temporal relations, and often notional relations too. The Venetians began to assimilate the perspective system, without which the depiction of architecture is impossible, at a later date than was done in Florence and several other Italian artistic schools. However, not forgetting but cultivating, primarily, the symbolic values of architecture and, secondarily, their own traditions of spatial perception, they achieved a period of particularly remarkable results in portraying painted architecture in the Cinquecento period. The inclusion of architectural motifs in painted compositions reflected a whole complex of ideal though as yet fantastical notions current among the artists and architects of the Renaissance concerning the architecture of the ancients as well as of sacral architectural forms in general, including, of course, those present in the East. The depiction of Biblical loci in numerous religious paintings by Venetian artists, including architectural

motifs, presents a wide range of highly varied materials and, first and foremost among them, in the light of our interest, in the varied functions of Eastern architectural motifs, the decorative, compositional, symbolical and interpretational.

Aristocratic and mercantile Venice presented itself as an example of absolute tolerance with regard to the "other". The mixing of ethnic groups and races, of the physical types and dress of the passers-by, of the citizens of the Republic and the numerous guests with which it was always inundated, were something quite habitual. And this was bound to find its reflection in the tastes of the masses. At the same time (as we have already attempted to reveal in the first chapter of the present work), an intelligent political and economic balance was maintained so far as was possible, and Venice persistently and painstakingly defended *her* laws, rights and interests.

In connection with the fact that the material under examination concerns architectural motifs in Venetian religious painting, we may linger a short while on the peculiar characteristics of Venice's everyday religious arrangements (which, in particular, will also shed light on the situation of those commissioning religious imagery). Unlike matters elsewhere in Italy, the position of the clergy here, despite the scrupulous respects paid to them, saw them estranged from public affairs. The holy fathers paid taxes into the common treasury, submitted to worldly shipbuilding work, and occasionally even performed military service. The election of the Patriarch and canons of the Basilica of Saint Mark was confirmed by the Doge, and the bishops were nominated by the Senate. The Inquisition, so mighty in other Italian regions, was established in Venice from 1536, but soon compelled to leave the territory of the Republic.

A special feature of Christian spiritual life in Venice was the existence of religious fraternities in its public life – the *scuole*, which united ecclesiastical or ethnic communities, or those belonging to artisanal guilds or trade corporations

(nobles not being permitted to join). We reiterate that the basis of the *scuola* as an institution was the religious principle, and the flourishing of these organisations in the sixteenth century, moreover, was linked to the processes of the deepening of religious life; though the self-awareness of the Venetians did not give way to their religious sensibilities. It is important for us to emphasise in this matter the considerable expansion of the circles commissioning religious paintings, which were spreading to spaces beyond the bounds of churches and private chapels. But there were other chapels apart from the parish churches and domestic chapels, for the use of and maintained by the *vicini* – associations of laypersons with a charitable bent from neighbouring areas, in whose affairs the nobles and "townsfolk" took part on an equal basis.

As in other contemporary Italian cities, the cult of Christ and the Virgin Mary was commonly associated with the myth of the foundation of the city. The celebration of Venice's foundation was held on the holy day of the Annunciation. Christ was also worshipped as a patron of the State, and in some rituals the doge acted as his avatar.[66] In some manner this explains the popularity of subjects on the theme of feasts in the work of Venetian artists (such as that of Veronese), which demonstrated not just contemporary life events, but also constituted an expression of the unity of the spiritual and secular power, and of all Venetian society.

Alberti remarks that the art of his day had appropriated for itself the most honoured place in all spheres, the public and private, and secular and spiritual. And indeed, painting, more than any other art form, was drawn into the taut metre of public life and the struggle of political passions of the states of the Apennine Peninsula. The specifics of Renaissance Venice's "historical culture" enable us to see in its religious art persistent iconographic motifs that are rare in the works of

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[66] Such simulation of the rulers to the Saviour was not merely a metaphor, but a reminder of the ties existing between the prototype of the image and the image itself in Christian aesthetics.

other schools of painting,[67] and to distinguish details that mark out Venetian paintings from the archetypical schemes of pan-Italian art. Military and diplomatic confrontations constantly lent political significance to Venice's relations with the Muslim world, and art often responded fervently to this circumstance too, especially when it concerned tragic conflicts with an inter-confessional basis. In this way, the dramatic history of interrelations between Venice and the Eastern world found its direct and indirect reflection in the religious works of local artists.

The tradition of dressing Biblical characters in contemporary costume was already well established and was further reinforced in Renaissance art. Characters were also often given a portrait likeness with real heroes of events contemporary to the artists, or with those commissioning the works. The buildings of distant Palestine were also "reproduced" in forms with walls and aspects that would be familiar in Italy. However, this pan-Italian Renaissance background stands against the peculiar features of Venetian art distinguished by researchers. Bernard Berenson thus emphasises in his book *The Italian Painters of The Renaissance*, that "It was only in Venice that painting remained what it had formerly been for all Italy in the first phase of its existence, – a language shared by all society. Venetian artists strove particularly for the perfection of their art, so that the contemporary generation could appreciate the true-to-life realism of the pictures they painted; and this generation, more than any other that had lived since the dawn of Christianity indeed, was one strongly tied to a world of actual reality".[68] "Actual reality" with its Eastern "ties" took a prominent place in the religious works of Venetian paintings, with, of course, the interpretation of Biblical texts from the Old and New Testament featuring as the basis for many such paintings.

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[67] Which is why certain archetypical motifs characteristic to the depiction of Biblical loci are not examined within the framework of this dissertation.

[68] Berenson, B. Zhivopistsy ital'yanskogo Vozrozhdeniya. Moscow, 1965, p.36.

Despite the fact that we are forced to acknowledge the relatively small number of Italian Renaissance pictures featuring architectural decorations in subjects from the Old Testament in comparison with those illustrating the New, they do strikingly demonstrate the general tendencies of changes in the visual interpretation of the architectural environment.
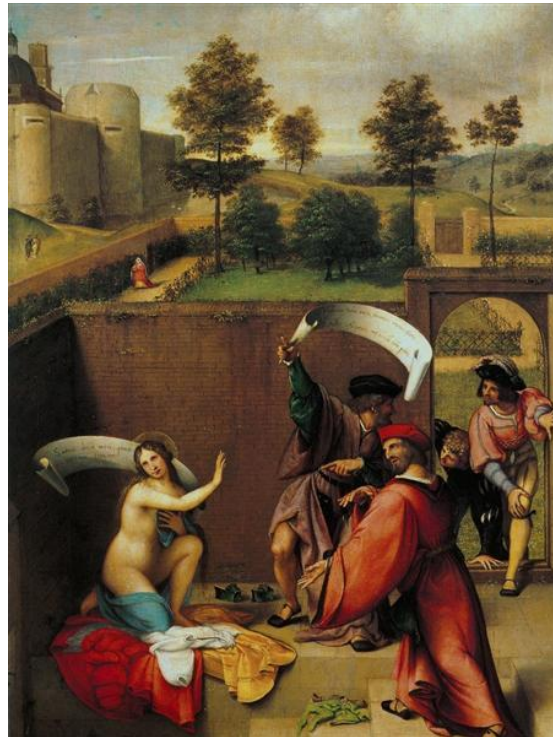

Figure 1. Lorenzo Lotto, *Susanna and the Elders*, 1517, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Thus, in Lorenzo Lotto's 1517 *Susanna and the Elders*, the architecture, like many other details of the work (including the cartouches holding the dialogue between one of the male characters and the unclothed heroine, which are supposed to have been inserted on the wishes of the patron), seems archaic even in comparison with that of other works of the same artist in his Bergamo period. In its laconicism, it makes a stark contrast with the turbulent and dynamic scene taking place in the bathhouse. Only a barely visible fragment of shaded wall on the left maintains the diagonal line continued in the perspective of the lane beyond. The other frontal wall with its arched entranceway creates a plane lying strictly parallel with the horizontal line of the canvas. The thin brick walls of the bathing enclosure contrast

sharply with the tall and sturdy fortress walls of Babylon with their massive towers that have no counterpart in width in any other Quattrocento work. It is quite clear that the architectural setting is organised here according to the stylistic laws of a recent age.

Figure 2. Giorgione, *Moses Undergoing the Trial by Fire,* c.1505, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Figure 3. Giorgione, *The Judgement of Solomon,* c.1505, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

It is of interest that we may also include such early works of Giorgione as *Moses Undergoing the Trial by Fire* and *The Judgement of Solomon* among the few quattrocento paintings of Old Testament subjects, in which he varies the form of the extramural constructions familiar to him with fortress towers and modest arched gazebos. Among these is one reminiscent of the Palace of Doges, fulfilling the semantic function of the temple of Justice (according to the version of Lionello Puppi).[69]

Figure 4. Bonifazio de Pitati, *The Finding of Moses,* first half of 16th c., Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

The grandiose composition *The Finding of Moses* by Bonifazio de Pitati is already a work of another age, though here the depictions of the turreted buildings far off in the hills still vaguely recall obelisks. The artistic lexicon of the Venetian quattrocento is totally transformed in the portrayal of the extravagant architecture in the Old Testament scenes by Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto. The latter's scene of the discovery of the infant Moses by the daughter of Pharaoh and her servant

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[69] Puppi, L., 'Giorgione e l'architettura', in *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano*, Florence, 1981, p. 354.

dominates in composition and position, taking up all the central space with large figures. The surroundings (a dynamic hunting scene on the right and a battle on the left) are contrastingly diminutive in scale. The small structure in the background does not therefore draw the attention, and is reminiscent of a small village house with a waterwheel (which is to be connected with the influence of northern artists).

Figure 5. Jacopo Tintoretto, *The finding of Moses*, c.1570, Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Figure 6. Paolo Veronese, *Rescue of Moses from the Waters of the Nile,* 1580, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

In Veronese's composition on the same theme (*Moses, Rescued from the Water*), the town in the background is represented with graceful columned

buildings and statues. The architectural fragment is painted without accent, in prevalently white tones, but importantly the hint of fortress architecture has gone, and the *veduta* appears like a scrap of lacework. It is more programmatically elaborated in his earlier work from the *Story of Esther* cycle of 1555-56 (*Esther before Ahasuerus*, *The Coronation of Esther*, *The Triumph of Mordechai*, and *The Banishment of Queen Vashti*) made for the church of Saint Sebastian in Venice. We note, first of all, the clear classicising content. The picture's position on a plafond determines the composition and sharp angle of its architectural fragments.

Figure 7. Paolo Veronese, *The Triumph of Mordechai* , 1556, Church of Saint Sebastian, Venice.

In *The Triumph of Mordechai*, a fragment of massive spiral column repeats the form that Veronese used in the illusory composition at the Villa Barbaro. The young artist renders Babylonian architecture in another manner in his sketches for the *Story of Esther*, kept in Verona's Castelvecchio Museum and dated c. 1548 (i.e. predating the cycle of the same name).

Figure 8. Paolo Veronese, *Esther before Ahasuerus,* c.1548, Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona.

On the first canvas *Esther before Ahasuerus*, the architectural motif comprises a small and truly scenic piazza with frontally positioned backdrop and a wide arch on the right, creating a subtle diagonal. Scholars have recognised in this composition a corner of Verona's Piazza Signoria contemporary to the young artist's residence there, albeit "reconceptualised" in a classical key. Equally "angular" and frontal are the architectural backdrops in two other compositions.

Figure 9. Paolo Veronese, *Punishment of the Eunuch,* c.1548, Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona.

In the *Punishment of the Eunuch* this takes the form of a ruined arch.

Figure 10. Paolo Veronese, *Ahasuerus orders the triumph of Mordecai,* c.1548, Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona.

In *Ahasuerus orders the triumph of Mordecai* an uninterrupted mediaeval edifice fills the entire background of the composition. This has crenulations like those on the fortress walls of the Veronese Castle of the Scaligeri, as well as a combination of ordered and arched architectural elements (both Classical and Renaissance). Apart from this, there is also a rotunda-like structure modelled on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, as a reminder of the times of King Solomon. The central multi-storey tower repeats the form of the so-called Septizodium.[70] In this way, the programme of the transferal of the significance of holy sites onto the native lands of the patron and artist is also established in this modest picture. Several years later (1555-60), Veronese decorates an altar in haute relief in the composition *The Anointing of David*, depicting the head and pelt of a sacrificed animal, thus instantly referring the viewer to the place of action of a pre-Christian ritual. The Classical ruins on the left, overgrown with fresh wild vegetation, are an iconographic symbol of the Old Testament giving way to the new growths of

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[70] Originally the Septisolium, the Temple of the Seven Suns, erected in 203 AD in the reign of Emperor Septimus Severus in Rome; destroyed in the Middle Ages, its remains included in the circuit of the fortress walls; finally demolished in 1588.

Christianity. In the right-hand part of the picture, Veronese has placed a representative structure in the background. And in so far as this is painted in the coloristic scale of the grisaille, this truly Palladian object (the painting was created during the work on the frescoes at the Villa Barbaro in Maser) appears like a phantom, with no relation whatsoever to the event taking place. The stone bridge in front of it, embellished with Classical sculptures, is an analogue of that in the environs of the Villa. Veronese may well thus have executed this subject while carried away in his enthusiasm.

Figure 11. Tintoretto, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,* c.1545, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

As for Tintoretto's rather extensive cycle of Old Testament subjects, it is only in the early composition *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* that architectural scenography is given any significant space, as determined by the position of the figures.

Figure 12. Tintoretto, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,* c.1550, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Ten years later, in *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, it has almost totally been removed from the artist's field of attention, merely to fill odd corners of space, denoting the mannerist tendency.

Figure 13. Paris Bordone, *David and Bathsheba,* c.1545, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

We note the similarity (if not identical nature) of the architecture in Paris Bordone's *David and Bathsheba* and his *Annunciation*. In both cases the action takes place in an arched portico with many columns. The form of the graceful columns is the same, set on high plinths of vegetal decor, above which haute reliefs of rams' heads attract the attention. Precisely this correspondence in architectural setting allows us to recognise the programme of the succession of generations of the House of David, as well as that of the succession of subjects in the Old and New Testament.

Having made a brief survey of the most striking examples of the use of architectural forms in Old Testament paintings, we may state that the 'Venetian case' of the Renaissance displays a tendency for their formal and symbolic interpretation, the reproduction of Classical forms, and an attention to contemporary architectural trends, as established by Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio and others. The imaginary architecture on these canvases often shows a festive or spectacular aspect, characteristic of Venetian painting. Our specific

interest also finds the reflection of the stages of development of painting in this group of objects; from the early Renaissance to Mannerism.

We shall now turn to the image of the Holy City in the works of Venetian artists of the 2nd half of the 15-16 centuries in ordrer to outline the 'kindred' Venetian tokens. And they are readily found, as in Jacopo Bellini's works. Thus, in his Annunciation, there is a certain building in the background resembling the palace that later received the name *Fondaco dei Turchi* and *Ca'Morolin*. There is a *fumaiolo* on the roof. In other paintings we discover the motifs of the Saint Mark Basilica pulpit (1-85), Porta della Carta (1-86), the courtyard of the Palace of Doges (1-67)[71]. A similar allusion to the Palace of Doges has been made by Giorgione in a separate group of structures seen in the composition *Judgement of Solomon* (1511, Florence, Uffizi). Likewise the view of the Piazzetta seen from the window in the *Reading Madonna* also by Giorgione (c.1510, Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum), should regarded as depiction of the blessed City.

Jerusalem in pictures by Venetian artists of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A wide field in which to observe the function of architectural backdrops in Venetian Renaissance paintings with Oriental subjects is that presented by pictures from the New Testament and those with motifs taken from apocryphal stories.

"The city and only the city has produced the characteristic phenomena of art-history,"[72] is the thesis declared by Max Weber in 1923, and has in some degree been proven correct in the analysis of the evolutionary and revolutionary changes

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[71] Worthy of attention is the vedutu with the boys swimming in the canal in the album of J. Bellini, where Venice is now seen without any 'canonical' mantle, outside the church iconographic tradition.

[72] Cited in Gerard de Bris. Bolshoi gorod – velikoye iskusstvo. Mif o tom, gde sozdayotsya iskusstvo // Logos. 2002, № 3-4 [electronic resource]. – Available at: http://www.ruthenia.ru/logos/number/2002_03_4.htm

in the depiction of the city in the history of art. We may observe how the conditional mediaeval schemes of depiction changed in the period of the early Renaissance with the inclusion in compositions of fragments of real cities. The sources of the special attention Venetian artists paid to their native city, which became obvious to all in the subsequent period with the spread of the genre of the *veduta*, did not draw originally on *plein-air* impressions alone. The idea of the city as a concentration point of holiness, order and civilised values is one of the most ancient in the history of culture. It is heard as far back as in the works of Plato and Aristotle, and refracted in the Christian philosophy of Augustine in his *De civitate Dei*, associated not only with just rule and statehood, but, primarily, with the City of God. In the mature Middle Ages, these ideas were continued by Thomas Aquinas. We have already made the case in the first chapter of this dissertation for the reasons behind the special attitude of Venetians, shaped by official ideology, toward their own city as shaded by a halo of sanctity, and the mental association of Venice with the locations of the main holy sites of Christendom.

The two cities connected with the acts of the Saints most often 'reproduced' in Venetian religious painting are Alexandria, where the 'Marciana' had unfolded, and, of course, Jerusalem. Here we examine the architectural forms in the iconography of the painted repertoire built up by Venetian artists of the late fifteenth and first third of the sixteenth centuries, where the place of action is Jerusalem.[73]

The main aim of this section is to understand what the depiction of Jerusalem might have implied for the Venetian masters. To this end, I shall

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[73] Of the whole range of iconographic meanings of architecture, the most interesting examples, when featured in the composition of elements of a city or fortress, are those which directly personify the City of God. It is important to state the fact that they take on the traits of real existing cities. In the iconography of the Heavenly Jerusalem, there exist several versions envisaging this. One identifies the Heavenly Jerusalem with its real prototype. Also widespread is the assimilation of the Heavenly City to Rome or Constantinople as the capital of the Christian world. And, finally, this symbolic role is invested in contemporary cities.

determine not only the constructive principles underlying Venetian representation of the Jerusalem, but also to what extent this was a refraction of real information and artistic imagination.

The importance of this subject is indicated by the absence of any previous attempt to comprehensively analyse the conceptual and practical mechanisms through which Venetian painters came to visualise their multiple 'Jerusalem'.

The question of the cultural and conceptual ties between Venice and the other great capitals in the early Renaissance is discussed by scholars solely within the framework of Venice's fabrication of her own identity and "myth". In this regard, scholars have concentrated mainly on the relationship between Venice and Rome and Venice and Constantinople,[74] leaving out Jerusalem, the city that had been and was a reference point for these two great centres, as well as for numerous other European cities. The only early exception to this trend is represented by the studies of the late 1970s and early 1980s by Lionello Puppi,[75] who treated the connection between Venice and Jerusalem in the context of the symbolical and sacral adaptation of the Holy City's image and its translation into the local milieu.

The mediaeval 'prehistory' of the architectural repertoire can be traced in the Venetian territory, more specifically in the frescoes of the Oratorio di San Giorgio in Padua, executed by Altichiero ca. 1370–1380. Although references to actual geographical and historical sites just begin to appear here among other

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[74] For example: Pincus Debora, 'Venice and the Two Romes: Byzantium and Rome as a Double Heritage in Venetian Cultural Politics', Artibus et Historiae, Vol. 13, No. 26 (1992), pp. 101-114. Manfredo Tafuri, 'La "nuova Costantinopoli". La rappresentazione della "renovatio" nella Venezia dell'Umanesimo', Rassegna, 9 (1982), pp. 25-38.

[75] Lionello Puppi, 'Verso Gerusalemme', Arte Veneta XXXII, (1978), pp. 73-77; Lionello Puppi, 'Venezia come Gerusalemme nella cultura figurative del Rinascimento,' in Le città italiana del Rinascimento fra Utopia e Realtà, ed August Buck and Bobo Guthmueller, (Venezia: Centro Tedesco di studi Veneziani, 1984), pp. 117-36; Lionello Puppi, 'Venezia tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento. Da "nuova Costantinopoli" a "Roma altera" nel sogno di Gerusalemme', in Le città capitali, ed Cesare De Seta, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1985), pp. 55-66.

decorative and symbolic elements, these paintings are already marked with the narrative verve specific to Venetian painted 'chronicles' of the Renaissance.

The key figure in the Quattrocento is the illustrious representative of Venetian painting: Jacopo Bellini. Not many of his works have survived, which is why his graphic production, epitomised by the two sketch books he assembled in the middle of the fifteenth century (now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris and the British Museum, London) is so significant.[76] Meant to be repertories of canonic inventions, these albums represent multi-figural compositions within complex urban perspectives, punctuated by buildings characterised by innovative architectural motifs. Jacopo did not follow the tradition of 'template books' specific to mediaeval masters. His drawings deal systematically with a vast range of subjects in analogy to the *storie* discussed by Alberti in his *De pictura* (1435).[77] Although the relationship between Jacopo Bellini and Alberti is still under debate[78], Jacopo's inventions seem to reflect or at least interact with the ideas of the Florentine master. Nevertheless, some of Jacopo's drawings reveal a taste for Byzantine and late Gothic architectural elements. Furthermore, although the majority of the buildings he represented was inspired by classic elements, in his original solutions he anticipated practices that would only later be widely employed in Venice.

Unlike many contemporary painters in Florence, Jacopo greatly deepened his spatial perspective, allowing him to combine several scenes and episodes on a single sheet. In some cases, characters and events from the Holy Scriptures merge

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[76] Selective works on Jacopo Bellini are: Marcel Röthlibsberger, *Studi di Jacopo Bellini* (Venezia: Pozza, 1960); Christiane Joost-Gaugier, *'The Tuscanisation of Jacopo Bellini,'* Ada Historiae Artium, 23 (1977b) pp. 95-112; Colin Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988); Patricia Fortini Brown, *'The Antiquarianism of Jacopo Bellini'*, Artibus et Hostoriae, Vol. 13, No. 26 (1992), pp. 65-84.

[77] Leon-Battiste Alberti, *Desyat' knig o zodchestve* ('Ten books on architecture), vol. 2 (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1937), p. 61.

[78] Keith Christiansen, 'Bellini and Mantegna', in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, edited by Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 51.

with episodes of contemporaneous everyday life. A taste for narrative is a distinctive trait of these images. Bellini shows resourcefulness and extensive proficiency when representing architecture. Moreover, the architecture often becomes an independent art object, as if the master acknowledged the fundamental role it played in the hierarchy of the arts at the time. This was, most importantly, the first attempt to create a real existing environment for the depicted events.

We can agree both with Marcel Röthlisberger, who assumes these albums to be "*Libri studiorum* made for his own use",[79] and with Keith Christiansen, who considers them to be study sketchbooks of some kind: a guide for aspiring artists of the early Renaissance, including Jacopo's own children, Gentile and Giovanni, as well as Andrea Mantegna and Vittore Carpaccio.[80] Although diverging, these opinions point out that Bellini's artistic interests lay in enhancing the role of architecture as structural framing for events and episodes represented.

It is still unclear what Jacopo Bellini's literary and visual sources on the Holy Land might have been. One could have been Fra Mauro's map, which has a *tondo* comprising a view of Jerusalem in the left corner.[81] Jacopo frequently depicted Jerusalem enclosed within fortified walls, similar to mediaeval Italian or ancient Roman fortresses, allowing the beholder to see into the city itself − with its towers, cupolas, roofs, spires, arcades, obelisks, squares, palaces and temples.

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[79] Röthlisberger, (1960), p. 71.

[80] Christiansen, (2004), p. 282.

[81] There is an alternative opinion that this tondo was created by someone from the Bellini family, supposedly by Leonardo, a nephew of Jacopo. Consequently, the problem of artistic reference between Jacopo Bellini and the miniaturist is worth further investigation. See: Angelo Cattaneo, *Fra Mauro's Mappa Mundi and Fifteenth-Century Venice* (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2011), pp. 153-155.

Figure 14. Fra Mauro, *Mappa Mundi,* c.1450, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.

It is important to proceed to a definition of the different typologies that can be identified in Jacopo's architectural renditions of Jerusalem, especially because these remain normative in the work of subsequent Venetian masters. However, one should bear in mind that such classification is indicative and by no means exhaustive.

Figure 15. Jacopo Bellini, *Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple*, drawing, British Museum, London, F.F. 58a.

There is, first of all, the symbolic Jerusalem, that is the representation of buildings and sites described in apocryphal Gospels and therefore unrelated to the historical city. Jacopo's reliance on these sources implies that architectural elements also assume a symbolic or allegoric value. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Jacopo's *Presentation of the Virgin* (British Museum F.F. 58a), where the master tries to adhere to the accounts provided by the *Gospel of James* and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*. The latter relates how infant Mary ran up the fifteen stairs leading to a temple in Jerusalem, where her parents had brought her in order to devote her to God. The fifteen steps of the temple were interpreted as a process of spiritual ascension, each step being linked to the text of an Old Testament psalm as stated in the *Golden Legend*: "And there was about the temple, after the fifteen psalms of degrees, fifteen steps or degrees to ascend up to the temple, because the temple was high set."[82] Pilgrims used to recite the Psalms of Degrees during special celebrations on their way to Jerusalem.
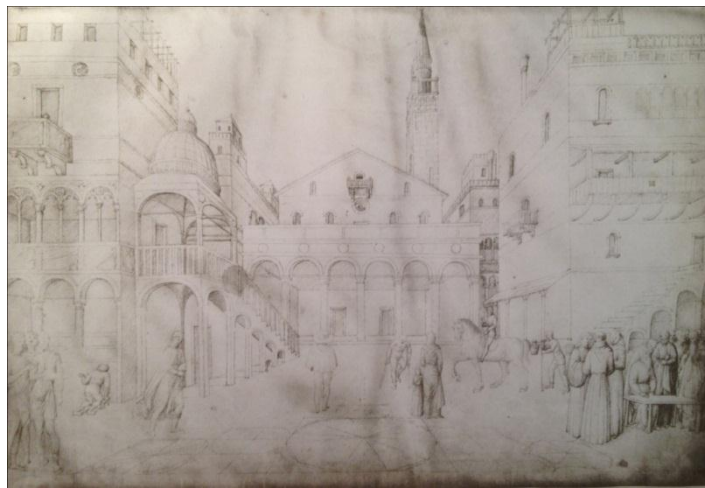

Figure 16. Jacopo Bellini, *Architecture*, drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Fol. 69b.

Despite the obvious importance of symbolism, Jacopo is also driven by the challenge of evoking an actual architectural space. The architectures of his

[82] *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as English by William Caxton*, Vol V, (London: J.M. Dent and Co, Albine House, 1900), p.101.

'Italianate Jerusalem' include staircases viewed from the side (a type of iconography that later became very popular), (ground floor) arcades and (first floor) loggias, all of which fit perfectly with the Venetian style of the facades. Often Bellini depicts semi-circular arches to top the space between the pillars and columns that lack an Oriental or Gothic reminiscence. If we agree with the interpretation of an architectural motif from Folio 69b (Louvre) as a reproduction of a Brunelleschi loggia,[83] we can assume that the idea of the arched loggias in the Ospedale degli Innocenti influenced many of Jacopo's architectural inventions. From this point of view, the difference between Jacopo's thorough architectural studies and the designs of Gothic interiors and arcades of his teacher, Gentile da Fabriano, becomes quite evident. The presence of arched loggias in Jacopo's drawings is meant to create a rhythmical structure of space that stresses the proportional unity of the image. A clear example of this is to be found in *Herod's Palace* (Louvre FF. 15b and 16a). Therefore, Jacopo's architectural vision of Jerusalem draws on a Renaissance ideal of urban harmony.

Figure 17. Jacopo Bellini, *Herod's Palace*, drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, FF 15b and 16a.

[83] Joost-Gaugier, (1977b), pp. 98.

Figure 18. Cima da Conegliano, *Presentation of the Virgin*, c. 1496-1497, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

I should slightly broaden the chronological scope of these observations and compare Jacopo's *Presentation of the Virgin* to a work of the same subject created around 1496 by a representative of the next generation of Venetian masters, Cima da Conegliano.[84] The biblical figures wearing Muslim turbans and standing in front of Renaissance buildings fit perfectly into Cima's setting of Jerusalem. By the time Cima arrived in Venice, Jacopo Bellini had already passed away. Although we cannot be sure that Cima saw Jacopo's drawings (some scholars believe that he worked in Giovanni Bellini's workshop),[85] it is undeniable that the new generation of Venetian masters to which Cima belonged was profoundly influenced by Jacopo's example. Cima represents Jerusalem as a majestic city, with a grand portico in the background and a magnificent piazza in front of the temple. The buildings, however, lack the robust look of Jacopo's because of their brightly coloured inlay decorations and the richness of their marble pillars. Cima's tendency to using festive ornaments may be explained by a possible influence of Carpaccio's work. In Cima's painting, the arched portico constitutes a further

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[84] We will talk in the next chapter about the composition of Carpaccio on the same subject.
[85] Peter Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 4.

development of artistic ideas displayed in Jacopo's *Presentation*. In contrast, the city in the background resembles the outskirts of Conegliano, the hometown of Cima.

A sub-type of the Italianate Jerusalem can be identified in Jacopo's rendition of the Holy City as a particular Italian town. In Jacopo's *Madonna of Humility with Donor (Lionello d'Este)*, Jerusalem is represented as the city of Ferrara, which was the hometown of the donor and a place where the master himself had stayed for a while. In religious paintings, the depiction of hometowns or architectures specific to a historical city is considered to fulfil a pedagogic or anagogic function. In the *Garden of Prayer*, a book for girls published in Venice in 1454, the author urges the reader to imagine a well-known city and to assume that all the Gospel events took place there.[86] In granting sacred spaces the features of a particular city, artists do not simply reveal a straightforward empirical attitude, but also seek to endow the represented city (often their own) with implications of sacredness and grandeur.

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[86] Michael Baxandall, Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy, A primer in the social history of pictorial style, (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1972), p. 46.

Figure 19. Jacopo Bellini, *Madonna of Humility with Donor (Lionello d'Este),* c.1430, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

However, Jacopo rarely reproduces a historical city as an alter ego of Jerusalem. In most cases, Jacopo's recourse to real and familiar elements aims to moderate the impact determined by the novelty and fancifulness of some of his architectural inventions. A noteworthy example of this is the multi-tiered fountain in the *Judgment of Solomon* (Louvre, ff. 24b and 25a). Its prototype is believed to be the fountain in Verona's Piazza delle Erbe, next to the Venetian column.[87] The base of the fountain is an antique marble basin, which was taken from the Roman *thermae*; crowning the structure is a female statue, a second-century Roman copy (later named the *Madonna Verona*).[88] Bellini adorns his fountain with a variety of ornaments which seem out of place, considering both the period of the biblical event and its allusion to Verona.

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[87] Yevgeny Yailenko, *Venetsianskya antichnost'* ('Venetian antiquity'), (Moscow: Tekst, 2010), p. 89.
[88] Bellini visited Verona, working on the Crucifixion composition for the cathedral.
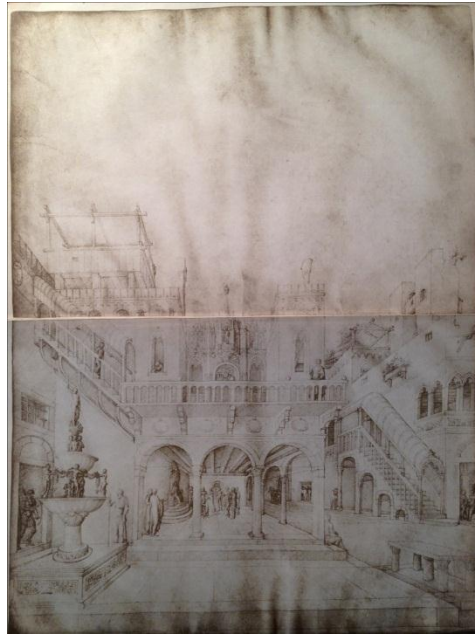
Figure 20. Jacopo Bellini, *Judgment of Solomon,* drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, F.F. 24b and 25a.

Figure 21. La Fontana di Madonna, c. 1368, Verona.

The case of this fountain provides an opportunity to define two further typologies in Jacopo's depiction of Jerusalem, namely, the antique Jerusalem and the fantastic Jerusalem. In *Flagellation* (Louvre F.8) and *Pilate's Court* (Louvre F. 35), the only easily recognisable building is the Arch of the Sergii in Pula.[89] Jacopo hardly ever copied real structures exactly as they were. The representation of

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[89] Irina Smirnova, *Yakopo Bellini i nachalo Vozrozhdeniya v Venetsii* ('Jacopo Bellini and the beginnings of the Renaissance in Italy'), (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1994).

Jerusalem as an ancient city in Jacopo's drawings may be explained in terms of historical accuracy: at the time of Christ, Jerusalem was under Roman rule. However, the tendency towards reproducing antique architecture is a hallmark of the whole Renaissance period. Erudite circles of Northern Italian towns have been known to conduct major antiquity research activity since the beginning of the fifteenth century.[90]

Figure 22. Jacopo Bellini, *Flagellation,* drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Fol. 8a.

Figure 23. Jacopo Bellini, *Pilate's Court*, drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Fol. 35a.

A prevailing motif in Jacopo's depictions of Jerusalem is the image of a column with a Corinthian capital. In *Calvary* (Louvre F. 19a), the column lies on the ground, and most probably symbolises the fall of paganism. Similar ruins and vestiges belong to a common iconography of religious paintings not only in Italy, but also in other European regions; they are loaded with a symbolical charge, much

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[90] Patricia Fortini Brown, 'The Antiquarianism of Jacopo Bellini', Artibus et Hostoriae, Vol. 13, No. 26 (1992), p. 69.

like the fountain, which traditionally represents christening and the purification of the soul.

Figure 24. Jacopo Bellini, *Calvary*, drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 19a.

The whole image of the city in this drawing also shows Jacopo Bellini's visualisation of fantastic Jerusalem. We see a mix of diverse architectural forms behind strong fortified walls from bell-towers with peaked hipped roof to the temple apses with Venetian bifora, which reveals the indelible influence the surrounding architecture had on artist's imagination, as well as his ability as a composer.

Although in depicting architectural spaces Jacopo followed the geometric principles of creating perspectives typical of the Florentine Renaissance, in representing landscapes he continues to abide by mediaeval conventions. I refer, for instance, to the hills framing his views of Jerusalem and serving as a background for biblical events. The almost total absence of vegetation is a striking feature of Jacopo's landscapes. In this regard, Jacopo's sensitivity differs greatly from those of later artists. In 1453, Andrea Mantegna married Jacopo's daughter, Nicolosia, and became his heir along with his sons, Gentile and Giovanni. In comparing the landscapes of Jacopo with those, much more detailed, of Mantegna,

the difference of conception becomes blatant, even if Mantegna undoubtedly took up many motifs from Jacopo.

Figure 25. Andrea Mantegna, *Agony in the Garden,* 1453-1454, National Gallery, London.

Figure 26. Jacopo Bellini, *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem,* drawing, British museum, London, FF. 23b and 24a. Detail.

In Mantegna's *Agony in the Garden*, the depiction of Jerusalem seems to derive from Jacopo's *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem* (British Museum F.F. 23b and 24a). We can note many similarities in buildings such as an 'amphitheatre' with arcades, and a common approach to using the curvature of space to picture the background view of a distant city. The same subject was treated later by Giovanni

Bellini in his *Agony in the Garden* (c.1465; National Gallery, London). Although the scenery is closely reminiscent of Mantegna's work, the architecture of Jerusalem in the background shows no resemblance to that in the pictures of his brother-in-law. The main event is staged in an Italian mediaeval town; a minaret towering on top of a hill is the only reference to an Eastern setting. This single detail is extremely relevant here, since it announces the emergence and development of Muslim motifs in late fifteenth-century representations of Jerusalem. In Giovanni's painting, the reference to the Muslim world is still discreet, almost latent, but it will immensely expand and turn into an essential feature of the Holy Land as interpreted by Venetian masters.

Figure 27. Giovanni Bellini, *Agony in the Garden,* c. 1465, National gallery, London. Detail.

Jerusalem in Mantegna's *Agony in the Garden* is a peculiar and marvellous mix. Its buildings are sharply outlined, providing a detailed and clear view. One must consider Mantegna's accuracy as evidence of the master's genuine interest in the architecture of a non-Christian city: a city, which turns out to be both ancient and Muslim. In reality, Mantegna's allusion to antiquity is laden with more

complex implications for Mantegna through his depiction of Jerusalem intended to evoke not only Rome but also Constantinople, the two capitals of the Roman Empire.[91] I have already mentioned the Roman 'amphitheatre', a round structure with arcades. A large building next to it seems to be a palace or a temple-like structure with order decorations. These two grand architectural pieces frame a triumphal column adorned with an intricate band that winds down its shaft on the model of Trajan's Column. Numerous evocations and references may be discerned upon closer examination. As the legend goes, King Solomon once received a column inscribed with "the wisdom of the world" from a "winged spirit". Jesus would be tied to it during the flagellation. It is not clear whether Mantegna meant to represent Solomon's legendary column. In the painting, the column appears as a triumphal monument, crowned by the golden statue of a mounted emperor and evocative of the famous *Milliarium Aureum* except for the shaft, which is silver, and not gold or bronze. Moreover, the tower resembles the so-called Torre delle Milizie in Rome, which was built in the first half of the twelfth century. Another legend tells us of Emperor Nero standing atop the tower as he watched Rome burn and sang of the fall of Troy. The presence of the tower has been interpreted as an allusion to the imminent fall of the second Rome, Constantinople, and of the decline of the Byzantine Empire. Another detail should draw our attention: the wreaths placed atop the spire-steeples are shaped to resemble a triumphant crescent, which may symbolise the triumph of the Ottoman Muhammad.

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[91] Selective works on Mantegna's allusions to Rome and Constantinople: Vincenzo Fasolo, 'L'ispirazione romano negli sfondi architettonichi del Mantegna', Palladio, XIII, (1963), pp. 179-184; Michael Vickers, 'Mantegna and Constantinople', The Burlington Magazine, Vol. 118, No. 883 (Oct., 1976), p. 680-688.
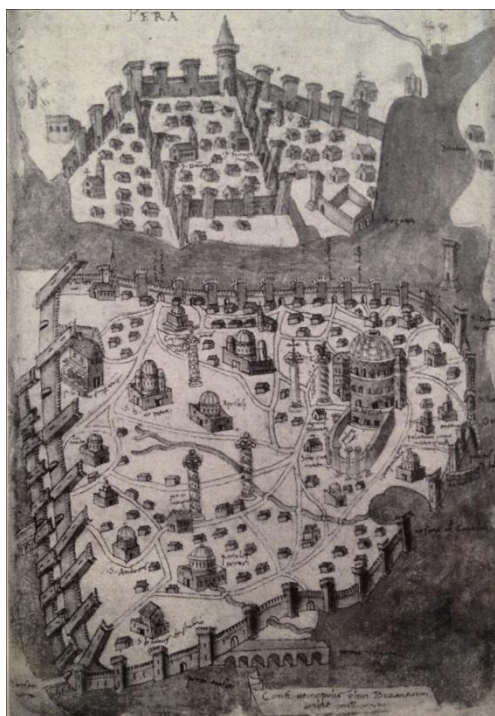
Figure 28. La Torre delle Milizie, Rome.

Figure 29. Constantinopole nel *Liber insularum* (Ms. Lat. XIV.45 (=4595), Biblioteca Marciana, Venezia, f.123r.

These allusions and references are even more complex due to the resemblance of some of the edifices in Mantegna's Jerusalem to actual buildings in

Constantinople: its fortress towers, its hippodrome, its Grand Imperial Palace, and the Column of Justinian (destroyed at the beginning of the sixteenth century).[92] Mantegna's source is supposed to be the *Liber Insularum* by the Florentine merchant and traveller Cristoforo Buondelmonti, two copies of which are held now in the Marciana Library, Venice[93]. Another possible source of inspiration for Mantegna might have been Ciriaco d'Ancona's sketches and description of Constantinople, which are believed to have been familiar to all the members of the Bellini family.[94]

Mantegna fuses Jerusalem and Constantinople in a similarly obvious manner in the *Agony in the Garden* and the *Crucifixion*, both originally part of the predella of the San Zeno Altarpiece (c.1457-60). In both cases the cityscape, obeying the slope of the hills, appears abruptly curved and convex. In these paintings, Jerusalem comprises not only bell-towers, but also a circular building topped by a cupola (its similarity to Hagia Sophia may be intentional, but the first association that comes to mind would be with the Chalke, the main entrance to the Great Palace of Constantinople, in the middle of which a slab of porphyry was placed–the emperor's spot during ceremonies).

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[92] Brian Croke, 'Justinian's Constantinople', in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, edited by Michael Mass, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 66.
[93] Claudia Barsanti, 'Constantinopoli e l'Egeo nei primi decenni del XV secolo: la testimonianza di Cristoforo Buondelmonti', Rivista dell'Instituto nazionale d'Archeologia e storia dell'Arte, 56 (III serie, XXIV), 2001, pp. 83-254.
[94] Ronald Lightbown, *Mantegna: with a Complete Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Prints* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 40.

Figure 30. Andrea Mantegna, *Agony in the Garden,* c. 1457-59, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours.
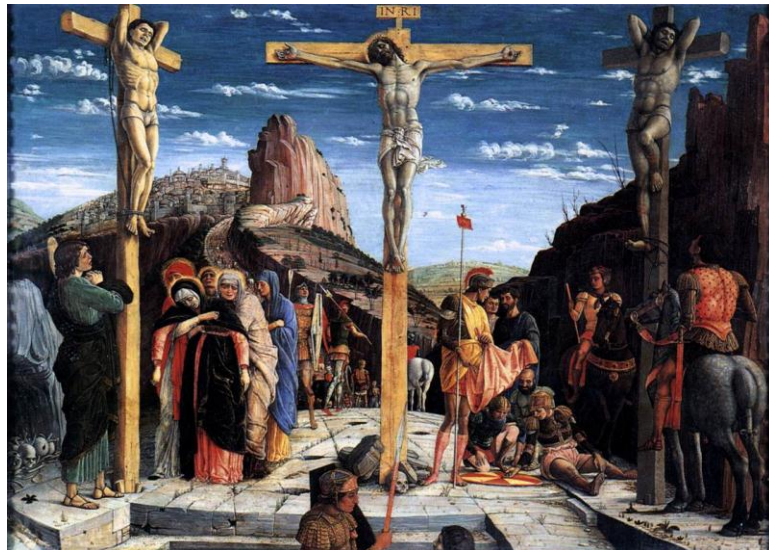

Figure 31. Andrea Mantegna, *Crucifixion,* c. 1457-59, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

I have explained the reasons at the core of the Venetians' unique perception of their native city: a sacred place honoured by the presence of major Christian shrines and relics. These ideas were reflected in numerous Venetian paintings which include the image of Jerusalem. In examining the depiction of Jerusalem in the works of Jacopo Bellini and Andrea Mantegna, I have discussed the essential aspects of art production in late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century Venice. By the same token, I have stressed the crucial role architecture plays in the creation of perspective as evidenced by the works of Jacopo and his followers. In

addition, I have demonstrated how architectural structures that may seem imaginary often reflect real prototypes. Even if these prototypes are not reproduced faithfully or in great detail, it is still possible to recognise them. It is worth noting the creative ways in which artists alter or elaborate upon their written or visual sources. The image of Jerusalem is evoked through the insertion of recognisable elements of its ancient and contemporary topography, through allusions to other symbolic places such as Rome and Constantinople, through assimilation to Italian cities or through the depiction of fantastic architectures. Even in the oeuvre of a single artist such as Jacopo Bellini, Jerusalem is never the same: it morphs constantly in accordance with the artist's goals. As the archetype of the sacred city, Jerusalem lends itself to embodying a wide range of ideals and issues typical of Venetian Renaissance culture. In many compositions where events unfold in Jerusalem or its outskirts, the architecture not only serves as a historical stage, but also incorporates extra-figurative values that are predominantly symbolic and that enable us to understand many aspects of Venice's perception of her own history and artistic production.

Jerusalem in the Pictorial Narratives of Vittore Carpaccio.

I have discussed the characteristic features of Jerusalem's architecture in the paintings of Venetian artists of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Now I would like to point out some general characteristics of the depiction of Eastern cityscapes in Vittore Carpaccio's oeuvre. Jerusalem, indeed, is an important component of Carpaccio's interpretation of the Eastern world. Although the theme of the East, in one way or another, is treated in almost all of his works, it is surprising that little attention has been paid to the specificity of these architectural motifs. In Renaissance art, the representation of architecture is endowed not only with temporal and geographical, but often with symbolic implications. Investigating Carpaccio's Eastern cityscapes will enable us to

determine those common elements against which it is possible to evaluate the specificity of Carpaccio's Jerusalem.

The two most relevant types of Venetian religious paintings are those dedicated to the lives and deeds of the various saint-patrons worshipped by the scuole, (Mark in the first place, but also Catherine, George, Justine, and Stephen) and those depicting historical events related to holy relics and their miracles. The fact that some of these saints' doings occurred in the East explains the presence of Eastern motifs in many religious paintings.

The topics popular in Venice during Carpaccio's time were not only stimulating his interest in everything Eastern[95]; they were inspired by actual connections and recent events. Carpaccio's painting started featuring Eastern themes frequently after 1500. Eastern dignitaries, soldiers, musicians, women in specific dress–all of this makes recurrent appearances in his work.[96]

The cycle of paintings executed by Carpaccio for the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, a confraternity of immigrants from Dalmatia who had moved to Venice fleeing the invading Turks, is worth scrutinising. In 1502, Venice gained some ground in the Ottoman war and signed a truce with Sultan Bayezid II, even as the Rhodes Knights received the relics of St George from the patriarch of Jerusalem. This occasion was celebrated with great festivities in Venice. It is possible that this event led to the commission by the St George confraternity of a cycle of paintings for their scuola.[97] The cycle is dedicated to Dalmatia's three patron Saints: St Jerome (born in Dalmatia), St George and St Tryphon (both born in the Roman province of Asia, previously Phrygia), but the narratives he chose to

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[95] Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de Voragine, poetic cycles about Orlando and others.
[96] Fortini Brown connects this sudden interest with the suddenly tense relations with the ottomans, because of which the reception of the East became a form of mania. Fortini Brown (1988), p. 69.
[97] Gentili (1996), pp. 74-75.

include obviously conjure up the Holy Land and insinuate the idea of a new crusade which would free it from the infidels' rule. The two initial compositions, made in 1502–1503, the *Agony in the Garden* and the *Calling of St Matthew* seem to bear a common message, which proclaims the importance of conversion and the necessity of sacrificing oneself in the pursuit of the highest Christian ideals.

Figure 32. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Calling of Matthew,* 1502, Scuola di San Giorgioa degli Schiavoni, Venice.

In the *Calling of St Matthew* Carpaccio depicts Capharrnaeum in an astonishing manner. There, the city is surrounded by a fortress wall (with Guelph merlons), which reveals majestic buildings. Even the publican's table, spread with rich rugs, is propped on two stone columns, decorated with shaped caps. The characters are arranged in accordance with the all'antica isocephalic principle, with the wall's horizontal line providing a framing. The architecture here is robust and austere, with no added splendor or colors. Nothing of Eastern origin catches the eye, except for one detail: the roof of the square turret above the city gate and, perched on top of it, a small Muslim half-moon.

Figure 33. Vittore Carpaccio, *Triumph of St George*, 1502, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

Figure 34. Pietro Perugino, *Delivery of the Keys,* 1481-82, fresco, Cappella Sistina, Vatican.

In the *Triumph of St George* Carpaccio follows in the footsteps of Perugino who, at the centre of his *Delivery of the Keys*, represented a domed building as the embodiment of an "ideal temple". And yet, the visual impression of the two paintings is different, due in the first place to the differences in their architectural and spatial arrangement. As usual Carpaccio's backdrop is not a paved square (whereas Perugino's background includes regular distinct paving slabs). Unlike Perugino, whose composition is flanked on either side by triumphal arches (one is recognisably the Arch of Constantine), Carpaccio plays down the symmetry of his composition by adding a colorful crowd. Here, as in the *Baptism of the Selenites*, there is more festivity, highlighted by Eastern motifs: figures clad in Muslim

dresses and fortresses with towers-minarets. One must notice the way in which the painter integrates the architectural elements into the scene: he creates a kind of solemn rhythm in the square's surroundings, but also uses the different platforms of the buildings to accommodate the spectators.

Figure 35. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Baptism of the Selenites,* 1507, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

Despite the crowded scene, Carpaccio in the *Baptism of the Selenites* managed to subordinate the composition to a strict module. Filling the foreground with large figures in a continuous freeze slightly higher than the horizon line, he accentuates the relevance of the architectural elements. He arranges the buildings in a complex order, but clearly following some sort of structure. Carpaccio deserves credit here, since the triad of musicians on the platform covered with an Anatolian carpet becomes the chromatic "tuning fork" upon which the chromatism of the composition relies. One of the brightest spots in the painting is the parrot on the foreground: a symbol of eloquence and salvation. Its crimson color is echoed by the red diamonds on the stairs to the right and reverberates with greater intensity in St George's purple mantle. The bright colors of the musicians' dress and of the selenites' clothes, of the staffage and even the horses' scarlet harnesses

are so prominent that Carpaccio seems to deliberately continue this golden-red extravaganza in the chromatism of the architectural elements.

The calm-paced rhythm of the painting's foreground and the diagonal progression of the steps rising to the right are countered by the receding row of the columns to the left. These columns seem compressed by an invisible power. This magnifies the temple's size, in front of which the main action takes place, but also allows for an extraordinary intensification of the pictorial distance.

Figure 36. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Daughter of Emperor Gordian is Exorcised by St Triphon*, 1507, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

Figure 37. Castel Sant'Angelo, 135 – 139 AD, Rome.

Carpaccio succeeded in extending the rhythm of the architectures represented throughout all the compositions so as to deftly punctuate the structure of the entire cycle. The central building in both the *Baptism of the Selenites* and the *Daughter of Emperor Gordian is Exorcised by St Tryphon* is similar to the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. This round building is slightly shifted to the right in the *Baptism*, and to the left in the *Exorcism of St Tryphon*. These two edifices respond to one another, intensifying the link between the two canvases side by side. The same can be said for the steps in the foreground of both paintings. But of course the true common denominator of the two paintings is the extreme brightness, typically Venetian, of the figures' costumes, the linear but colorful architectural decor and the golden light that permeates everything. Carpaccio always thought his compositions through and searched inspiration in real buildings for his architectural motifs. This is proven by the marble incrustations of the rotunda's tower in the *Triumph of St George* and by the decoration of the podium in the *Madonna with Child* set up on the altar of the albergo between the *Baptism* and the *Exorcism of St Tryphon.*

At this point, we can define some of the principles operating in Carpaccio's representations of Jerusalem. In the scuola's *Agony in the Garden* and in the *Holy Family with Two Donors*, the Holy City is barely discernible in the background. In the *Agony*, Jerusalem lies in a valley: an allusion to "the power of darkness" in Luke's Gospel. The city's low placement makes sense, since the action is supposed to take place on the Mount of Olives, which rose higher than the city. In the Lisbon painting, Carpaccio anchors the towers of Jerusalem upon a hill, perhaps a reference to the iconography of the city of God.[98] Some of the buildings here soar

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[98] Book of Revelation 21:2: 'And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband'. 21:10: 'And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God'. 21:12: 'And had a wall great and high, and had

above a natural arch which is also featured in *St George and the Dragon*. In Carpaccio's *Sacra Conversazione* a real arch may symbolise the entrance to the "heavenly world". Interestingly, Jerusalem here appears not simply on a hill but on the shoreline, which can also be seen in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*. On these premises, one can interpret the faraway fortresses in the Lisbon *Holy Family* as a reference to the Golden Horn Bay.[99]

Figure 38. Vittore Carpaccio, *Agony in the Garden,* 1502, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel'.

[99] Although it may also be associated with Venice itself and the Dalmatian shoreline, since some of the first members of the fraternity were sailors.

Figure 39. Vittore Carpaccio, *Holy Family with Two Donors,* 1505, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

Figure 40. Vittore Carpaccio, *Sacra Conversazione,* c. 1505, Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon.

Figure 41. Detail of Figure 40.

Figure 42. Vittore Carpaccio, *St George and the Dragon*, 1502, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice.

However, in other compositions the urban architectural decoration unequivocally evokes "real" Jerusalem. An example of this is to be observed in the Scuola di San Giorgio's *Triumph of St George*, where some aspects of the city of Silene bear resemblance to buildings in the *View of Jerusalem* by Erhard Reuwich (1486). In the painting, the statue upon the high column next to the Temple of Solomon (an octagonal building in accordance with contemporary conventions), which appears in the preparatory drawing for this composition (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) is no longer visible. Analogously, Carpaccio attenuates his allusions to contemporary Jerusalem by suppressing the half-moon from atop the cupolas and the turrets of the city, although most of the figures are dressed in Muslim costumes and the towers on the building to the left, which are usually assimilated with Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, are similar to minarets. If these are reminders of fifteenth-century Muslim Jerusalem, then it must be admitted that their impact is counterbalanced by elements evocative of the ancient Jerusalem.
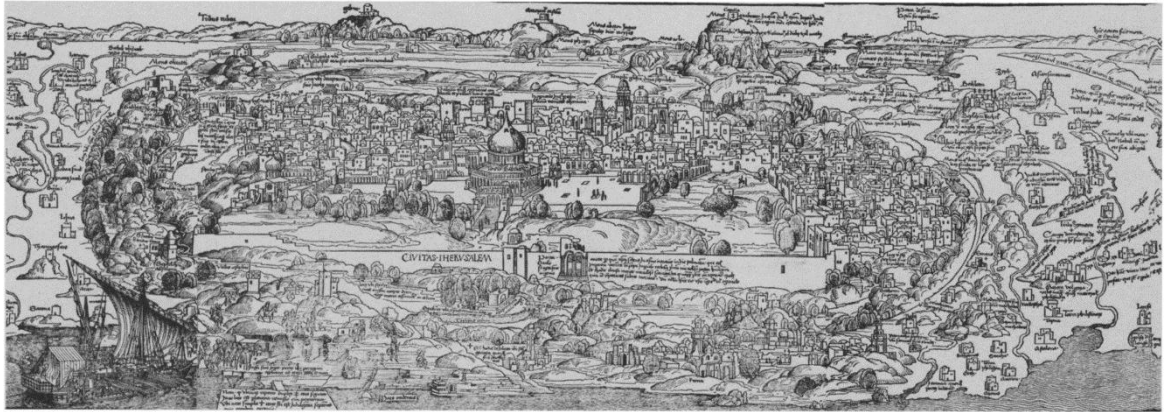
Figure 43. Erhard Reuwich, *View of Jerusalem,* from Breydenbach, *Peregrinationes in Terram Sanctam.*

Figure 44. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Triumph of St George,* 1402, drawing, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
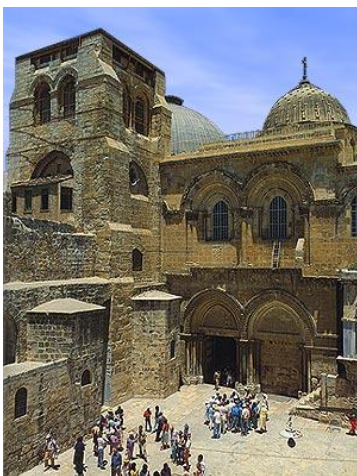

Figure 45. Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's architecture is given a more splendid representation in Carpaccio's paintings commissioned by the Scuola degli Albanesi. His *Presentation of the Virgin* gives us an opportunity to note not only the influence that Carpaccio's teachers and colleagues had on him[100], but also his knowledge of contemporary drawings.[101] The stage for this composition is set mainly on the exterior of Solomon's Temple. By contrast, the subject of *Marriage of the Virgin* from the same cycle allows Carpaccio to evocatively replicate the Temple's magnificent interior. Here, Carpaccio seems to represent authentic Judaic relics, including the Ark of the Covenant. The temple architecture, however, is filled with both late antique and Italian inlay decoration.[102] Similarly, the design of the marble Giants' Staircase (1483-1498; architect-Antonio Rizzo) and of other palaces and religious Venetian buildings is reflected in Carpaccio's interpretation of Solomon's Temple. It is worth noting Carpaccio's technique of manipulating architectural volumes. Despite the pompous decorations, which include marble inlays and intricate panels, the walls visually limit the view of the beholder. Perhaps in an attempt to avoid this effect, Carpaccio uses the doorway as an opening onto the outside "world" - onto the square, where one can see the silhouettes of classic buildings with richly inlay facades adorned with white columns and arches.

The spatial organisation in this cycle is much simpler than in his other work. I consider this to be related to the paintings' format, which are almost square-shaped and therefore impose a certain compositional structure. This specific format is emphasised by large geometric figures that are made less austere by a colorful and decorative layout, matching the atmosphere and the image of actual

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[100] See chapter 2 of the present work.

[101] For example, illustrations from Vita della Madonna istoriada, published in Venice in 1502. (Stefania Mason, Carpaccio: the Major Pictorial Cycles, (Milano: Skira, 2000), p. 171).

[102] According to one of the theories, this particular style has been influenced by north-italian certose, which utilised mosaics and architectural ornamentation in the décor of the monasteries. The art of certose was in turn heavily affected by the Byzantine and Muslim art, processed through Venetian filter.

Venice. However, it is obvious that here one observes the fusion of several architectural motifs from different sources: Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople and Venice.

Figure 46. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Presentation of the Virgin,* 1504-08, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 47. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Marriage of the Virgin,* 1504-08, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Carpaccio's biographers have yet to agree whether the artist actually traveled east[103], or whether he gathered information from the illustrations he could have accessed in Venice (Oriental sketches by Gentile Bellini, Erhard Reuwich's woodcuts illustrating the *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* by von Breydenbach, and the illustrations to Filarete's *Treatise on Architecture* [104]). However, all scholars agree that the origin of the artist's passion for Oriental subjects stems from the contrasting Ottoman-Venetian relations; the conquest of Constantinople and the rule of the Holy Land by Turks helped keep alive the memory of the stoicism exhibited by the first Christian martyrs in the East.

To paraphrase Fortini Brown, Carpaccio's method of depicting architecture can be defined as "archeological contamination"[105], since the architectural motifs in Carpaccio's paintings carry the trademark signs of many different types of buildings without evoking any of them in particular. As a rule, Carpaccio fused characteristic elements of Venetian palaces and churches with elements of Eastern and antique architecture, not to mention his evocation of castles and fortresses typical of Northern Italy. In his fictive cityscapes, all these various elements seamlessly blend together. Yet certain fragments of the architectural backdrop in

[103] One argument in favor of the painter having been in Jerusalem is as follows: Giovanni Bellini turned down Francesco Gonzaga's request to paint a panorama of Paris, saying he had never been there. (Смирнова (1982), стр. 15). In connection to this, Carpaccio's only surviving letter comes to mind – its subject is the painting for Francesco Gonzaga (the letter's addressee) – a watercolor panorama of Jerusalem on a large sheet of paper. Unfortunately, no data of the finished order is present. Yet it is important to note David Marshall's opinion on the matter. He notes that the two lost views of Jerusalem, which are mentioned in Carpaccio's letter from the 15 August 1511 to Gian Francesco Gonzaga were identical to Reuwich's engravings. The size of the views, that Carpaccio quotes in the letter, is additional proof, since the proportions are also like those in Reuwich's work 1:4,5 and 1:4.7. (Marshall (1984), p. 620).
[104] The Florentines treatise (around 1465) was well known in Northern Italy and had a significant impact on its architecture.
[105] Fortini Brown, (1988), p. 115.

Carpaccio's painting are easily recognisable: Crusader castles on the islands of Crete and Rhodes and historic buildings in Jerusalem. [106]

If, on the one hand, Carpaccio's evocation of the East resonates with historical and symbolical implications, on the other hand it is obvious that his Eastern motifs also add a sense of celebration and ornamentality, expressed in a palette presenting a wide spectrum of subtle hues. Like Gentile Bellini, Carpaccio ingeniously designed his buildings and cityscapes, leaving no doubt about his profound knowledge of architecture.[107]

The simple statistics demonstrate that all six of the scuolas having painters in their service at this time chose Carpaccio[108] to create their narrative cycles. This preference is probably accounted for by Carpaccio's narrative verve. But, probably, Venetian commissioners were also attracted by the artist's knack for inventing sceneries in such a way as to have a suggestive effect on the viewer.

The quality of the artistic world of Carpaccio, which sets the artists apart from ordinary descriptive painters, is his poetic imagination, his gift for describing the poetry of the contours and inflections of emotions. This is why his huge canvases ought to be explored carefully, as Carpaccio devised all their details to be appreciated also separately. This is why the architectural "details" in his works are also "narrative" and require the slow, meticulous gaze of the viewer.

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[106] Note that the fifteenth century witnessed the final establishment of an urban civilisation, in which space and time gauge public relationships. This might have promoted the depiction of real objects.

[107] It would seem reasonable to connect this to the fact that Jacopo's work also presents some evidence of his work on the Palazzo Ducale

[108] Also, along with others, Carpaccio worked on the Miracle of The Cross at the Ponte di Rialto. He also worked on paintings commissioned by cities in Dalmatia and Istria (Zara, Koper)

<u>Jerusalem in Carpaccio's St Stephen Cycle.</u>

As I have said already, Carpaccio's last cycle, which represents the life of St Stephen, was commissioned by the Scuola di Santo Stefano and created between 1511 and 1520.[109] Unfortunately, only four of the five original panels have been preserved: *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon* (1511; Berlin, Staatliche Museen), *The Sermon of St Stephen* (1514; Paris, Musée du Louvre), *The Disputation of St Stephen* (1514; Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera), and *The Stoning of St Stephen* (1520; Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie)[110]. In this cycle, the artist returns to his favorite motifs, giving us the opportunity to assess the complexity of his final production and to trace the algorithm of his visual interpretation of one of the most archetypical iconographies in the history of Christian art: that of the earthly and celestial Jerusalem.

Figure 48. Vittore Carpaccio, *St Stephen is Consecrated Deacon,* 1511, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

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[109] On the history of the scuola see: Augusto Gentili, 'Nuovi documenti e contesti per l'ultimo Carpaccio. II. I teleri per la scuola di Santo Stefano in Venezia', Artiibus et Historiae, Vol. 9, No. 18 (1988), pp. 79-108.

[110] On the original arrangement of the paintings in the interior of the scuola see: Michael Green, 'La scuola di Santo Stefano in Venezia: Sede delle ultime storie di Vittore Carpaccio', Studi Veneziani, 29, (1995), pp. 143-66.

Figure 49. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Sermon of St Stephen,* 1514, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 50. Vittore Carpaccio, *Disputation of St Stephen,* 1514, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 51. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Stoning of St Stephen,* 1520, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

This cycle has much in common with paintings commissioned by the Scuola di San Giorgio such as the *Triumph of St George* and the *Baptism of the Selenites*; Carpaccio even copies some motifs from these canvases. Despite the sometimes formulaic character of the compositions, the St Stephen cycle avoids repetition, which Carpaccio achieves by means of a concentrated, dramatic action, an energetic style and the festive freshness of his palette. The landscapes in these paintings are especially eye-catching. They are saturated in light and air, wider and deeper than most of Carpaccio's other landscapes. They are painted in denser, deeper tones. The massive bluish mountains, hills, rocky ravines, treetops almost swell and grow denser, as they are outlined by powerful yet smooth contours. All this is reminiscent of Giorgione's landscapes and of Titian's early work. But, unlike his younger fellow painters, Carpaccio is not satisfied with "pure" bucolic

scenery; for him the natural landscape is inseparably connected to architecture: an architecture that becomes more diverse and fanciful than ever. Carpaccio's imagination designs strange antique temples abutting fortresses, pyramids alternating with palaces, fret worked tiered towers side by side with delicate 'minarets'. Notwithstanding the fertility of his architectural inventions, Carpaccio does not renounce rendering the image of the City of God concretely and matter-of-factly. The striking fact is that the architectural forms of Carpaccio's Jerusalem are different in all four paintings. Therefore, I will analyse the compositions in the chronological order of their creation and attempt to understand the role of their architectural elements as a whole.

In *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon,* the main action unfolds in accordance with the conventions of Venetian pictorial narrative, and is characterised by a frieze-like arrangement of the figures within a narrow foreground, backed by a spacious architectural and scenic panorama. The close up helps us to appreciate the beautiful dalmatics worn by the six young Christians, who according to tradition were chosen by the apostles, positioned next to and behind Peter, with young Stephen before him on the knees. The musical term *legato* (literally meaning "tied together") is perfect for describing Carpaccio's compositional style. Since the action culminates in the figure of the kneeling Stephen on the porch steps, the group of Christians and of 'saintly wives' create a kind of colorful train tailing after the hero. This calm cortege acts like a musical tie– creating a prolonged note brimming with calm energy. Stephen's head is crowned with an aureole and he is the only figure given visual relevance by the framing of an arch in the background. The archway's portico is lithe, narrow and yet solid, and it helps to highlight the significance of the young hero. This little portico takes on the function of a triumphal arch, a triumph of Faith. In the *Sermon of St Stephen*, this motif becomes even more obvious. However, it can also be seen in other paintings by Carpaccio and other artists. For example, in Carpaccio's *Presentation of the Virgin*, the head of Mary is bent in a similar way as Stephen's,

and its emplacement is accentuated by a higher nimbus, with the arch of the building serving as a backdrop.

Figure 52. Detail of Figure 48.   Figure 53. Detail of Figure 46

At first glance the perspective seems impeccable, but is not exempt from imperfections. It indeed recedes at an astonishing pace, accentuated by the antique portico of the temple, whose nineteen arches are compressed like an accordion's bellows. One can only assume that this compression of the portico was needed in order to highlight the impressive size of the temple, where presumably deacons were elected. I have already noticed the "speeding-up" of space in a more rudimentary form in the *Baptism of the Selenites,* which was created seven years before the beginning of the St Stephen cycle. These pictures, commissioned by two competing *scuole*, match each other in the ways in which the temples are displayed on view: they are painted on the right side of the compositions and the main action around them is organised in a similar manner. Both pictures have figures on the lower step of the temple and before it; it is wrong to consider these figures as merely staffage. In fact, they accomplish a primary iconographic function. In *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon* the heroes are the evangelical widow, the orphan

and the traveler, to whom any good Christian must give alms and help[111]. In both compositions the steps, though different in shape, face the viewer, somehow including him or her in the action represented. Although both pictures offer truly spectacular action in the foreground, Carpaccio does not include (as previously in other similar compositions) onlookers: the religious event takes place with no one to witness it.

In *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon* one can also observe a red parrot, a kind of starting point for the eye from which we can draw imaginary lines, charting the perspective all the way to the horizon line. The parrot is perched on a stone, a symbol of St Stephen's future passion. In the *Baptism* the horizon line supports the representation of Castel Sant'Angelo, which visually truncates the space. The perspective axes, supported by vigorous architectural forms, go beyond the horizon line, creating the illusion of infinite space.

Figure 54. Detail of Figure 48.

Unlike the *Baptism*, the *St. Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon* presents an inversion in the disposition of the figures, since those aligned in a frieze appear in

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[111] Gentili A, 'Nuovi documenti e contesti per l'ultimo Carpaccio. II. I teleri per la scuola di Santo Stefano in Venezia', in *Artiibus et Historiae*, Vol. 9, No. 18 (1988), p. 82.

the foreground, below the imaginary middle line of the painting. In this manner, Carpaccio not only makes the figures seem smaller, but also vacates the centre of the canvas, creating a spacious middle ground. This space is occupied by the portico-tower on the right and by a compact group of buildings to the left. It is difficult to find any similarities between the buildings of this composition and Venetian houses. However, the *fumaioli* (chimneys) perched on the gabled roofs behind the fortress walls are Venetian, as pointed out by David Marshall[112]; it is also possible that the building behind St Peter (Marshall says nothing of its function) is also "Venetian". There is nearly no hint of Mauro Codussi's architecture, nor of Pietro Lombardo's, although their styles are so clearly evoked in other paintings by Carpaccio, such as the *Annunciation*. In *St. Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*, only the incrustations in the spandrels of the triumphal arch may summon the works of these architects. Venice is present here only in the form of the expanse of water and the sailboats in the distance. It is no coincidence that Carpaccio's Jerusalem is situated on the shoreline: in a sense, the Holy City incorporates features of the Serenissina and her surrounding lagoon.

Nonetheless, the bulk and proportions of the buildings depicted suggest the urban scene of a far-stretching city. Besides the oddities already touched upon with regard to the distortions of the orthogonal projection, another element looks strident. As Marshall notes, "although the effect of an organic whole is present, it was achieved by means of [the buildings'] placement side by side; no attempt is made to convincingly combine them. For example, the main rectangle of the foremost structure's wall is continued by the back wall but upon closer inspection of the bottom line we can see that the back wall does not quite match. It does not adjoin the castle wall at the other side either, so a second refraction occurs and the two parts have different vanishing points."[113] In reality we are looking at two

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[112]Marshall (1984), p.610
[113]Ibid, p. 613.

different buildings that the painter had no intention of link together, despite the fact that he does not indicate the distance between them. This composition demonstrates Carpaccio's dwelling on principles of architectural and urban illusionism that would be soon surpassed by the masters of the High Renaissance. Despite all these inconsistencies, we are obliged to give the artist credit for his ability to arrange the structure of the architectural decor, which otherwise would create the impression of a fragmented vision.

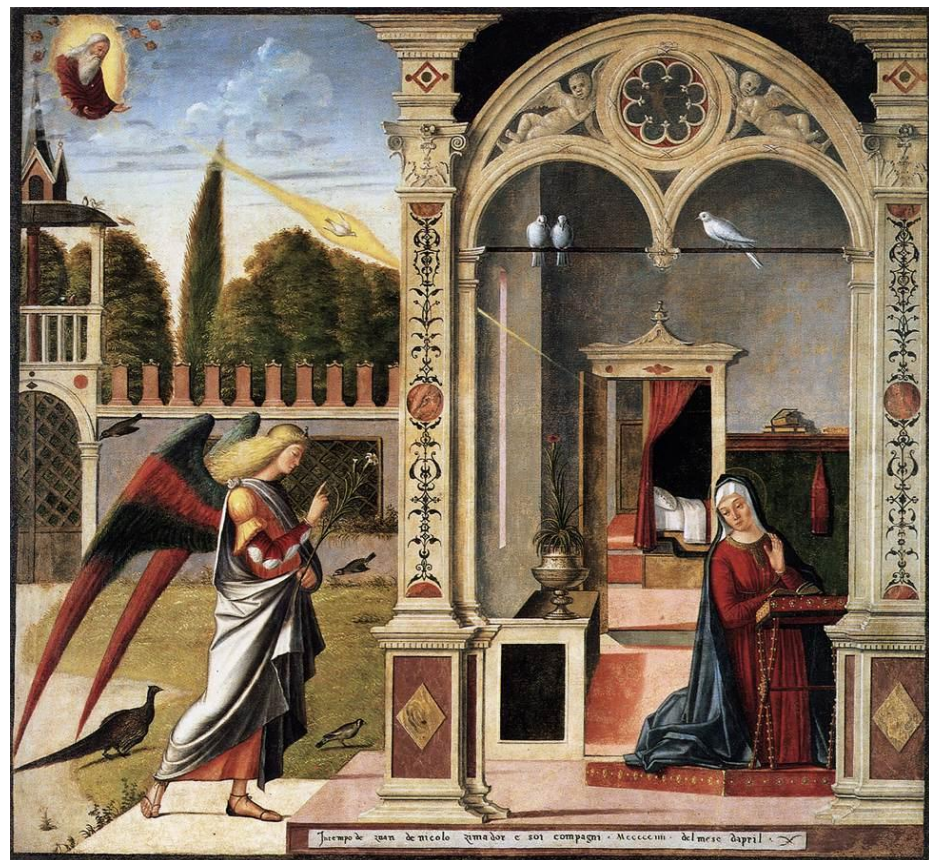Figure 55. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Annunciation*, 1504, Galleria Franchetti, Ca d'Oro, Venice.

Interesting enough, in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*, buildings characterised by regional elements similar to those mentioned by Marshall (the castle of Soncino, Cremona and the towers of Rhodes)[114], are endowed with a monumentality worthy of the prestigious edifices of a capital such as Castel

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[114]Ibid, p. 613.

Sant'Angelo. I would also mention the centric towers close to the Porta Aurea in Constantinople, which may easily be identified with the building in the background "invented" by Carpaccio.

Figure 56. Rocca Sforzesca, Soncino.

Figure 57. Palace of the Grand Master, Rhodes.

Figure 58. Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, *Sermon of St Mark in Alexandria,* 1504-07, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Therefore, Carpaccio's Jerusalem, as it is shown in *St Stephen is Consecrated Deacon*, has some features that reminds us of both Rome and Constantinople. One scene combines a high row of fortifications, a minaret that looks like the Alexandrian minarets painted by Venetian artists in the Marciana cycles (e.g. *Sermon of Saint Mark in Alexandria* by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini and Roman architecture (though designed with Renaissance proportions: one of these buildings, a *campanila,* resembles the one we have seen in the *Daughter of Emperor Gordian is Exorcised by St Triphon;* another "Roman-inspired" edifice is the two-level tower with arched recesses behind St Stephen). Before the hill, on the left, there is a construction resembling both Absalom's tomb in Jerusalem[115] and Zechariah's[116] (because of the even, smooth sides of the pyramid that constitutes the basis for its column). Both these real monuments show the same typology (pyramidal top on a column base) and might have been the prototypes of Carpaccio's fantasies. In my opinion, this very isolated fragment, showing a part of

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[115] The Absalom's tomb is an ancient stone monument with conic top in Kedron valley in Jerusalem. The monument is traditionally thought to be the tomb of Absalom, the rebellious son of King David. However, later scholars suppose the monument was created in the first century A.D.

[116] This monument was ascribed as a tomb of priest Zechariah, only two centuries before the creation of Carpaccio's cycle.

the necropolis with the tombs, reflects Carpaccio's interpretation of the remains of ancient buildings as a symbol of the fading old world after the advent of the Messiah. But Carpaccio's buildings are complete, they even look as though they were renovated, while in the central niche of the hypothetical 'tomb' a statue is depicted, resembling Praxiteles' *Hermes*, without its upper body and arms, while nearby on the ground lies a chunk of a column.

Figure 59. Absalom's pilar, Jerusalem.

Figure 60. Zechariah tomb, Jerusalem

Figure 61. Detail of Figure 48

Besides some minor details, such as the pediment crowning the tomb to the left and that of the arcaded portico behind St Stephen, a major common characteristic emerges from the Carpaccio's architectures in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*: the sandy yellowish color of all the buildings. In this regard, the paintings of the St Stephen cycle are an exception among Carpaccio's traditionally polychrome cityscapes. This predominant tonality is used by Carpaccio in the *Sermon of St Stephen*, where the action takes place inside the city walls. Although one of the octagonal buildings at the left boasts some delicate coloring, all the rest–the city's temples, houses and towers–are of the same yellowish color, which is, surprisingly, quite close to the sandy ochre of Jerusalem today.

David Marshall extensively commented on Carpaccio's use of Erhard Reuwich's woodcuts illustrating Breydenbach's text for his depiction of the octagonal building in *The Sermon of St Stephen*. He agrees with his predecessors (Ludwig-Molmenti, Creswell and others), that this edifice evidently resembles the Dome of the Rock, which was associated then with Solomon's Temple. In addition, Marshall notes that the building is also closely related to a number of representations of ideal churches in Umbrian painting, such as the temples in Perugino's *Delivery of the Keys* and Raphael's *Marriage of the Virgin* (1504; Milan, Brera). This comes as no surprise for the Renaissance ideal of centrally planned churches reflects an attempt on the painter's part to apply to modern sacred buildings the same divinely inspired proportions used by Solomon in constructing his Temple. Saying that "by bringing his representation into conformity with Renaissance ideals, Carpaccio was at the same time approaching more nearly the true appearance of Solomon's Temple", Marshall fails to remark that Carpaccio singles out Jerusalem's main building especially through color.

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Figure 62. Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem.
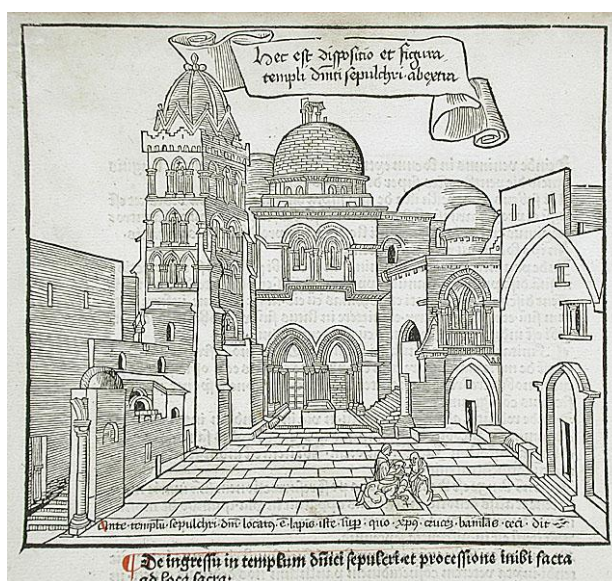
Figure 63. Erhard Reuwich, *Church of the Holy Sepulchre,* from Breydenbach, *Peregrinationes in Terram Sanctam.*

Note that a centric building, emphasised by its colour, and resembling the Dome of the Rock, appears in Renaissance painting several times. It was essentially a temple building which is traditionally identified with Solomon's Temple. However, Carpaccio may have found its prototype for his "temple" not only in the Dome of the Rock, but also in other visual sources. I stress this point since many scholars believe that Carpaccio's building in the background, which is

usually interpreted as the Holy Sepulchre Church, was inspired only by Reuwich's woodcuts.

In the *Sermon*, as well as in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*, the downfall of the Old World is symbolised by the ruined condition of some of the "smaller" elements of the buildings' decoration. Stephen is reading his sermon on a pedestal which is a fragment of an ancient statue. But the city is displayed in all of its magnificence in contrast with the cityscapes of Italian urban centres in the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. By this, I do not mean the geometric correctness and harmony of Carpaccio's buildings, but rather their arrangement on different levels, using the natural relief of the hillside. In this case, there is no shoreline, perhaps because Carpaccio suggests its presence outside the city wall. In the far distance a mountain rises, demonstrating Carpaccio's mastery of aerial perspective. The artist also uses the luxurious hillside as an indicator of the city's connection to its environment. The rest of the view is a kind of an enlarged axonometric image (with a picturesque blend of rigid and precise linearity) against a flat theatrical backdrop. The triumphal arch in the middle distance holds the composition together. It faces the viewer straight on so as to align itself with the row of buildings to the right, while through its entrance it directs the viewer's gaze towards the town square, which climbs towards the hillside, as is often the case in cities of the Veneto. As I have already suggested, the triumphal arch correlates easily with the figure of St Stephen and carries a familiar symbolism, signifying the triumph of faith. In addition, its presence conjures up Jerusalem's archway from the times of Emperor Hadrian (which in turn echoed the Arch of Trajan in Ancona) as part of the entrance to the Roman Forum in Jerusalem. Carpaccio's compositional talent deserves further praise: he organises the whole cityscape in such a way that the hill and all the buildings on it seem to bend around Stephen's figure, as if pivoting around the saint's index finger, pointed skyward.

In the *Disputation*, a pyramid seems to enfold the saint's figure. Its peculiar shape carries several implications. Firstly, the ancient Romans used this typology for their tombs, as it was a symbol of eternity. During the Renaissance, interest in these kinds of constructions was rekindled. In the work attributed to the Dominican friar Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), the Egyptian pyramid is the symbol of Time's flow (the three sides representing the present, past and future, for one can see only two sides of it at the same time, that of the past and the present) and also a symbol of the fleeting quality of life and the feebleness of man.

Marshall suggests that Carpaccio could also have drawn on Filarete's treatise as a source for this strange pyramid[117]. The pyramid and the obelisk were often combined at the time, resulting in a pyramidal obelisk (in the form of a relief on the wall) as a headstone, as for example in the Cappella Chigi in Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, designed by Raphael in 1513. However, in our case the pyramid, though it does carry a commemorative function, is not a mausoleum properly speaking. Perhaps, Carpaccio chose his form for it incarnates an idea of aspiration to the empyrean. At the same time it is a linking element of the composition, correlating with the cypress (this tree being as well the Christian symbol of Eden) in the central arch and with two conic towers to the right. In the background there is another city square, decorated with statues, which is not paved as the main Venetian "campi" were during the fifteenth century. The cityscape's composition does not seem overly complicated so that Carpaccio manages to avoid monotony by diversifying the buildings in the background, especially those on the right with which the outer columns of the portico are obviously aligned.

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[117] Marshall (1984), p. 611.
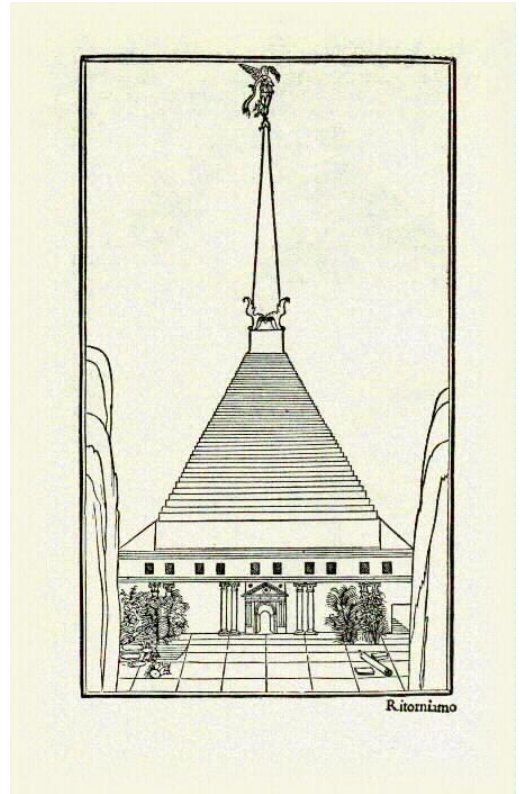
Figure 64. Detail of Figure 49

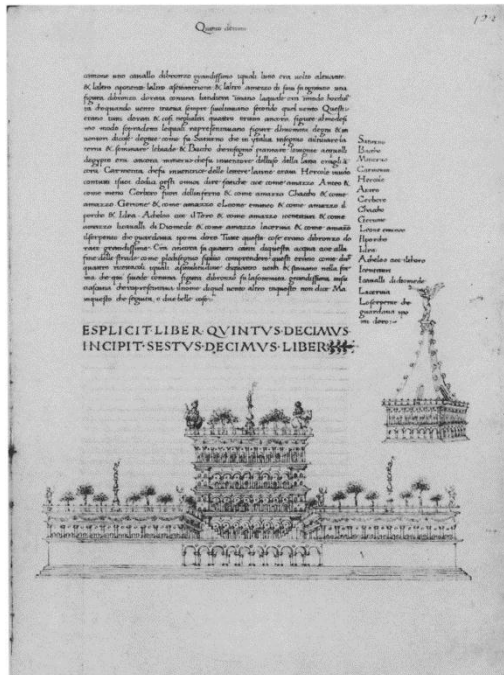Figure 65. Illustration from *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

Figure 66. Illustration from Filarete's *Treatise,* Biblioteca Marciana, Venezia.

Interestingly, Carpaccio represents here an arched portico with delicate columns similar to those that added grace to the majestic architectures of his early St Ursula cycle. But their usage clearly differs. In the St Stephen cycle the arched portico does not serve to separate the events happening at different times as depicted on a single canvas. The main novelty in the loggia's decoration is the material of which it is made: the columns in the *Disputation* are ivory-colored, and provide an excellent framing for the deep hues of black and red displayed in the centre. In particular, the pyramid and the equestrian monument on a slab of stone supported by three wide columns stand out. Each of these elements is similar in shape to the inner cylindrical supports of the mausoleum in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*, but here the niches reach to the bottom of the drums, and the statues in them are full-length and intact. Therefore, it is clear that an interpretation of these elements as symbols of the "crumbling Old World" does not hold here. The intactness of the mausoleum is probably natural in a depiction of the city's centre (in contrast to the sepulchral composition behind the city wall in *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*). Carpaccio is very perceptive in his distinctions of urban settings.

The horseman, who derives from Donatello's Gattamelata or Verrocchio's equestrian monument to Bartolomeo Colleoni, is already present in the *Triumph of St George.* The pedestals of both statues again demonstrate the artist's wonderful imagination, which, though capricious, always finds a functional application. The nude statues in the niches, the half-moon, and the figures in turbans are supposed to signify to the viewer that this was a pagan city. The complicated architecture here, as in the first two compositions, "retells" the story of the mythical, yet very real city of Jerusalem.

In the urban setting of Jerusalem, inspired, as I have already shown, by many different sources, Carpaccio manages to include towers akin to minarets[118]. Also, the small cupolas in the background of the *Sermon* indicate that Carpaccio must have known of the architecture of Eastern bathhouses. In this manner, the evocation of contemporary Muslim East naturally interweaves within the overall architectural configuration of the Holy City.

The final composition of the cycle is the *Stoning of St. Stephen*, which features architecture only marginally, with only some buildings on a hill in the background. But if one pays close attention, one can see that the artist gathered here all the typologies of building from his other paintings: the triumphal arches, the 'minarets', the high buildings with arcades and cupolas, the fortress walls and the Dome-of-the-Rock-like of temples. No other painting in the cycle can boast such a fine rhythm and concentrated balanced structure as this.

As a summary of my analysis of the architectural decoration in the St Stephen cycle, I must note that Carpaccio for the first time refrains from utilising the style of small-scale, almost intimate decorative elements, which is to be observed in his other cycles.

Here, the whole structural decoration of Jerusalem's architecture is much more impressive and solemn. This is perhaps why Carpaccio toned down the chromatism of his buildings, resorting to a quasi-monochrome. By this means, the viewer is able to focus up on the single figures despite the intricacy of these multi-figural compositions. The severity and rigor of the major buildings, which can be clearly seen in the first three paintings of the cycle, magnifies the visual impact of Jerusalem. The architectural elements represented in the St Stephen cycle

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[118]David Marshall states that those images derive from the sketches by Gentile Bellini. (Marshall (1984), p. 69)

accomplish a compositional function, which helps the artist to create a unitary atmosphere.

Thus, the iconography of the Holy City in the St Stephen cycle is highly innovative as much as Carpaccio here more than anywhere else used his knowledge of Jerusalem's existing constructions as a linchpin for his architectural fantasies. In three paintings of this cycle, Carpaccio in fact visualises an impressively complex city. In two compositions, Jerusalem is seen from the outside. In the first, *St Stephen Is Consecrated Deacon*, the artist creates an evocative ensemble, hidden behind imposing fortress walls, whose grandeur is made imaginable to the beholder through the outcropping fragments of distant buildings and the frontal view of a temple's façade on the left. In the last painting, *The Stoning of St Stephen*, Jerusalem is placed on an elevation, as if Carpaccio was suggesting its identification with the Heavenly Jerusalem. If one takes into consideration that it was precisely for his opinion on the temple's function ("the Most High doesn't dwell in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48)) that St Stephen was stoned and martyred, it can be assumed that the intention of Carpaccio was to depict Stephen's strangeness to paganism by distancing his figure from temple in the painting. That said, the artist also follows the Gospel: "and rushed at him with one accord. They threw him out of the city, and stoned him" (Acts 7:57-58). Already in the comparison of these two paintings, we can see Carpaccio's ability to create different "Jerusalems" in conformity with the particular narrative context.

In all these fictive architectures of cityscapes, it is possible to identify the innumerable iconographical sources which most likely inspired Carpaccio. However, only his fertile invention and sense of architectural coherence allowed Carpaccio to visualise harmonious complexes of buildings tightly related to the theological and symbolic meanings of his *storie*.

And because the metrics of the illusory space is homogeneous to the metrics of the real three-dimensional space, one can still experience the feelings that Carpaccio's depicted Jerusalem aroused in sixteenth-century viewers in entering and browsing through the now lost interior of the albergo in the Scuola di Santo Stefano.

The focus of this chapter has been the architectural representation of Jerusalem in Venetian paintings. This means that I gave myself the task of analysing the characteristic elements of Carpaccio's architecture not only within the context of his work but, also with reference to the paintings of his contemporaries and compatriots.

The city in and of itself in the artistic aesthetics of Carpaccio's time was a synonym of civilised order and virtual mirror of sanctity. Obviously, Jerusalem, as the sacred site of many of Christ's doings and his great sacrifice, was a special subject in the field of religious art. Venice was considered to be one of the major centres of Christian faith and therefore did not hesitate to appropriate the aura of sanctity inherent in both the historical Holy City and its celestial counterpart, as soon as Venice realised that Jerusalem might lose its sacred status in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest.

Visual associations with Constantinople, Rome and Venice were already evident in Jacopo Bellini's drawn representations of Jerusalem. Bellini's influence played a key role in the development of the next generation of Venetian artists, including Carpaccio. This means that the blending of artificial, imaginary elements with realistic ones specific to Carpaccio's Jerusalem was by no means his invention, neither was Carpaccio the first to depict miracles taking place among everyday events. Yet Carpaccio is exceedingly imaginative, and his take on dramatic topics and the scenography of his paintings make him stand out among his contemporaries.

Carpaccio's pictorial architectures, including the buildings portrayed in his last cycle, created at a time when in Florence and Rome the so-called High Renaissance was blooming, still follow the artistic rules of the Quattrocento, upholding traditional ways of representing the pictorial space through the principles of geometry and linear perspective .

Although Venice was graced by Leonardo's presence in 1500, Carpaccio does not seem to have been affected by this visit. However, at the same time Giorgione was starting to work in Venice and his influence proved to be a milestone in the development of the Venetian school. It would be a mistake to presume that Carpaccio was still following Cennino Cennini's instructions for painting architecture and yet, although he possessed a thorough grasp on geometric perspective and experimented with very complex spatial constructs, one can see in his work some archaic elements and also an absence of aerial perspective.

Relying on Lorenzo Gori-Montanelli's typology of architectural functions in Tuscan painting[119], Carpaccio's pictorial architecture as conceived in three of the survived paintings from the St Stephen cycle can be defined as *architettura-ambiente*, architecture meant to enfold the figures. Only *The Stoning of St Stephen* offers the viewer an example of *architettura-oggetto*, that is, an architecture which is itself the visual focus of the subject matter.

There is no doubt that in his final cycle Carpaccio continued using architecture as a means of framing his tridimensional scenes of action. Yet, in the St Stephen cycle he abandoned the depiction of multiple scenes occurring at different times (continuous narratives), a pictorial practice he often resorted to in earlier works. This manner of painting was obviously influenced by theatrical productions. In the St Stephen cycle, however, Carpaccio presents the viewer with

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[119] Lorenzo Gori-Montanelli, Architettura e paesaggio nella pittura Toscana. Dagli inizi alla meta del quatrocento. (Firenze: Olschki, 1959).

an architectural image, valuable on its own, and carrying a much greater meaning that the *architettura-ambiente*. In fact in the St Stephen cycle the understanding of architectural functions matches that of sixteenth-century Venetian artists. These basic functions are defined by Erik Frossman as *Grundrissfunction* and *Aufrissfunction*, that is, 'layout function' and 'elevation function'.[120]

Carpaccio's final pictorial cycle makes it evident that the painter uses his architectural decors not only in a utilitarian, empirical view, nor as an exclusive source of information and ornamentation, but as a meaningful container. Therefore, despite its sharing much in common with the architectural elements of earlier compositions, the architecture in the scenes from the St Stephen cycle possesses an intrinsic grandeur and a rhythmical austerity.

The cityscape itself takes up a larger part of the view, thereby responding to the standard and scale of a metropolis. This grand scale is the only common measure for the many buildings displayed in the cycle, their sheer number forcing the viewer to perceive them in succession, just as when viewing any real architectural ensemble.

By compressing some architectural elements, Carpaccio accentuates differences in scale. This technique enhances the beholder's naïve impression of the great magnitude of the buildings depicted, while it is also an attempt to expand pictorial space. As a result of this "concentration" the viewer's gaze travels swiftly into the depths of the painting.

The architecture in the Saint Stephen cycle combines elements of both the antique and Muslim Jerusalem which (just like the Muslim clothing of some of its figures) helped visualise the painting's meanings. Although the architectural forms

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[120] Erik Frossman, 'Uber Architekturen in der venezianischen Malerei des Cinquecento', in Wallraf-Richarts Jahrbuch, XXIX (1967), p. 120.

inspired by antiquity often look even more fanciful in Carpaccio's interpretation than the ones inspired by his knowledge of Muslim culture.

One of the key features that distinguish this cycle from the others is its surprisingly monochrome palette (with only a few minor exceptions). This relative 'ochreness' operates as a magnifying foil for the background – making the figures appear more in relief and noticeable. Also, in this manner, the different architectural elements are better linked together to form a single ensemble. Having given up the colourful flamboyance of his earlier works, Carpaccio can here use the stereometry of his architectural forms as a means of artistic expression. This reveals the intellectual in him: a man for whom perspective served as a vessel for sacred and humanistic meaning.

Carpaccio's personal architectural vision, his minute attention to detail, his willingness to portray complex urban compounds (not just ideal cities but cityscapes conveying an effect of reality) announce the most important developments in the representation of space as practiced by Venetian artists. Carpaccio's example thus became a formative part of the Venetian veduta, although the genre would soon lose its sacred connotations.

Jerusalem in High Renaissance painting

The Venetian painters of the High Renaissance present us with numerous examples of motifs and forms of Classical architecture in their depictions of Jerusalem. Moreover, these only vary occasionally in different compositions.

Figure 67. Paris Bordone, *Bathsheba Bathing*, c.1549, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

We note the Palladian variation of a grand city thoroughfare in Paris Bordone's *Bathsheba Bathing*. The perspective of the roadway is flanked by columned porticos, interrupted by occasional arches, and closed by an obelisk (as in Sebastiano Serlio's drawing *Scena tragica*. The urban setting of Jerusalem in the time of King David looks like an 'ideal city'. Ideas connected with the work of Aldo Manuzio's circle, the development of the ideo of *translatio*, of the continuity with antiquity, and the idea of Venice as a 'second Athens' rather than merely a 'second Rome', reflected the rise of Venetian statehood in the 1520s. It was also associated with the ideals of Classical democracy. An indirect confirmation of this is the circumstance that many prominent figures of Renaissance culture worked in the city (Venice becoming particularly popular following the 1527 sacking of Rome), including Aretino, Sansovino, Serlio and others.

Figure 68. Titian, *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple*, 1534-38, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

We turn our attention here to the circumstances of Venice's origins, of a city without a Classical history of its own. Venetians thus displayed a reverential interest in the Classical past and its representation. We may however speak also of the sacralisation of the forms of Classical architecture. Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple* for the albergo of the Scuola della Carita sums up a tradition about which we have already spoken above in connection with this subject's treatment at the hands of Jacopo Bellini, Carpaccio and Cima da Conegliano, and connected with the widespread type of narrative compositions (*storia*). Their extensiveness and frieze-like nature distinguish these Venetian compositions from the more seamless Tuscan type (Ghirlandaio). The main reason for this scrupulous following of tradition was the corresponding article in the contract made with the customer. It was, however, the heads of the scuola who selected Titian as the most renowned master at a time when both Carpaccio and Pascualino Veneto were already competing against him (when he had to set up a new work in the place of his old one). The range of influences on this composition include Raphael's *Sacrifice at Lystra* and *Apostle Paul, Preaching in Athens*,[121] and Peruzzi's fresco *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple* in the church of Santa Maria della Pace

[121] Hood, W. The Narrative Mode in Titian's "Presentation of the Virgin" // Studies in Italian Art and Architecture, 15th through 18th century. Rome, 1980, pp. 143–145.

(1523-26), which Titian may have seen in reproductions. We must also mention, of course, Titian's close contacts with Serlio, who was resident in Venice from 1528 to around 1541 (it may have been Serlio himself who had been influenced by Peruzzi's Roman fresco, as revealed in his sketches). The symbolism of the obelisk and pyramid included in this painted composition refers to the eternal divine wisdom, theologically associated with the Virgin Mary. The pink-yellow wall of the temple is executed in a colouristic range that is atypical for Titian's work and which must be associated with the Palace of the Doges (the idea of the succession of divine wisdom was imbedded in the sculptural decor of the Palace, with Venice personified by the figure of Justice in the *Judgment of Solomon* sculptural group). The illusory architecture well accounted for the real architecture of the albergo. Titian considered the effect of his composition from various different viewpoints. Mary is positioned in front of a physically perceptible boundary – a lintel above, a column behind, and the edge of a doorway below – and is standing motionless on the threshold. The court creates a spatial pause. But the girl is already stepping up to the second flight of the staircase. It is as though she is entering a sacral zone which seems the same for both the picture and the interior: due to the irregular plan of the room, its right-hand part finds itself behind the altar area, which immediately adjoins the church proper.

Titian's *Presentation at the Temple* is a monument connecting two artistic periods. Having assembled within himself the values and achievements of the past, he opens up new possibilities for depicted architecture of the 'grand' Classical style. On the one hand, the picture is an illustration of the problem of the life of tradition in the painted depiction of the holy city. On the other, the situation of the artistic turning point has engendered a monument, integral in form, in which diverse means of expressiveness are brought together. Like Titian, Tintoretto, in his own *Presentation of the Virgin* from the church of Santa Maria dell' Orto in Venice, transforms the ideal objective system of Renaissance perspective, activating the relations between the viewer and the artistic image. With Tintoretto,

the viewpoint is lowered sharply and the staircase climbs steeply up an insuperable wall, whose ornament lends its surface a great flatness.

Figure 69. Tintoretto, *Presentation of the Virgin*, 1553-56, Madonna Dell'Orto, Venice.

Figure 70. Titian, *Ecce Homo*, 1543, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

In Titian's composition *Ecce Homo* the architectural programme is taken to a minimum in comparison with that of the *Presentation in the Temple*. The main motif here is the portal with staircase in rough-hewn stone. A grape leaf motif can be traced in the ornament of the portal (the symbol of the Eucharist). The rusticity

of the pilaster gives the architecture a heroic character, as well as a human scale. In his treatise *Regole generali* of 1537, Serlio prescribes the use of rustic stonework in the Doric and Tuscan orders: the former for temples, and the latter for official buildings, courts, castles, storehouses and treasuries. Here Titian unites the sacral-heroic sense of rustic masonry with the theme of the 'dungeon' and courtroom, as confirmed by the bust of Tiberius.[122]

In the second half of the sixteenth century, churches and palaces not of Jerusalem, along with their facades and interiors, continued the Classicising tendency. Nevertheless, archaising references to works of the fifteenth century (Carlo Crivelli, Jacopo da Montagnana) occasionally appeared, as for instance in Antonio Faenza's *Annunciation* (1524, Loretto, Palazzo Apostolico). Here there is a clear-cut division of the scene, fantastical architecture with variegated decor.

In interpretation of the depiction of Jerusalem, we also distinguish the problem of the penetration into painting of real motifs from theory and practice contemporary to the artists. Brizio discusses the evolution of Veronese's architectural style from Sanmichele to Palladio.[123] *Christ Among the Pharisees* (late 1550s, Museo del Prado, Madrid) is one of the very rare examples of an interior scene in Veronese's work. The internal space of the temple is extremely large, however, and wider than in the namesake works of Bonifazio (Galleria Pitti) or Paris Bordone (Boston). Palladian motifs are present in the semi-circular colonnade, and the wing which, notwithstanding, provides integrity to the space.

The influence of Sansovino, Sanmicheli and Palladio on Paris Bordone are quite obvious. The same can be said too of the aforementioned Serlio.

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[122] Fossman, E. Über Architecturen in der venezianischen Malerei des Cinquecento // Wallraf-Richarts Jahrbuch. 1967, XXIX, pp. 112–139.

[123] Brizio, A.M. La pittura di Paolo Veroneze in rapport con l'opera del Sanmicheli e del Palladio // Bolletino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio. 1960, II, pp. 19–25.

Figure 71. Tintoretto, *Washing of the Feet,* 1547-1548, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Similarly recognisable is the *scena tragica* in Tintoretto's *Washing of the Feet*, painted for Venice's Church of San Marcuola. And, despite the genre character of each fragment with characters, the architecture maintains a high style. And Tintoretto still adorns it with a pyramid and a central statue in an archway, as is seen in Serlio. The dramaturgical elaboration of the *mise en scene* demanded a different positioning of the architectural space (the figure of the kneeling Christ on the right is not supported by architecture at all). This is treated here more as a background than a place of action. Similar approaches by Tintoretto should not be overemphasised, though. In the *Last Supper* from the church of Santo Stefano (c. 1580), the stage area is quite distinct – even raised on a dais and tilted toward the viewer.

The specific purpose of architectural and perspective structuring as an active stylistic technique may vary, but it is unfailingly endowed with a high meaning and formal spirituality.

Eastern architecture in the painted cycles devoted to the acts of Saint Mark.

Standing out among the series of Venetian religious paintings are the cycles of works devoted to the Saints [124] – particularly Saint Mark, but also

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[124] Subjects from the lives of the Saints took on special significance after the Council of Trent. Artists usually selected those episodes from their lives in which the Saints submitted to tortures

Catherine, George, Justin, Stephan and others who bring to mind the stoicism of the first righteous Christians in the East, or those devoted to historical events connected with their relics and the miracles they performed in Venice.

Saint Mark – the most adored Saint in Venice – was not only her Christian spiritual heavenly patron, but also a kind of mythological 'genius loci'. The painted *Marciana* was therefore the realisation of a kind of state programme. Its iconography not only comprises moments from the acts and passion of the Evangelist, but also the prehistory of the theme, as it were, i.e. the story of the founder of Alexandria, the city that became the site for the holy deeds of the Evangelist. In this connection we summon up as an example the panel for a wedding chest on the subject of *The Victory of Alexander of Macedon and the Foundation of the City of Alexandria*,[125] on which Eastern exotica features in the presence of camels in the background, while the opponents of the European warriors are designated by the details of their fantastical costume, with Phrygian caps and beards; the shaven faced 'Macedonians' are fitted out according to contemporary Italian fashions. This is but one example of an array of others revealing the popularity of the extensive collection of themes connected with this place so sacred to Venetians.[126]

We still have yet to examine the historical cycle of seven works made for the Scuola Grande di San Marco over an approximately thirty year period. This

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and persecution. The striving of the Catholic Church to reinforce the cult of the Saints is understandable – and this is, after all, the cult the Protestants rejected. Thus, many works of this nature were painted by Veronese. These include *The Martyrdom of Saints Primolus and Felician* made in 1562 for the Church of Santa Maria; and *The Martyrdom of Saint Justina* (above), which the master painted in 1573 for the church of the same name in Padua.

[125] C. 1460, Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti. The work is ascribed to the Master of San Migniato.

[126] This includes non-religious pictures too, as for instance the Deliverance of Arsinoe by Tintoretto (1552, Dresden, Picture Gallery), where the action is played out in correspondence with the subject in the port of Alexandria, beneath a tower finished in 'diamond-form' hewn blocks, reminiscent of the fragment of the walls of the Palace of the Doges that stands over the water on the Rio del Palazzo side.

comprised the *Sermon of Saint Mark* by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini (Milan, Brera); the *Martyrdom of Saint Mark* by Giovanni Bellini and Vittore Belliniano (Venice, the Hospital); the *Healing of Saint Ananius* (Venice, the Hospital); the *Baptism of Saint Ananius* (Milan, Brera); *Three Episodes from the Life of Saint Mark* all by Giovanni Mansueti (Venice, the Hospital); *Thunder on the Sea* by Palma the Elder and Paris Bordone (Venice, the Hospital); and *Presentation of the Ring to the Doge* by Paris Bordone (Venice, Galleria Accademia). It is quite clear that the first five of the works listed are connected by a common subject, reflecting the doings of the Saint in Alexandria. They were probably made in correspondence with the initially established and unified 'Alexandrian' programme. The two latter works, which depart from both the subject context and pictorial structure, were painted in completely different historical and artistic conditions, and, it is supposed, in order to decorate empty spaces on the walls of the chamber.

Figure 72. Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, *Sermon of Saint Mark, 1504-07,* Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 73. Giovanni Bellini and Vittore Belliniano, *Martyrdom of Saint Mark*, 1515-26, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

Figure 74. Giovanni Mansueti, *Healing of Saint Ananius,* 1519-24, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
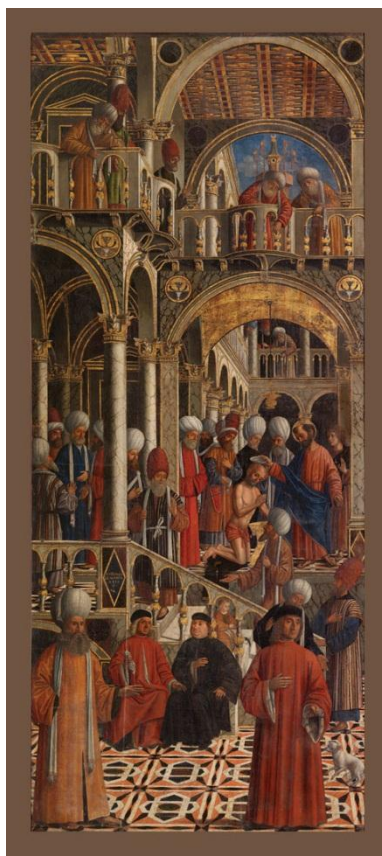
Figure 75. Giovanni Mansueti, *Baptism of Saint Ananius,* 1519-24, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 76. Giovanni Mansueti, *Three Episodes from the Life of Saint Mark,* 1519-24, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

In 1504, Gentile Bellini was commissioned by the council of the Scuola di San Marco, a wealthy and powerful association of spice traders, to paint the composition *The Sermon of Saint Mark in Alexandria* for the reception hall (albergo) of the Scuola's *vicario*. Work on this large-scale canvas (347 x 770 cm) began in the same year. On Gentile's death it was continued by the artist's younger brother Giovanni. Experts in Venetian art have long considered the problem of the exact contribution made by each of its authors to the general artistic solution[127] but our own declared theme demands we concentrate primarily on the iconography of the picture.

The scene for the sermon unfolds on a spacious rectangular Alexandrian square, which is strongly redolent of a Venetian piazza not only in its scale, but also by the fact that there is a large monumental temple closing it off as a backdrop, similar in appearance to Saint Mark's Basilica. (Here too, just as in the compositions dedicated to the Holy Cross that were made for the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, Gentile Bellini affirms his importance in the history of Italian art as a creator of a specific genre – that of a particular cityscape – which would soon be formed into a typically Venetian art form – the *veduta*). All the immediate foreground of the composition is filled by a diverse looking crowd, listening to the preaching. The group located in the centre of the composition and, thus, in the middle of the square (they concentrate just a little to the left of the viewer, to reveal the central portal of the temple in perspective), draw the viewer's eye deep into the space and visually unite the foreground and rear.

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[127] It has been established that the general thrust of the composition and the lion's share of the work on it are Gentile's. To Giovanni we owe the peculiar luminescence of the colour scheme and the inspired intensity in the way the figure of the Saint is depicted. A recent X-ray examination revealed that Gentile had painted six buildings on either side in the original version; Giovanni reduced their number to four on the left and three on the right, unifying the line of the roofs and reducing the number of arches in the left-hand side arcade. This generalisation of details allows the viewer's attention to concentrate on the main features of the painting. (Brown P.F., *Venetian Narrative Paintings in the age of Carpaccio*, London, 1988, p. 196).

The *ambon* on which Mark is speaking is moved to the left part of the composition, and behind it are placed the brethren of the Scuola in four regimented lines, clothed in black and red garments; in the foreground, almost on the edge of the picture space, Gentile Bellini is said to have included himself in a red costume and golden chain, given him as a reward by Mehmet II.[128] The group of Venetians has a look of cohesion, as though they form a kind of 'support group'. According to the original intention it was supposed to be just that, about which we will speak shortly. The remaining part of the numerous 'audience' of the Saint's sermon is made up, essentially, of Muslims contemporary to the artist.

Also on the ambon, behind the Evangelist, is a seated scribe, recording the speech of the Saint. No mention is to be found in the academic texts concerning this work of this obvious, instantly eye-catching fact. In my opinion, the figure of the scribe is not fulfilling an auxiliary role here, but presents a meaningful hint at the function of Mark himself, who is considered by many theologians to be not so much the author of the Gospel, but the man who wrote the 'Good News' direct from the oral testimony of Saint Peter himself.[129]

The remaining part of the large gathering is rich in the most varied characters, from a group of veiled women sitting on the ground in the centre of the composition, and various Eastern archetypes, to Venetians in dark clothes and berets, or dressed in golden mantles draped with luxurious chains, probably senior

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[128] In the monograph by C. Campbell and A. Chong, a detailed description is given of this award, which takes the form of a chain braided from a double row of interlocking links, with a medallion featuring the insignia of the Sultan. The authors believe that such a level of detail in the depiction of this 'object' and the positioning of the figure of Gentile in one of the most prominent places in the composition were a sign of respect paid by the younger brother to the elder. (Campbell C. and Chong A. *Bellini and the East*. London, Boston, 2005, p.116).

[129] According to Papias, an early Father of the Church, who cited Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3, 39:15), "Mark was Peter's interpreter". Hence there emerged the widespread opinion that he had written the words of the Gospel under Peter's dictation. They are often shown together: Peter holding a book, and Mark sitting and noting down his words". (Hall, J. *Slovar' syuzhetov i simvolov v iskusstve* ('Dictionary of subjects and symbols in art'), p. 349).

Venetian officials (among them can be discerned the consul, identified from the xylography in Vecellio's treatise).

Researchers have noted the authentic details in the artist's reproduction of the architectural space and atmosphere of a Mameluke city, and suggest that the artist may well have made use of the memoirs of Ciriaco d'Ancona, a humanist, traveller and merchant who had twice visited Alexandria and Egypt. Another possible source is the *veduta* of Cairo by an unknown artist, sent from Venice to Francesco Gonsaga by the Mantuan ambassador, which Gentile may have seen. It was not rare, however, to meet Mameluke merchants in Venice herself, dressed in their national costumes and quite familiar to the inhabitants of the lagoon city. In this manner, Gentile would have been able to depict in detail the various representatives of the Syrio-Egyptian world of his day.

Like many other Italian artists of the Quattrocento, Gentile Bellini included genre fragments in his composition, placing them in the background. If, however, the scale of the canvas is borne in mind, and moreover the fact that this plane is the most 'charged', if it can be phrased in such manner, each such fragment is thus perfectly distinct. They lack any symbolic load, and their mission here is to create a halo of the genuinely exotic. Here we see a driver pulling a one-humped camel by the bridle; there a lonely, wandering giraffe; a street food salesman in front of his brazier, and so forth.

The general appearance of the central cathedral is distinct from the surrounding architecture. In it there are no (or almost no) elements of Mameluke architecture. But it is impossible to name any specific European building that has served as a model for the artist. As has already been said, it is at first glance reminiscent of the Venetian Basilica of Saint Mark, but also of Constantinople's Hagia Sophia, and the building of the Scuola di San Marco. L. Botti bears witness to the doubts current in academic circles: "The cathedral was identified by Ridolfi

as the mysterious church of Saint Euphemia, which in reality is not mentioned in either Alexandrian sources or in the hagiography of Mark; we do not know where the scholar took this information from, and perhaps it has no basis at all, though others have since used this name to refer to it all the same."[130]

Just as "fantastical" are the other buildings framing the square, without analogues in reality, though bearing the traits of Muslim architecture of the Levant – white cuboid houses with roof terraces, round coats of arms on the facades, and minarets. Recognisable signs of Alexandria are present too, however; Pompey's Pillar, an obelisk, and the Lighthouse. (None of these structures are reproduced in exact accordance with the preserved descriptions, though it is clear that Bellini aimed for accuracy in signifying the place of action).

The presence of the obelisk as a needle pointing skyward was intended to reinforce the symbolic meaning of the picture, emphasised by its positioning in the composition; the obelisk is placed on the same axis as the preacher. Its hieroglyphs conceal ancient wisdom, which is associated with the role of the word of God expounded by the Alexandrian bishop as a source of truth and knowledge. Unlike the difficult to discern hieroglyphs of the tip, those halfway up are easy to 'read': we see two footprints, the letters VL, an owl, a snake, and something akin to a gimlet. Their meaning is connected with the deeds of the Saint in Alexandria. The two footprints recall the outline of the shoes depicted on the facade of the cobbler's workshop in the drawing *The Healing of Ananius* by Giovanni Bellini, while the gimlet is the tool (a bradawl?) with which Ananius injured his hand. In this way, the hieroglyphic images constituted a kind of reminder of the miraculous healing of Ananius caused by the Saint. According to legend, Ananius converted to Christianity, later succeeding Mark as Bishop of Alexandria.

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[130] Botti, L., 'Tra Venezia e Alessandria: I teleri belliniani per la Scuola grande di San Marco', *Venezia Cinquecento*, № 3, January-June 1992, p. 45.

The owl, the symbol of Minerva, is one of the most widespread and well known ancient symbols of wisdom. There also exists another interpretation of this bird – that of victory. The depiction of an owl is joined with that of a serpent, which in this context loses all its diabolical meaning, to be interpreted, according to Horapollo, as "the all-triumphant". (The snake was also a symbol of Africa, which should also not be dismissed, considering the African location of Alexandria).[131] As such, both these images – the owl and the serpent – lend the actions of the Alexandrian Bishop a sense of triumph and victory, as well as wisdom.

If we take the letters VL as Roman numerals, then this refers to the year 45 AD, an approximate dating of Mark's mission in Alexandria. Botti, however, offers another suggestion: recalling that the names of pharaohs and emperors were inscribed on such obelisks in antiquity, it might be supposed that the two letters stand for VIVENTE LOREDAN, thus indicating that the work was painted during the reign of the Doge Leonardo Loredan (1501-1521).[132]

It might be possible to agree with both hypotheses, which are in no way mutually contradictory. With all the artist's striving for precision, he nevertheless creates his work in accordance with laws unconnected with the temporary realities of history. And while a reference to a Venetian Doge on an Alexandrian obelisk of the first century AD might seem anachronistic, it does fully correspond with the generally accepted method for the reproduction of time: anachronistic costumes of the sixteenth century on characters, Eastern and Western (apart from Mark himself, draped in a toga and himation), the presence of minarets and other fragments giving the impression that the Evangelist is giving his sermon in the Alexandria of the sixteenth century.

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[131] Hall, J. Op. cit., p. 247.
[132] Botti, L. Ibid., p. 46.

It is of interest that *The Sermon of Saint Mark* sets a rare iconographic precedent. And it is possible that the motivation for this commission came from the political and commercial relations between Venice and Alexandria, and the wider relations of Venice with the Mameluke states in general. By the time of this commission, these relations were suffering serious difficulties due to the obstructions set up in the way of Venetian merchants by Mameluke officials, forcing them to pay exorbitant rates at the customs houses in Alexandria and Beirut and detaining their ships and crews. A particularly severe conflict flared up between the Dukedom and the Mamelukes in the early sixteenth century, in which the unwilling participants were the members of the spice trading fraternity and their renowned captains. Lacking direct documental references between these events of 1504 and the commissioning of the picture, it may with some confidence be supposed that the resolution of this commercial and financial 'crisis' and the worthy part played in it by the Venetians served as the motivation to have the picture painted. Not only did this mean preserving the portraits of the negotiators and captains, it also involved convincing the viewer of the validity of the presence of Christian Venetians in the land of Egypt, in Alexandria. This was a city where a Christian church had stood long before any mosque (the stones of which church having been used by the Caliph of Baghdad to construct his palace),[133] and one directly connected with their native Venice by the name of Saint Mark.

While still working on *The Sermon* and, probably, being under the impression of these dramatic Alexandrian events, Gentile Bellini proposed to the fraternity in 1505 that he begin work on the theme *The Martyrdom of St. Mark*. The proposal was accepted, though the process of creating the painting would begin later (in July 1515). Today, the painting is still where Gentile Bellini expected it to be: on the wall over a door in one of the rooms of the Hospital. It is possible that Giovanni used preliminary sketches by his brother for this

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[133] Venise et l'Orient, p. 35.

composition. Very soon afterwards however (29th November 1516) Giovanni would die too. The work was completed by Vittore Beliniano in 1526. Since the painting was signed only by Beliniano without mention of Bellini, it is supposed that the main part of the work had been done by him, as it is unlikely that the fraternity would have allowed such a blatant incivility towards Giovanni.

In the story of Mark's martyrdom, described in *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, it is said that the evangelist was seized by pagans on Easter Day during the celebratory mass, dragged by a rope around the neck all through the town, and then flung into a dungeon. That night Christ appeared to him in the prison and, after having greeted him ("Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus!"), gave him solace. The next morning the torture by dragging went on until the Saint drew his last breath. The pagans were going to burn his lacerated body, but the crowd of 'evildoers' was dispersed by a sudden storm and blasts of thunder, and the Christians were able to bury him in secret.

The composition of *The Martyrdom* is cleanly divided by the doorway into two parts: on the left there is a group of characters wearing turbans and oriental robes, and behind them one can see Venetians, whose energy is apparently held back by the first solid row of evildoers. These are portraits of members of the fraternity, who cannot now be identified. It may however be supposed that one of them, the profile of a grey-bearded man, is a portrait of Giovanni Bellini himself.

The left-hand fragment was closed off with the depiction of a respectable urban area combining Eastern elements with contemporary Renaissance arched porticoes. In the left-hand part, the execution itself takes place: the torturers, surrounded by a chaotic crowd of Moors, drag the unfortunate Mark's body out beyond the town walls. The torture is accompanied by flogging. In the depths of the painting one can see a church standing on a small hill. The church probably represents the one built by the Saint's followers, where he was buried. Both on the

left and on the right some characters in the crowd are looking upwards, noticing how the clouds are piling up. The whole scene is described meticulously in all its details, in accordance with the best Bellinian tradition of detailed pictorial narrative.

An indication of the actual motives behind creating the composition is the depiction of the architecture of the church, which is reminiscent of the San Ciriaco Cathedral in Ancona. The creation of the painting was predated by a twenty-year-long conflict between the two ports for the right to freely cross the Adriatic. The conflict was settled in favour of Venice (Ancona remaining in the jurisdiction zone of the Republic). Botti believes that it was this contemporary event that had allowed the creator of the painting to introduce the depiction of the church of San Ciriaco; not only because of its unusual architectural forms, but also for its association with Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice, where the Saint's relics eventually found their resting place; in this way the two cities were conceptually connected by the idea of a single heavenly protector.[134]

We can thus see that both compositions were in one way or another connected to the 'main topic of the day', and conveyed parallel information to the contemporary viewer, beside the religious meaning. But the additional meaning was already obscured for the next generation of viewers and never received subsequent mention.

As an example, we can provide a quotation by Vasari on the works of Mansueti, who "created his works in an excellent manner, he loved to depict nature, characters and faraway landscapes and painted a great many pictures in Venice, assiduously emulating Gentile Bellini. So, for example, on the side wall of the reception room in the Scuola di San Marco he painted Saint Mark preaching in a square. He depicted male and female Turks and Greeks and other persons of

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[134] Botti, L. Ibid., p. 66.

different ethnicities in unusual clothing. At the same place, when painting another story with Saint Mark healing a sick man, he painted a perspective with two stairways and many stanzas. In another painting beside this one he depicted Saint Mark converting countless numbers of people to Christianity, with an open church with a crucifix on the altar, and different kinds of people everywhere, with very expressive faces and clothing".[135] And indeed, beside the works mentioned, Mansueti expanded the 'Marciana' with other works on that subject (*The Arrest of Saint Mark*). In his works, Mansueti appears to be not only a devoted disciple of Bellini, but also a follower of Cima da Conegliano, as can be clearly seen from a work of the latter – *The Healing of St Anianus*.

Researchers believe that both two works, created for the church of Santa Maria dei Crociferi and commissioned by a wealthy silk corporation for their chapel, played an important role in the infiltration of Eastern motifs into Venetian painting.[136] Both works were painted within the same 'register'; they are packed with people, and these, almost without exception, are characters in festive Muslim garb. The emphatic decorativeness of the paintings was created by the truly musical 'reiteration' of the arched enfilades, porticoes, and interiors ("many stanzas", it should be noted, from their basic appearance are in the spirit of Sansovino's 'ordered arcades'), with an intersection of leading vectors which makes the space more complex while at the same time organising it with an accurate but visually softened (thanks to the semicircles) rhythm. A special decorative feature is lent the works of Mansueti by his favourite red colour in the clothing of his characters, whether they are 'Venetians', 'Mamelukes' or 'Turks'. This red colour enters into a complex rhythm (now quite vibrant) with the snow-white colour of his characters' turbans (which are always painted as massive by

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[135] Vazari, J. Zhizneopisaniye naibolee znamenitykh zhivopistsev, vayatelei i zodchikh ('Biographies of the most renowned painters, sculptors and architects'). Vol. II, Moscow, 2000, pp. 512-513.
[136] Venise et l'Orient, p. 39.

Mansueti). It is not so much the architectonics and geometrical accuracy of composition, but mainly the deep internal musicality that distinguishes the paintings of Venetian artisans. With regard to Mansueti, such a conclusion would not be entirely correct: the artist combines geometrical precision (to the point of officiousness) of the complex architectonic and dimensional "passage" with "internal musicality", highlighted by the chromatic rhythm. "A sensorial perception of the world" here (still!) goes together with an admiration of the exquisite play of lines. Cima is just as precise and thoughtful towards his 'Muslim' pagans, towards the decorative component of their appearance, and pays the same close attention to the architectural décor with its rich colourful inlays, and which is nonetheless more dimensionally integrated, having no arcaded 'labyrinth'.

Figure 77. Giovanni Mansueti, *The arrest of St Mark in the Synagogue*, c.1499, the collection of Prince von und zu Lichtenstein, Vaduz.

Figure 78. Cima da Conegliano, *The Healing of St Anianus*, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Figure 79. Tintoretto, *The Miracle of St Mark Freeing the Slave,* 1548, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

Works dedicated to the patron of Venice were ordered by the local aristocracy often and regularly, and the Scuola di San Marco continued to decorate its rooms with scenes from the Saint's life. On its commission, *The Miracle of St Mark Freeing the Slave* was created by the thirty year old Tintoretto, for whom it became his first definitive success. By the time this painting was created significant changes had occurred in Venetian pictorial art. And Tintoretto, a younger contemporary of Giorgione, Titian and great artisans of the Cinquecento, had not only assimilated their lessons ("drawing by Michelangelo, coloration by Titian"), but had developed in his oeuvre an intensity of passions and forms, which literally explode and send whirling away the landscapes of his pictorial worlds. And, of all others, it is precisely in *The Miracle of the Slave* that researchers find the first triumphant manifestation of his synthetic manner that was independent of any external influences.[137] That said, it has been noted that the reclining man wearing a red turban on the right-hand (from the viewer's perspective) part of the composition is a reference to a preparatory drawing by Michelangelo for a figure on the sarcophagus of Lorenzo de' Medici (the Uffizi), and the general composition is redolent of the cartoon *The Sacrifice at Lystra* by Raphael, although, unlike the latter, it is filled with a powerful dynamism. Here as well we can see the diversity of ethnic types which makes it possible to say that the artist himself gives them particular attention and that contemporaries likewise understood them well; "'oriental robes and barbaric adornments of many among the characters' (Ridolfi)".[138] As for the peculiarities of the pictorial framework of Tintoretto's painting, the restless play of the unnatural light that is used by the artist to create the miraculous atmosphere is especially noticeable against the rich and daring extravaganza of colour which is permitted to blaze on the assemblage of oriental garments. This same brilliance hardly allows any corporeal sensuality here, still retained by the forms. It sooner permits the forms be seen as by some

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[137]Echols R., 'Tintoretto, the Painter', in *Tintoretto* edited by M. Falomir. Madrid, 2007, p.37.
[138]Argan, p. 409.

mystical vision. And the illumination steeps the architectural space in mystical light. Here the master becomes one of the first harbingers of the art of the Counter-Reformation.

It stands out that in the vast majority of artistic paintings by Tintoretto, the architectonic décor of Biblical stories and stories of Saints was intentionally made to appear Classical (no matter where the action takes place, whether it be in Alexandria or in Jerusalem), in accordance with the artistic programme. Meanwhile the depiction of the camel in *Stealing the Body of Saint Mark* was created in an illusionistically natural manner that differentiates it drastically from the camels in paintings by the older generation of Venetian Renaissance artists. This animal does not look like an 'attribute' for the creation of an oriental environment at all. The angle at which the head is turned conveys the general anxiousness that saturates the whole composition with restless currents.
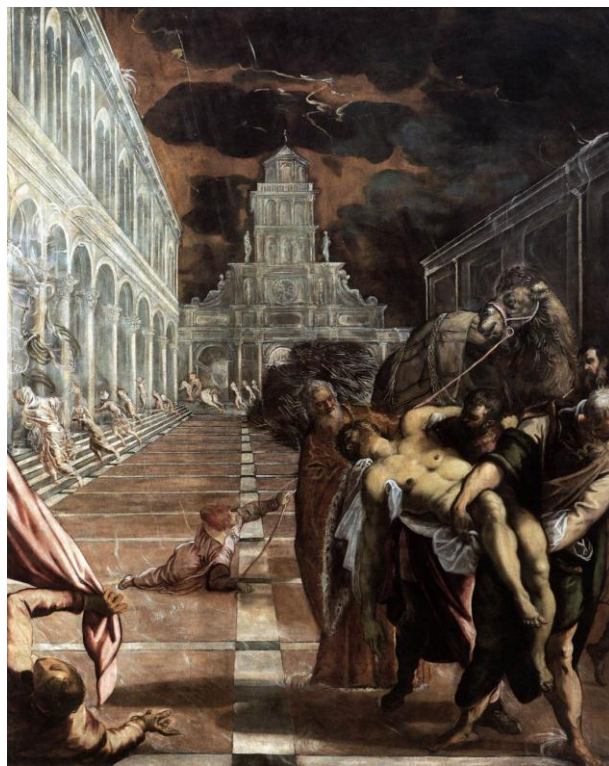

Figure 80. Tintoretto, *Stealing the body of St Mark,* 1562-66, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

Under flashes of lightning, all the architecture of the square becomes a fantastical, spiritualistic vision and is transformed from a *veduta* of the "freely traversed Piazza of San Marco with its old *Procuratie* and closed in by its church, demolished by Napoleon",[139] – into a co-participant in a tragic event. In this mature work of Tintoretto, a new important phase of Venetian art is heralded – artistic mastery, the perfected ability to arrange perspective plans and unexpected angles to create a living environment and show the breathing of space in unison with the human, combined with an intense search for the essential and symbolic forms of light. And here, alongside all the visual appeal of a Tintoretto composition, there emerges an anti-theatrical, anti-decorative effect, always supposing a degree of alienation – the captivating effect of the presence of the awesome powers of the divine. It is precisely this that brings in new content into the visual language of Tintoretto, transforming the 'myth of Venice', and filling it with the dramatic quality that reflects the shifts taking place in the fate of the city and state.

In his monograph, Boris Vipper links Tintoretto's artistic discoveries in the field of the depiction of light with the natural philosophy and elemental dialectics of the artist's contemporaries, Geronimo Cardano (1500-1576) and Bernardino Telesio (1508-1588). "Cardano contemplates on the soul in the form of light; according to the teachings of Telesio, the material principle, mediating between things and the soul, is the light which surrounds and penetrates all objects and adopts all their properties and forms in order to transfer to them spiritual substance."[140] The scholar makes an even more definite alignment between the art of Tintoretto and the philosophy of J. Bruno (1548–1600), the main premise of which is that the Earth is only a tiny particle in the infinite expanse of the Cosmos, though this same particle carries within it the current of the Universe.

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[139] Vipper B., *Tintoretto*, Moscow, 1948, p. 53.
[140] Ibid., p. 52.

But, according to the logic he postulated on the unity of the material substance of the vast earth, in which there is no place for the contraposition of the 'perfect' and 'imperfect', these can and must exist, in the worldly dimension, equally in West and East.

In all compositions presenting the architectural and spatial environment of cities sacred to the Venetians, different iconographic sources may be discerned as having inspired the artists with a rich array of ideas. However, it was only their own organically inherent 'composer's' gift' and inventiveness that enabled the artists of Venice to produce such harmonious complexes of depicted architecture, in line with both their theological and figurative programme.

Chapter III.
Eastern architecture in the secular painting of the Venetian Renaissance

La Serenissima Repubblica sent ambassadors to Eastern countries, and often received, in turn, the envoys of the Mamelukes and Ottomans, and − less often − those of the Persians too, which permits us to speak of her knowledge of the customs, religion, philosophy, culture, science and technology of the near eastern countries and beyond. Though Venice took part in the religious squabbles of the various holy leagues and often fought on her own account against the infidel, the periods of peace were longer than those of war, and political treaties and trade agreements were renewed when new rulers took the place of the old, while diplomats carried on their activities even in times of strained relations. As for commercial ties, these were virtually never disrupted.

Signs of this Eastern presence in the world contemporary to the Renaissance Venetian found their way into the painted sphere, occasionally in an almost furtive or arbitrary manner, and other times bursting into it triumphantly and openly. In the latter case, the impression may be given that neither the programme, nor the subject, nor characters are possessed of any mystery. The paradox of history (including the history of art), however, lies in the possibility of a plurality of interpretations and treatments of most events and, therefore, of the works of art they inspired.

One such example is provided by the picture *Reception of the Venetian Embassy in an Eastern City*, also going by the more precise title *Arrival of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus*. This large canvas (118 x 204 cm), painted in

oils, is found in the collection of the Louvre.[141] What is surprising is that its vastness and semi-official nature, presupposing the existence and preservation of documents for its commission, have not been able to shed any light on its provenance or authorship for scholars. In contemporary catalogues the painter is listed as "anonymous Venetian artist", while older counterparts state "ascribed to the brush of Gentile Bellini and his assistants". This opinion is founded not only on the similarity of the Eastern city's spatial plan with that of the undisputed Bellini work *The Sermon of Saint Mark in Alexandria*, but also by the fact that, as Argan has it, "Gentile was not only a portraitist, but also a kind of topographer: accounts have been preserved that ascribe panoramic views of Cairo, Genoa and Venice to his hand".[142] The exact dating of the work is in doubt: a date of around 1488-1496 was long preferred, today corrected to 1511. Nor is the name of the customer known. There is a suggestion, however, that it may have been one of the Venetian ambassadors themselves, who had provided the artist with detailed instructions. This may refer to Tommaso Contarini or Pietro Zen. The last commercial and diplomatic mission of Zen had indeed been accompanied by a whole range of dramatic events.[143]

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[141] Several copies made from it exist in France, including a tapestry of 1545, woven at a French factory.

[142] Argan, p. 299.

[143] "For the last twenty-five years, we supposed that this picture had been made in the first phase of the existence of such paintings, but in actual fact it was painted towards the end of that period. We cannot attribute it precisely to any one of the great Venetian orientalists". (Venezia e l'Islam 827-1797. Edited by S. Carboni, exhib. cat., Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 2007, p. 323). Its "floating" date was based on the observation that the third minaret of the Great Mosque of the Umayyads shown in the picture was erected in 1488, as well as the fact of the Mameluke costumes of the characters. It may be supposed that the painting was made between 1488 and 1516. A date has recently been discovered by restorers (on the wall behind the leg of the horse) - 1511. The creation of the picture has thereby been connected with events that proved of great significance in the life of the Venetian colony in Damascus: In the May of 1510, a Mameluke guard seized a Cypriot spy on the river Euphrates bearing a message from the Shah of Persia to the Venetian consuls in Alexandria and Damascus, Tomasso Contarini and Pietro Zen. Contarini and Zen were accused of treason. They were to answer for this before the Sultan in Cairo. Until then, the Venetian merchants in Damascus were held under arrest and their goods confiscated. To resolve the diplomatic conflict, the government of Venice sent the envoy Domenico Trevisano to Cairo,

Figure 81. Unknown artist, *Arrival of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus,* Louvre, Paris.

According to the conclusion arrived at by J. Raby after many years researching this work, we know that the action unfolded in Damascus in the last years of Mameluke rule, and the subject is that of an audience of Venetian ambassadors with the local ruler or *naib*, and that this is the only Italian painting in which fifteenth century Damascus is shown authentically. The scholar notes that, unlike the other "Oriental" pictures of its day, the *Arrival...* probably depicts a secular subject, rather than religious,[144] thus freeing its author from having to combine West and East in the architecture, as had been the case in the compositions featuring Saint Mark by Gentile Bellini, Giovanni Mansueti and Cima da Conegliano; the artist has created, in essence, a *veduta* of a contemporary Muslim city. That said, it is unknown whether or not he himself had travelled with the delegation to Damascus, or had based his work on the accounts of the Venetian

who arrived in the city in May 1512 and very quickly negotiated the liberation of all his countrymen. Only Zen remained in the Sultan's disfavour and left the Mameluke court under guard, on foot and in chains. (Gentile Bellini and the East. Edited by C. Campbell, A. Chong, exhib. cat., National Gallery, London, 2005, p. 22).

[144] This use of the subjunctive mood in Raby's text indicates that historians are not even confident as to the nature of the subject shown!

diplomats who had been there, or on engravings showing the city. However might have been the case, he has succeeded in creating a rather detailed panorama of the city opening up on the southern side of the Great Umayyad Mosque. The original dome of the Mosque (destroyed in a fire of 1893 and later restored) is visible in perspective, along with its leaded roof, three minarets, and the facade of a house.

The *Arrival*...is an important work from a historical point of view, primarily due to its depiction of a moment from one of the last phases of Veneto-Mameluke commercial relations. A few years later, Syria and Egypt would be conquered by the Ottomans, and Venice would gradually lose her priority in the spice trade, the main currency of the time, because of the great geographical discoveries made by Portugal. By the end of the fifteenth century, trade with the Mameluke territories made up 45% of the general shipping volume of the Republic of Saint Mark.[145] In addition, thanks to their relatively "peaceful coexistence" with the Mamelukes, the Venetians were able to provide comparatively safe passage for pilgrims visiting the Christian holy sites.

Despite the clear, in Raby's view, topographical authenticity, he considers that the unknown Venetian artist painted the city *post factum* rather than from life. The minaret of the largest mosque in Damascus, reconstructed in 1488, is seen on the left. The houses in gardens beyond high walls are presented in considerable detail. The artist places an Arabic inscription ("There is no god but Allah") on the curvature of the arch, however, something not otherwise known in Damascus and which provides indirect witness of the painting having been made back in Venice.

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[145] The Republic provided the Mamelukes with linen canvas, woollen broadcloth prepared in the Alps, silk, velvet and Venetian hats, Baltic amber, Italian corals, furs, and especially metals such as gold, silver, copper, lead, mercury and tin. In return the Venetians brought back spices, pearls, medicines, precious stones, cutting weapons, and multi-coloured gold-embroidered silk fabric (Damascene). (Muratori-Philip, A. Venise entre deux mondes.// «Venise et l'Orient». Connaissance des Arts. No. 300, 2006, p.7).

In the background of the cityscape, high-ranking Mameluke grandees are depicted (though Ottomans may also be discerned among them), along with the "military elite and several ordinary townsfolk, including women".[146] The costumes and headdresses of the characters, like their hairstyles, are shown with care. Here we see palm trees, camels, apes, gazelles and everything required to make a peculiar atmosphere of Eastern authenticity. As such, Michael Rogers has defined the picture as "the first European attempt to depict an exotic location in all its details, from the fauna and flora to architecture and the inhabitants".[147] There had been a time when the honest Gentile Bellini and Constanzo da Ferrara had brought drawings back with them from their eastern "business trips", with portraits and figures of the natives, though these had all been executed in isolation from their place of abode. Here an attempt had been made to show a particular situation in its specific surroundings, or situational context. And so we have the attention to detail – from the black and white marble decoration of the arches and minarets to the heraldic arms of the Mameluke Sultan Qa'it Bay; and from the precise depiction of the Mameluke minaret with its bars for the suspension of hanging lamps to the *miradors*. There are even two small domes shown in the picture, one fluted and the other with glass porthole windows, indicating a bath house, possibly the famous hammam in the Sūq al-Buzūriyya.

In the foreground is all the bustle of a major city, including a horseman in old Syrian dress and gossiping gawkers, all under the steadfast gaze of two women in traditional Damascene headdresses.

The unsure dating of the piece has served as the basis on which to build theses regarding its use as a model for compositions by Carpaccio and Mansueti, as well as Durer ("During his second journey of 1505, Durer borrowed the Mameluke

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[146] Rogers, J.M., 'The Gorgeous East': Trade and Tribute in the Islamic Empires', in '*Circa 1492. Art in the age of exploration*'. Edited by J.A. Levenson. Washington, 1991, pp. 69-74.
[147] Ibid.

type, to several years later completely reject Ottoman types in his graphics in favour of the Mameluke, though this change was purely external and not functional in nature").[148]

Essentially, the architecture presented creates the natural decoration for a high-impact scene. The head of the receiving party, the Sultan's vicegerent (*naib-i-soltan*), is shown seated on a rectangular platform (a *mastaba*) and dressed in a large turban with high wave-shaped crests like the rounded points of a crown, the wearing of which was restricted to the Sultan and high-ranking officials. Damascus was a favourite city of Venetian trading folk; here the *bailo* received a regular salary from the Mameluke government, and all Venetians enjoyed various privileges, including the right to wear local dress. In the reception shown on the picture, however, they are clothed in their official costumes. Only four of the participants in the above-described dramatic events of 1510-1512 were permitted to wear the dress seen on one character in the picture – the purple toga with wide sleeves – and these were Trevisano, Contarini, Malipiero and Zen. Of these, only Pietro Zen and Nicolo Malipiero were then in Damascus. The latter arrived there in 1511, and it may well be he that is portrayed here. In the opinion of Campbell and Chong, however, the similarity of the model for a portrait of Pietro Zen in a work by Titian from the Hermitage with the figure heading the group of envoys in this painting argues for it more likely being Zen.[149] (He would return to Venice in January 1513, to the acclaim of his fellow citizens).

If we take into account that no official reception in Damascus was ever mentioned in the "Zen affair", then it becomes possible that the composition in the picture is compilatory and was made in memory of the town and, possibly, of the official audience Zen had received on his arrival in Damascus in late 1508. The

[148] Ibid.
[149] Gentile Bellini and the East. Edited by C. Campbell and A. Chong, exhib. cat., National Gallery, London, 2005, p.22.

date on the painting might refer not to the moment of his arrival, but to the most important year of his residence in the Mameluke territories. Sergei Bodrov's dissertation work (*Bodrov*, p. 36) refers to the presence at the Louvre of another picture on an analogous theme by a member of Gentile Bellini's circle, *The Reception of Domenico da Treviso in Cairo* (1512, Paris, the Louvre), but we must speak now of the painting currently under examination.

Whoever the artist may have been, scholars have determined the viewpoint from which the scene he depicts could have been seen: the upper floor of the Venetian *fondaco* in Damascus, located to the south of the Great Mosque,[150] which witnesses in one way or another his close acquaintance (or having been made acquainted with) the world's most ancient capital.

While the city in which the action depicted in the painting was mistakenly cited as Istanbul in the seventeenth century, there are no doubts as to the precise naming of a similar large work by a member of the Venetian school – *The reception of the Venetian delegation in the Topkapi Palace* (oil on canvas, 147x198 cm; Jerusalem, L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art). Moreover, it is perfectly clear that the artist was quite familiar with the local topography, depicting the architectural framing of the second door to the palace complex in great detail. The viewpoint selected by the painter is surprising, as, strictly speaking, we discover here not just one observer's position. The compositional plane of the entire vertical of the canvas is clearly divided in two according to the proportions of the Gold Section by a column. The point of view in the (viewer's) left hand portion is more elevated than that in the right. Apart from this, the depiction is made here, if it may be thus expressed, in a different optical system. From above, the general plan affords us a view of the rows of the numerous courtiers, arranged in correspondence with protocol along the high arched gallery; courtiers also fill

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[150] Raby, J. Venice, Durer, and the Oriental Mode. The Huns Huth Memorial Studies I. Islamic Art Publications. London – New Jersey, 1982, p. 55.

the spacious balconies, supported by columns of a composite order; in the rear plan a view opens up of a variety of cupolas and tent roofed structures, minarets and towers of other courts.

The naive conventionalism of the left hand portion is smoothed out in the right hand side of the picture, which presents the scene of the audience of the two noble Venetians in close up. The Venetians are received by a high ranking aristocrat (the sole seated figure) in the presence of five respectable courtiers. The scene takes place in the interior of the gallery. Formally, both spaces (the open courtyard and the interior) are united by a checked tiled floor. The preference for a warm palette in the architectural colour scheme (the pink stone of the central column, the tiled floor and several rectangular caissons on the basket-handle vault of the gallery) as well as in the clothing betrays the signs of Venetian artistic thought. The stiff severity of the figures, scrupulous delineation of documentarily exact fragments of architectural decoration, and the clear archaism of its rendering permit a provision dating of the piece to the first third of the fifteenth century.

The architectural fragment in Gentile Bellini's renowned portrait of Mehmet II serves quite a different function. In his bull on the Crusade, Pope Nicholas V calls the seventh Ottoman sultan Mehmet II Fatih the prototype of the Antichrist and the red dragon of the Apocalypse. The reign of this cruel conqueror saw European rulers forced many times to send flattering diplomatic missions to his court. (The messenger who brought news of his death to Venice did so with the declaration "The great eagle is dead").[151]

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[151] "... our wish is the have good peace and friendship with the sovereign emperor of the Turks", Doge B. Marcello instructed his ambassador, sent by the Senate to Istanbul, as early as January 1454. (Quoted from Braudel, F. Vremya mira. Moscow, 1992, p. 134).

Figure 82. Gentile Bellini, *The Sultan Mehmed II*, c.1480, National Gallery, London.

The history of this portrait is well known. In 1479, to mark the end of the latest Turco-Venetian war[152] and shortly before his death, the Sultan invited the official painter of the Republic to come and paint his likeness. The decision to summon the artist came about when the ruler resolved, after having suffered health problems for several years, to withdraw from official life completely; painting was one of his favourite pastimes and he was an avid collector of art.

The Venetian artist joined the court, and performed all manner of artistic works on the Sultan's request – from frivolous frescoes to miniatures – and made his own album drawings of the Eastern characters that caught his attention. Yet the most iconic artistic result of the visit was the portrait of the Sultan himself.

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[152] On the 26th January 1479, Venice signed a peace with the Turks following a protracted seventeen-year war. Bellini set out for Istanbul in September. It has been suggested that Constanzo da Ferrara had been working at the court of the Sultan immediately before Bellini was summoned. (Babinger, F. Un ritratto ignorato di Maometto II. Opera di Gentile Bellini. // Arte Veneta XV, 1961). According to another version of events, Constanzo most likely returned home in the May of 1481, after the death of Mehmet. (Gray, B. Two portraits of Mehmet II. // The Burlington Magazine. July 1932, vol. LXI, p. 6.)

The simplicity of composition of this head-and-shoulders portrait, and the gracefulness of the decor formed by the gilt arched "frame" (also painted onto the canvas), contrast with the neutral dark background which, incidentally, bears six golden crowns to signify the nations subdued by the ruler. Taken together with the fine and precise features of the semi-profile with its graphically crisp outline of a hooked nose on a nocturnal backdrop – all these characteristics of Bellini's work are fully within the stylistics of quattrocento depiction in their archaising variations (which might well have been particularly imposing to a Muslim eye, accustomed to flatness in figurative art).

The so-called imperial arch (with connotations of the concept of the triumph) bears an inscription – "Conqueror of the World".

Contemporaries noted the stoutness and corpulence of Mehmet, his short thick neck, sickly visage, broad shoulders and loud voice. "Mehmet gathered epithets like medals: "Thunder of War", "the Mighty, Victorious Ruler of Land and Sea", "Lord of the Romaoi and of All the Earth", "Conqueror of the World", but had trouble walking as time went on".[153] In Bellini's portrait, the Sultan appears "gloomy and not in good health", but also wistful and introspective. There are no traits here of the majestic lionising that might otherwise have characterised such a "conquering" model.

The arch, a common feature in Early Renaissance portraits, may be read in a Muslim context as an echo of the sacral *mihraba*, indicating the *Qibla* or direction of Mecca, where the main holy site of the al-Ka'ba stands. Mounted in the eastern corner of this is the reliquary cum architectural object housing the "black stone" which, according to legend, carries within it the possibility of seeing Paradise; those who have seen it in life are granted a place there after death. In this way, the legible programme of the portrait is further reinforced by the presence in

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[153] Crowley. Op. cit., p. 330.

the foreground of a carpet cast over an unseen parapet. The carpet not only introduces a resounding decorative note into the picture's ascetic structure, but also supports a special semantic load, dividing the Sultan from real space and placing him in a special zone, analogous to the *Sajjada* or, in Turkish, the *namazlik*, or *mehrabi* (prayer mat). Elucidating the function of the latter, Nadzhim ud-Din Bammat writes: "But to what is it that these views turn? There is no actual mosque here, but this place establishes, as it were, the essence of the territory of Islam in its spatial and historical dimensions".[154] The theme of Paradise is also evident here, in both its symbolic and aesthetic qualities.

This seemingly uncomplicated composition contains, however, yet another puzzle. This refers to the crowns positioned over the arch, three on each side. In form and placing they are analogous to the three found on the reverse of medals bearing the Sultan's likeness,[155] which symbolised the lordship of the Great Turk over the conquered countries.[156] It was long thought that Gentile Bellini had doubled their number for symmetry, but, as was recently noted by Maria Pia Pedani, there are seven crowns shown in the portrait, including that present on the textile in front of the Sultan. This has led this scholar to make the following conclusion: the crowns here may represent the Ottoman dynasty, of which Mehmet was the seventh Sultan.[157]

Gentile Bellini spent eighteen months in Constantinople. The artist successfully combined his diplomatic mission with diverse kinds of artistic works, receiving in gratitude an aristocratic title and valuable gifts. His life portrait of the Sultan went on to become the main iconographic model for further depictions of

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[154] Nadzhim ud-Din, B. Kontseptsiya prostranstva v islamskom mire // Kul'tura. Moscow, 1983, Nº 1, p. 49.

[155] One of these, with three crowns on the reverse, is the work of Gentile Bellini.

[156] There is some dispute on this point. The "selection" of symbols includes: Constantinople, Trebizond and Konya; Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul; or Greece, Trebizond and Asia.

[157] Raby, J. Opening gambits.// The sultan's Portrait. Picturing the House of Osman. Istanbul, 2000, p. 69.

this type. In the majority of copies made, the architectural frame disappears, however. With it vanishes the symbolic content of the portrait.

Figure 83. Paolo Veronese, *The Family of Darius before Alexander*, 1565-1570, National Gallery, London.

Just as in the previous chapter, the High Renaissance represents the real-life East through a classicalising prism. Paolo Veronese's *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (1565-1570, National Gallery, London) is a striking illustration of this. The decorative architectural background (an arch, the vertically detailed architectural ornament of the fountain, and the balustrade extending across the entire horizontal of this huge painting) lend scale to the space. This technique supports the narrative basis of the actions presented, which also unfurl across the entire breadth of the picture. The action unfolds in the foreground, without leaving the customary space of the forestage. The figures, bold and colourful, create what is essentially a coloured haut relief, contrasting sharply with the "pallid" background of an architectural setting. While the vibrancy of the colour scheme is entirely the prerogative of the group of people in the foreground, the architecture has clearly been allocated the role and significance of a rhythm-forming and organisational principle. Along with this, it also has the function of illusory imitation – quadrature – of real architecture.

Egyptian Alexandria, a city so close to the hearts of Venetian patriots, may be referred to in a totally different context that that shown on the paintings dedicated to the lives of the Saints. The action in the well-known picture *The Deliverance of Arsinoë* by Tintoretto (1552, Dresden, Gemäldegallerie) plays out in correspondence with the subject (Arsinoë was the sister of Cleopatra) in the port of Alexandria, at the foot of a tower, dressed in diamond-pointed rustication reminiscent of a fragment of the wall of the Doges' Palace over the water on the Rio dell' Palazzo side. This means that here too, in this architectural fragment, the artist is creating an illusory connection between the two cities.

The discussed works of anonymous artists reflecting formal diplomatic meetings between the representatives of Eastern countries and the Venetian Republic are few in number. Nevertheless, it may be supposed that it was precisely these works that laid the foundations for a special genre – representative documentarily accurate compositions, a tradition that would develop over the coming centuries in the subsequent history of European art.[158]

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[158] Among others we note these Venetian paintings: *Doge Marino Grimani Receives the Persian Embassy* by Gabriele Cagliari (son of Paolo Veronese), 1603, in the Doges' Palace; and Antonio Stom's *Entrance of the Bailo Alvise II Mocenigo as Ambassador to Constantinople* (Museum da Palazzo Mocenigo di San Stae), 1710.

CONCLUSION

In the work presented, we have defined in correspondence with our declared objective the role and place of Eastern architectural forms in Venetian Renaissance painting. A range of works has been examined that most vividly demonstrates the leading tendencies in the interpretation of Eastern architectural motifs, and the genesis of their iconography has been traced as far as is possible. During this research, we have discovered that the depiction of Eastern architecture by Venetian painters has both a decorative and semantic function (compositional and symbolic).

Works containing an architectural setting or its fragments by Gentile Bellini, Vittore Carpaccio and other masters have been used as the basis for an attempt to investigate the origins of given forms, information on their real-life prototypes, the reasons for recourse to Eastern architectural motifs, and the means of their execution.

We have once again stated and confirmed that, over the century and a half of its existence, Eastern images were presented in Venetian Renaissance painting with an unprecedented frequency and flexibility, and, what is more, at all stages of the period in question. Reproduction of content of this kind might be regarded as not only a result of the peculiar nature of the social procurement that arose in the specific conditions of the Republic's history, but also as a matter of individual artistic reflection.

A detailed and meticulous analysis of paintings by Venetian masters has revealed the interconnections between the function of a work (its purpose; creation on the basis of a programme devised by the patron; and its position and addressee, i.e. focussing on a defined, selected viewer, while not thereby

excluding the appeal to a wider audience as well) and its visual artistic solution. The logic of the investigation revealed a clear fact: that by virtue of her geographical situation and, if it can be phrased in such a way, "specialisation", Venice's links with the countries of the Orient found reflection in the phenomenon of its artistic thought and practice, and could not have failed to influence the depiction of architectural settings. The significance of the architectural motifs employed in the construction of "scenes of action" shown in painted compositions prompted us to concentrate our attention on the evolution of their interpretation, both in religious compositions and in the increasingly more widespread secular pieces. The perspective adopted in our research, limiting the examination to Eastern loci, has nevertheless demonstrated convincingly the "strategic" changes occurring in the general artistic practice of the era.

Using examples of pictures by Early Renaissance painters (members of the Bellini family, Andrea Mantegna, Vittore Carpaccio, Giovanni Mansueti, Cima da Conegliano, Carlo Crivelli, Vincenzo Catena) and those of the High Renaissance and Mannerism period (Giorgione, Titian, Paris Bordone, Veronese and Tintoretto), an analysis has been made in this dissertation of the evolution of the principles behind the visual "construction" of Eastern architecture.

In the material under consideration, a special place is taken by the broad group of canvases on religious themes,[159] of prominence both in the ritual side of life in Venetian society, and in its emotional sphere and more mundane aspect, and particularly among those depicting Jerusalem.

In subjects taken from the Old Testament, the most varied concepts of architectural decoration for Biblical loci are demonstrated, from the depiction of

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[159] It is worth reiterating the expansion of the circlessss of its clientssss in Venice thanks to the activity of the scuoli, vicini and other religious institutions.

fortifications (by Lorenzo Lotto in his *Susanna and the Elders* (1517), and Bonifazio de' Pitati in *The Finding of Moses* (1520s)), traditional Italian rural stone structures (Giorgione's *Moses Undergoing Trial by Fire* and *The Judgement of Solomon* (both circa 1505)), depictions of architecture reveal no obvious sacral functions. At the same time, a tradition for their representation was established, as in the compositions seen in Jacopo Bellini's drawings for *The Judgement of Solomon*: here, the subject permits the architectural surroundings in which the action takes place to be interpreted in line with the ideas of fair judgement, of Justice and Righteousness, symbolising the high virtues of Venetian law and form of government.

Christianity's engrained notion of the holy city as the Heavenly City (that is, as a simultaneously real and mental city) deeply penetrated the consciousness of believers, and its visual image received distinct realisations at different periods. Organised architectural space in painted depictions of Jerusalem became a reflection of the metaphorical presence of the Sublime, "coming down from God out of heaven" (*Revelations* 21:2), and the poetic image of the City of God in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine.[160] The architectural landscapes of Jerusalem met with in the paintings of Venetian artists of the early Renaissance continue to preserve a memory of the use of artistic techniques and motifs borrowed from the eastern Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine cultures (including in their Italian modification). Often, the "role" of Jerusalem, in agreement with generally accepted European iconography, is played by the likeness of the real cities, or their iconic

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[160] "O house, full of light and splendour! I have loved your beauty, and the place of the habitation of the glory of my Lord, your builder and owner. ... remembering Jerusalem, with heart raised up towards it, Jerusalem my country, Jerusalem my mother, and Yourself, the Ruler over it, the Enlightener, the Father, the Guardian, the Husband, the chaste and strong delight, the solid joy, and all good things ineffable, even all at the same time, because the one supreme and true Good." From Augustine's *Confessions*, translated by J.G. Pilkington, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1*. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo , NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Book XII, Chapters 15 and 16 <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm>

edifices in the Veneto area, that were home to those commissioning the works. Meanwhile, even in the symbolic composition *Sacred Allegory* by Giovanni Bellini, the architectural structures in the background (the castle and peasant cottages crowning a steep hill) are rendered as a landscape from *terraferma* and simultaneously the Holy Land, in so far as the figure of a bearded man embraced by a woman being is presented against the background of one of the peasant dwellings. This may represent the joyful reunion of Joachim and Anne in Jerusalem. In this way, a stately event – the coronation of Venice – takes place against a backdrop of the Holy Land, bringing the latter peace and tranquillity. (Which is the exact explanation given for the presence of the figure of a Turk, dejectedly walking off at one side of the picture).[161]

Nonetheless, traits of the real topography of Jerusalem may be clearly discerned in many compositions, even those in which the holy city figures in the general view. However, these are not executed with documentary accuracy, but depicted on the basis of graphic illustrations (at times conventional) and written accounts.

The Holy City, shown more as a symbol and metaphor in the margins of paintings than as a place of action (as in Bellini and Mantegna), gradually transforms into an inhabited human settlement.

Examples of the importance of the "installation" and setting of pictures showing scenes from the Gospels, or from the lives of the Saints, in real spaces, are offered by Carpaccio in his St Stephen cycle or Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple* for the hall of the *albergo* at Venice's most venerable *scuola* – the Scuola Grande della Carità, now forming part of the premises of the Gallery of the Academy. Both canvasses, oriented on the quattrocento tradition (Titian's

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[161] Smirnova, I. "Svyashchennaya allegoriya" Giovanni Bellini. In *Grani tvorchestva: Sbornik nauchnykh statei.* Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya, 2003. Pp. 114-128. (In Russian).

composition may have been made in correspondence with a drawing by Pasqualino Veneto, approved by the Scuola), were intended for quite restricted quarters, which they were to make stately and festive. On top of that, they were also to give the impression of the illusory presence of the viewer in a holy space and activate his perception, to draw him into the pictorial space. Among the architectural backgrounds featured are palatial structures of Venetian appearance (Smirnova, 24), which also help create an effect of being present in this way, in a drawing together of the historical and the contemporary. (It is here that we find the depiction of specifically Venetian architectural fragments).[162]

Gentile Bellini was the first to develop a type of mundane historical composition that united legendary history with the present day. The striving to reproduce exact detail in portraying architectural decoration and true likeness of scenic spaces for formal occasions and ceremonies taking place in Venice in paintings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, was extrapolated in the creation of detailed architectural settings in religious compositions, whether this be Alexandria (Mansueti, Giovanni and Gentile Bellini) or Jerusalem (Carpaccio). The precision of spatial relations and the harmonious scaling of forms reveal the Renaissance thinking of the masters of this generation. However, in the case of Carpaccio's compositions, for instance, the scale of the figures is smaller than seen in artists of the Florentine school, and the architectural surroundings and spatial setting take up considerable place. This occurs in the cycles devoted to Saints George and Stephen, analysed in detail in the second chapter. The works of the above mentioned artists became the sources for a typically Venetian art form, the *veduta*. In the first third of the sixteenth century, a time of active communication between Venetian art and the ideals of the High Renaissance, these intentions remained visible, as for example in Giorgione's *Reading Madonna*, where the

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[162] The Loggia of the Palace of the Doges, a decorated arcade, whose patterned klllllll wall is reproduced in full.

evangelical theme was organically combined with a real architectural cityscape of Venice. In Venetian secular art, these traits are clearly seen in the work *Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in an Eastern City*, discussed in the third chapter of the present research.

New circumstances (the consolidation of her political independence, her reputation as an ideally organised state, the preservation of Renaissance cultural traditions, alongside the continued economic and political might of Venice, at a time when several other Italian states had come under the control of the Habsburgs or been invaded by them after the Sack of Rome) enabled the changes that were planned and implemented in Venice from the 1530s onwards as part of the *Renovatio* policy of her sixty-sixth doge, Andrea Gritti. The *Renovatio urbis* programme proposed extensive construction projects, first and foremost of the Piazza San Marco, the Piazzetta and the Rialto Bridge, was not fully realised. The ideas shaping it, however, along with its majestic spirit exerted a considerable influence on the artistic consciousness of the age, to be reflected in its paintings. If we take into account the intensive theatrical activity that developed in Venice throughout the sixteenth century, the special flourish of the culture of spectacle of Venetian public festivities, the grandeur and pomp of which Gritti urged to be maintained (as the popular, town-square spectacle developed in parallel with it), we can better understand the special sumptuousness, flourish and truly heroic pathos of the classical motives of architectural decoration that the "Jerusalem" pictures of the Venetian Cinquecento were so rich in. In them, we discover an attraction to monumental forms, a elevation of intonation, festive magnificence, and the aspiration to embody the idea of majesty. While such Venetian architects as Spavento or Scarpagnino, staunch upholders of the civic architectural tradition with its decorative richness of form and picturesque quality though insufficiently familiar with architectural theory, were cautious in their treatment of architectural heritage, the arrival in Venice of Sebastiano Serlio, despite his short stay in the city, and Jacopo Sansovino, was of immense significance. The activity of

Sansovino and his colleagues in transforming the city centre, the beginnings of a new architectural decoration of the Piazza San Marco, the erection of the Procuratie Vecchie and Nuove and other buildings, and the clearing away of dilapidated structures, gave the capital of the Republic its appearance of *Venetia Triumphaus*. The reinforcement of the idea of *translation*, the continuation of the inheritance of the political and cultural traditions of Antiquity and Byzantium following the Sack of Rome, stimulated the creation of a project for the separate majestic building of the Libreria with its classical arcades. The Loggetta Sansovino became the incarnation of the idea of the triumphal arch. Venice's major painters were made familiar with many projects[163] and translated, whether consciously or due to more underlying influences, their ideas onto their paintings. It should be recalled that the genre of socially significant works, of public art, defined by the Venetians themselves as opera pubblica (the monumental altars or wall panels) that replaced fresco painting in Venice in the fifteenth century, whose popularity had been shattered by the intimate and lyrical works connected with the name of Giorgione and his followers), regained a leading position from around the 1520s.

These intimate tendencies were replaced by a triumphal principle, dramatic scenographical illusions and dynamism. But it was also from this point that the *storia* genre – the many-figured narrative composition – was relegated to a subsidiary position. In the 1520s, only one *scuola* in Venice saw works continue to be produced in this genre, in the Albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, made by Giovanni Mansueti and Vittore Belliniano. But from the midpoint of that century, this archaising genre in the works of the most prominent representatives of the Venetian High Renaissance took on a new aesthetic and stylistics. Paris Bordone's *Miracle of the Ring* begins the tradition of effective classicalisation of the architectural setting, evolving further in the later part of the sixteenth century in

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[163] The buildings themselves were erected over decades, but Sansovino's building for the Procuratie Nuove, reworked in 1585 by Scamozzi, was only realised in the seventeenth century by Longhena).

The Feasts and other compositions on Gospel subjects by Veronese (such as the *Anannunciation* of 1578) and Tintoretto's series devoted to Saint Mark. Veronese's evangelical compositions reveal not only a connection with the old Venetian tradition of theatrical performances in arched loggie (we find similar compositions and ordered architecture in both Mansueti and Carpaccio), but also a reflection of the architectural and scenographic tendencies then coming into vogue (Palladio etc.).

In this way, the interpretation of architectural decoration in paintings, including the depiction of holy sites, bears the signs of ideological connotations, in correspondence with the general tendencies of cultural demands of the days of the *Renovatio*. The architectural environment often figures as an active component of the general composition, facilitating the emergence of a new tendency for the combination of multi-figure narrative and the "grand style" of the Cinquecento with all its energy and majesty (Titian's *Ecce Homo* and others). It was precisely these ideas in politics and art that would form the departure point for the treatment of architectural spaces in the work of the Venetian painters of the Late Renaissance.

Speaking of Venetian artists' urge to capture real features of their native city and transfer them to the architectural decoration of places in which Biblical events or the acts of the first Saints had taken place, two additional circumstances should be highlighted in their depiction: the aforementioned interest in genuine topographical features (occasionally combining features of the built environments of Constantinople, Rome and the Christian fortresses and castles that withstood the Islamic expansion) and, secondly, the depiction of fantasy buildings, creating a general impression of exotic motifs that facilitated the imparting of a mystical

mood (as are numerous in the work of Vittore Carpaccio).[164] But also in the later 1500s, other means of colour variation, such as in Tintoretto's *Abduction of the Body of Saint Mark*, whose action is arbitrarily shifted to a Venetian town square, where the artist's extravaganza of light transforms the urban landscape into a fantastical vision, lending it a charge and disquieting dramatism that appears to part from the harmony and grandeur of the Venetian mythos.

Though the viewpoint connected with the perspective determined by the chosen theme may be one-sided, it has nevertheless opened up a truly multivarious and broad picture of the influential processes and meanings, both deep and more easily perceived, in Venetian art, all of which contributed to making it, in the sixteenth century, one of the most vivid and iconic artistic phenomena of its time.

The results of this research reveal the causes behind the appearance of particular motifs and approaches of the depiction of Eastern architecture. A shift has been uncovered in the images of this architecture – from the fantastical and conditional (with rare inclusion of specific fragments inspired by information recorded in the accounts of travellers, merchants and missionaries), and pseudo-Byzantine or pseudo-Islamic, to an architectural entourage "constructed" in "all'antica", accompanied by changes in the level of conventionality and in the interpretation of space and its organisation.

Images of Eastern architecture have been used in this dissertation to once more reconstruct and define more exactly the mechanism behind the consolidation of Renaissance thought oriented on Classical culture. Regarding the polyfunctional portrayal of architecture in general, and in Venetian Renaissance painting in

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[164] Fantastic details were occasionally generally accepted and their symbolism was linked with the possibility of associations obvious for the initiated, such as, the ball-shaped finials on the points of pyramids and obelisks in the pictures of Titian, Bordone, Tintoretto, and even swords (Giorgione's *Judith*), symbolising the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

particular, suggest a complicating of its general history. However, by including this perspective into the general history of Venetian painting, we obtain a picture of it that has a much greater fullness.

In this manner, even in such a peripheral area of Venetian Renaissance art as the architectural backgrounds to paintings, we can trace the gradual penetration of authentic Renaissance tastes, occasionally synchronic with processes in development in real architecture. The inclusion of distinctively Venetian traits in the depicted architecture of Oriental loci (Alexandria, Jerusalem and etc) becomes a powerful means of artistic imagery. And just as the preconditions and reasons for the appearance and spread of real-life architecture *all'antica* in Venice (Coducci, Lombardo, etc.) are connected with the Venetian Republic proclaiming its role, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, as the defender of Christendom from Turkish expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean while simultaneously promoting an "imperial" ideology whereby Venice was presented as the heir to Byzantium or a Third Rome, so too did this idea find, I believe, clear reflection and visual reception in the images of Eastern architecture featured in the paintings of Venetian artists.

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