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**BYZANTINE ARTISTIC TRADITION AND THE WESTERN WORLD.
MEDITERRANEAN DOMAIN – PART 1**

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Elena Lavrentyeva

The Question of Byzantine Input to the Crusader Architecture of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the 12th Century: The Case of the Holy Sepulchre

Despite the fact that the Byzantine Empire lost Palestine province in the first half of the 7th century, it supported the Christian churches and shrines there during the reign of Rashidun, Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. In the context of Levant culture Christian churches became mixed monuments contained several disjoint features of Byzantine and Near East architecture.

The continual contact between Levant and Byzantine culture can be seen in the architectural features of the Holy Sepulchre complex (D. Pringle, J. Folda, R. Ousterhout). One of the most striking events was the Constantine Monomachos' restoring program in the mid-11th century when masons were sent from Constantinople for rebuilding the main Church for Christian world (R. Krautheimer, R. Ousterhout, and J. Bogdanović). Unfortunately the reconstruction of all byzantine stages of the Holy Sepulchre is impossible because of the frequent destructions and of the last greatest rebuilding by crusaders in the 12th century.

The main target of this research is the definition of Byzantine input to the building process of Crusader complex of Holy Sepulchre rarely received the focused attention it deserve.

According to the narrative sources, the scholars mention that by the early 12th century a Byzantine Church of the Holy Sepulcher was in ruins, barring the Rotunda Anastasis, a number of other chapels and the surviving fragments of a northern part of triportico (L.-H. Vincent, F.-M. Abel, V. Corbo, D. Pringle, R. Ousterhout, and D. Bahat).

The remains of the complex, built by Constantine Monomachos, were preserved and integrated into the structure of a new domed Crusader church that was built in two basic stages (D. Pringle, J. Folda). The first phase of restoration work was carried out under Patriarch Arnulf of Chocques during the reign of Baldwin I; the second phase – under patriarch William of Malines during the Fulk and Melisenda's reign (J. Folda, C. Enlart, A. Borg).

There are archaeological confirmations of the movement to the eastern side of several chapels, the destruction of eastern apse of the Rotunda, and the shifting of omphalos position to the west. More precise definition of the architectural composition of the eastern part of Monomachos' Holy Sepulchre requires separate consideration: it is known that the Byzantine tradition of architecture helped to establish the forms of the crusaders' building and suggested some structural forms for the 12th-century additions (R. Ousterhout).

Determination of the katholikon's prototype is also still an open question. There was no proposition about domed church prototype derived from architectural heritage of Eastern Christian world, despite the fact that the possibility of existence of such prototype was mentioned very often in the scholars' literature (J. Folda, R. Ousterhout, and N. Kanaan-Kedar). Likewise the composition of Crusader katholikon requires comprehensive consideration of using of groin vaults, slightly pointed arches, arcature on the inner surface of the light drum, etc.

In spite of traditions' novelty brought by crusaders from the west to the Holy Land, the continuity of the byzantine traditions in Crusader architecture within the context of the European impact on the Levant cultural heritage is evidence.

By the second half of the 12th century architectural features of Holy Sepulchre complex which was consisted of Rotunda Anastasis, erected during Monomachos' rebuilding program, and katholikon, erected during crusaders reign after the conquest of Jerusalem, had a strong influence on development of churches' compositions both in Europe and Near East world.



Livia Bevilacqua

*“Leo da Molino Hoc Opus Fieri Iussit”:
A Bronze Door between Byzantium and Venice*

The outstandingly rich heritage of documentary material preserved in the State Archives in Venice is extremely precious for the Byzantine art historian, since it helps reconstruct several peculiar aspects of the artistic interrelations between Byzantium and Venice. One among those is the problem of the ways and modes of circulation and patronage of art works promoted by the Venetians in their establishments throughout the Byzantine empire. The study of these documents, however, can be profitably complemented by the material evidence, namely the surviving art works which may be regarded as coming from such context. A remarkably interesting case is that of the Byzantine bronze doors in the atrium of St. Mark's basilica in Venice.

Two inlaid bronze doors can be mentioned amongst the numerous masterpieces of Byzantine origin preserved in the Venetian ducal church. They were produced in the last quarter of the 11th and in the first decades of the 12th century respectively. While the former, which now closes the southwestern entrance to the church (the so-called Door of St. Clement), is unanimously considered the work of a Byzantine workshop, several doubts have been raised in the past, as for the provenance of the most recent one, that marks the central entrance from the atrium to the naos. Although it is now generally and correctly accepted that the latter is Byzantine as well (on the basis of technical features), a number of problems have not been sufficiently discussed as yet, especially those concerning the patron, Leo da Molino, whose portrait is displayed on one of the door's panels, together with a brief dedicatory inscription. Despite such visual testimony, his identity is still elusive, and his role in the economic and political connections between his homeland and Constantinople is unclear.

On the background of a wider research that I have started in 2013 – which is focused on the artistic production and circulation in the Venetian “quarters” in the Eastern Mediterranean cities before and after the Fourth Crusade – this communication aspires to shed some new light on the role of Leo, in the wider historical context of the venetian presence in the Byzantine Levant, and with the support of new, previously overlooked documentary evidence.

I will consider the door's technical and stylistic features (highlighted after several restorations) and iconographic program, and I will try to contextualize this work in the milieu of the continuous changes and redeceptions, carried out in the aftermath of the 11th-century reconstruction of St. Mark's basilica, as well as in the light of the complex relationships that the Serenissima was interlacing with Byzantium and the other maritime powers of the time.



Valentina Cantone

The Mosaics in Context.

*Preliminary Report on a Multi-Methodological Study
of the Inner Porch of San Marco, Venice*

This contribution represents the first communication about the research in progress. The working team is a multi-disciplinary group of scientists from the Department of Cultural Heritage and from the Department of Geosciences of the University of Padua. The focus is to study Early Christian and Medieval mosaics with a multi-methodological approach, by correlating the data coming from the historical investigation of artistic documents with the results of material analysis (glass tesserae and mortar), and with the data obtained by multi-spectral analysis and non-destructive radar. The purpose of this research is to study the mosaics in their context, considering not only the external decoration, but also the constitution materials of the architectural structure, experimenting with new technological applications in the mosaics study.

In my communication I intend to discuss the research method and the preliminary results of the project, referring to a case study the inner portal of the basilica of San Marco in Venice, actually under restoration.

The first concern of this research is the architectural structure of the portal. The portal is an exedra composed by three superimposed levels. The lower one displays symmetrically niches with the four standing figures of Evangelists, two on each side. The second level shows the Virgin Mary with the Child in the middle of the composition, with eight Apostles, four on each side. The higher layer, which corresponds to the apse, is decorated by a figure of Saint Mark arranged in 1545 by the brothers Zuccati on a gilded background. Scholars do not agree about the original articulation of the portal, assuming that the original structure was lower than the actual one.

Trying to confirm this assumption or to introduce another hypothesis, we have tried to investigate the materials under the surface of mosaic in the three levels of the portal using the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and an innovative Holographic Subsurface Radar which has never been used in mosaics study before. The instrument was invented to search for buried objects in the fields of civil engineering and mine detection. Its further developments provide high-resolution plan-view subsurface images. In this phase of the project, it is necessary to understand how to interpret the specific signal data collected from mosaics. Thanks to collaboration with the restorers, we have learnt a lot of technical data about the mosaics as for example the density and thickness of the mortars. Moreover, we know that in Saint Mark Basilica it is used a particular internal stair-like structure called “scaletta”, which can considerably compromise the interpretation of the signal. In order to complete our studies of the three layers and to obtain full and real radar information it is necessary to determine the bricks composition of the apse decorated with the orant figure of Saint Mark. By the direct in-situ observation of the extrados of this apse we documented that the brickwork of the higher level of the portal has a herringbone pattern. This structure is typical of the period in which the lower layers of the portal of the basilica were realized. The same pattern type is used in the main apse of the church and in other ancient parts of the basilica.



Antonella Manzo

Santa Fosca on Torcello and the Middle-Byzantine Tradition

The church of Santa Fosca on Torcello, an island located on the Northern side of the Venetian Lagoon, shows several interesting peculiarities that make it unique in Italy. It is characterized by a Greek cross plan, where, at the intersection of the arms, it occurs the transition from the central square plan to the octagonal organization of the supports, and finally to the circular base of the drum, by means of uncommon couples of pendentives. Furthermore, a wooden roof currently covers the central naos, which several scholars assumed originally vaulted by a masonry dome.

Many uncertainties are related also to its construction epoch, because of the lack of documentation: a large debate still tries to define the period of its erection, as well as the possibility of successive structural modifications that have brought the church to look like nowadays. The first reliable document that gives information about Santa Fosca, indeed, belongs to the 1011, when two sisters, Bona and Fortunata, made a donation act in favour of a Church in Torcello dedicated to Saint Fosca.

Moreover, several authors have identified some analogies between Santa Fosca and a group of churches, which developed in Greece during the Middle-Byzantine period. In fact, they show the same spatial organization of the Venetian church, with the transition from the square to the circle throughout the octagonal disposition of the supports. The comparison was mentioned starting from the end of the Nineteenth century, and was taken into account up to nowadays. Several scholars, who focused their studies on Santa Fosca church, took into account this assumption and never challenged it. In addition, recently this comparison has been further supported through the analysis of the analogies between the mosaics of the closer Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta - the ancient Dom of Torcello island, whose foundation dates back to 639 AD - and some of the churches of the octagonal domed type. Nonetheless, the relation between Santa Fosca and the Greek typology should be carefully analyzed in order to contextualize it to the period of its elaboration. At that moment, indeed, travelers were starting to discover medieval architectures and to classify them on the basis of a merely typological approach.

However, in order to demonstrate the real connection between Santa Fosca and the Middle-Byzantine churches, not only the typological analogies but also the constructive resemblances have to be taken into account. The socio-economic context plays a fundamental role as well: architectures in Constantinople, the main cultural and economic centre of the Byzantine tradition, have therefore to be considered. Although during the XI century northern Italy was not under the Byzantine Empire control, indeed, the Eastern culture influenced the Venetian flowering in art and architecture, thanks to their very close commercial ties. Thus, the aforementioned analogies would be also validated by finding some Constantinopolitan constructions, used as models for the Venetian and for the Greek culture as well.

The aim of the present contribution is therefore to analyze the relation between Santa Fosca and the Greek churches from different approaches (socio-economic, typological, etc.), and to examine the possibility that both Santa Fosca and the Greek churches could refer to an earlier construction, perhaps located in Constantinople.



Patrick Martin

*The Last Judgement Mosaic at Torcello, Venice –
Exploiting the Resources of Byzantium*

On the west wall of the Cathedral of Torcello in the Venice lagoon a full height gold-glass mosaic shows the Crucifixion, the Anastasis and the Last Judgement. The mosaic is normally described as Byzantine. This paper asks what it means to call it Byzantine and then considers how the Venetians used the Byzantine material to introduce their own innovations.

The Cathedral in its present form was dedicated in 1008. There is no surviving documentation for the date of the mosaic, but stylistic and archaeological data suggest the last half of the eleventh century.

I argue that the iconography of the Last Judgement is Byzantine, as were the craftsmen who made it, and the materials used. The iconography is clearly based on the cluster of motifs that became the standard model for the Eastern Last Judgement around the beginning of the eleventh century. It contrasts sharply with the Western model as seen in the near-contemporary west wall fresco at Sant'Angelo in Formis near Naples. The mosaic technique is Byzantine: the same workshop may have worked, first at Daphni and then at Torcello. Analysis of the Torcello tesserae indicates that they were not produced locally: the raw glass probably come from Syria.

In the second half of the eleventh century it was to Venice's advantage to portray itself as an ally of the Byzantine emperors. It boosted trade and gave the city extra leverage against threats from the German empire, from other Italian states and from the Normans in the south. Part of the propaganda campaign was the redecoration of Torcello Cathedral, starting with the Apostles in the main apse, continuing with the Ravennate South Chapel, and culminating in the west wall.

Prestige demanded mosaic, but the native mosaic revival in Italy was not effective until the twelfth century: the Venetians had to look East for craftsmen.

At the level of the individual motif the craftsmen followed the standard Eastern iconography, making a clear statement of common interests between Venice and Constantinople.

The Venetian innovations came in the overall layout. The monumental Last Judgements in the Eastern Mediterranean up to the end of the twelfth century were almost always found in narthexes and funerary chapels; participants in the liturgy were literally in the midst of the events depicted. Flat images were confined to icons and painted panels, books and ivories. For the Torcello west wall it was necessary to design a convincing flat composition to put across the desired religious messages.

The second innovation is the unique combination of Crucifixion, Anastasis and Last Judgement. Anna Kartsonis sees the Anastasis as prompted by the presence of the baptistery just outside the west door, a traditional pairing of Baptism and Anastasis picked up later in the Baptistery of S. Marco.

Together these innovations allowed the Venetian patrons to achieve a new and complex image for both meditation and instruction. Reading from the Crucifixion downwards the viewer saw the cosmic drama of salvation, out of time and authenticating the timeless reality of Christ in the sacraments, in the church and in the resolution of history. Reading from the bottom upwards the viewer, as he left the church or watched the newly baptised enter, was confronted with the choice of virtue or vice, Paradise or punishment, with a message of hope in God's mercy and of threat in God's judgment.



The Fresco Cycle of St. Francis in Constantinople

One of the major turning-points in the history of the world was the Crusades. While the political, economic, and social impacts of the Crusades redefined the trends of the Middle Ages, the Fourth Crusade marked one of the most dramatic moments of the Byzantine history: the Sack of Constantinople in 1204. Although the Latin occupation of Constantinople is remembered by the plunder and destruction of the rich art works of the imperial city, there is one example of artistic activity of the Latins from this period. The fresco cycle of St. Francis of Assisi, an Italian Catholic friar and the founder of the Franciscan Order, was discovered in 1967 after being sealed in a chapel for seven centuries at the Kalenderhane Mosque, a former Byzantine church which was part of the monastic complex of Virgin Kyriotissa.

The frescoes portraying Francis's life were painted shortly after the canonization of the saint in 1228 and prior to the reconquest of 1261. They are regarded among the earliest depictions of Francis's life on fresco. Thus, the cycle is both the earliest preserved fresco cycle of Francis and also the only example of artistic activity from the Latin occupation of Constantinople. Besides it is an intriguing example of the hybrid works of art, which emerged in the post-Crusade Eastern Mediterranean. The joint existence of Western and Byzantine elements is generally considered to be the intent of the patron to promote a common cultural and spiritual stance between the Latins and Greeks in the broader context of their commitment to the union of the churches and missionary activities in the East. The resemblance of the fresco cycle to the format of the Byzantine vita icon with the central figure of Francis flanked by ten scenes from his life is striking. The choice of the vita icon format is interpreted as an attempt of the Franciscans to legitimize the sainthood of their recently canonized founder at the hearth of the Greek Orthodox world since the Byzantine vita icons typically displayed the portrait of one of the most popular saints in the Orthodox calendar, such as Nicholas, George, or John the Baptist. But perhaps more intriguing are two other Byzantine components of the fresco program, which surround the narrative of Francis's life. The first is the Theotokos and Child with Angels scene depicted on the vault directly above the central figure of the saint. The second is the depiction of two Greek Church Fathers on the arch leading to the semidome of the chapel. The size of the Greek Church Fathers, twice the central figure of Francis, along with their prominent inclusion in the program cycle of a Catholic saint, is particularly noteworthy since archaeological evidence leaves no doubt that they were painted at the same time with the remainder of the cycle. One of them is identified as John Chrysostom, with whom St. Francis is associated because of his efforts to restore the church union and the parallels established between his asceticism and Byzantine monasticism, of which Chrysostom was one of the key figures.

Can these Byzantine components only be explained by the cultural climate of the unionist politics? Do they have any other significance beyond their interpretation as references to the common origins of the two churches and the legitimization of St. Francis? This paper aims to look beyond the visible and decipher the ongoing negotiations of power and ideology in the post-Crusades Mediterranean by taking a fresh look into the iconographic and stylistic elements of the cycle.



Vinicije B. Lupis

Byzantine Layers in the Reliquaries from the Cathedral Treasury of Dubrovnik

The Cathedral Treasury in Dubrovnik is one of the wealthiest church collections in the Mediterranean in which Byzantine objects occupy a special place. The oldest reliquary in Dubrovnik belongs to a later period, namely to the 9th and 10th centuries. The reliquary of the True Cross, or so-called 'gold staurothece,' is the oldest and most important object in the Cathedral Treasury and was likely an imperial gift to one of the important cities in the western Eastern Roman Empire. It dates from the 10th century and at some point after the 12th-13th century it was placed in a cross-shaped cavity in a silver, rectangular reliquary whose design is associated with the adriatic-byzantine, 12th century style. A special place was reserved in the cathedral's treasury for reliquaries of the Foot of St. Petrunjela and St. Domicila. The latter are decorated with elements taken from an older silver reliquary, which contained imperial portraits, apparently based on those found on the golden solidus of emperors Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and Romanos I Lekapenos. The Byzantine emperor Constantine VII was the first to mention the existence of the relics of St. Pancras in Dubrovnik, and it is obvious that the original reliquary, which was kept in the church of St. Stephen in Dubrovnik, also originates from the same period.

Reliquaries from the church of St. Stephen and the Cathedral were the most valuable in the entire collection of reliquaries in Dubrovnik. According to local tradition, the arrival of the original head reliquary of St. Blaise took place during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Constantine VIII Porphyrogennetos (1025th to 1028th). The translation of the relics of St. Blaise to Dubrovnik confirms the importance of the city for Byzantine politics in the Adriatic area. The reliquary head of St. Blaise, which was restored in 1694 following damage caused by the great earthquake in 1667, kept its original form of a Byzantine imperial crown and was repaired with parts from other reliquaries. It was originally designed for a Latin city in the Byzantine ecumena, since the inscription is written in the Latin alphabet to imitate Greek letters. Another reliquary of the Hand of St. Simon the prophet with a ribbon bearing five medallions with images of St. Theodor also originates from the 11th century. Byzantine artistic influence continues even after the definitive break with nominal Byzantine rule in Dubrovnik in 1204.

This paper will further examine other objects from Dubrovnik that can be related to late Komnenian and Palaeologan production. Certainly, one should mention the extremely valuable examples of Byzantine goldsmiths housed in the National Archives in Dubrovnik, such as the silver and gold seals of Michael II Komnenos Doukas, Despot of Epirus from 1251 and a chrysobull of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Dragases Palaiologos from 1451. This object marks the end of Byzantine artistic influence on the Dubrovnik goldsmith tradition.