

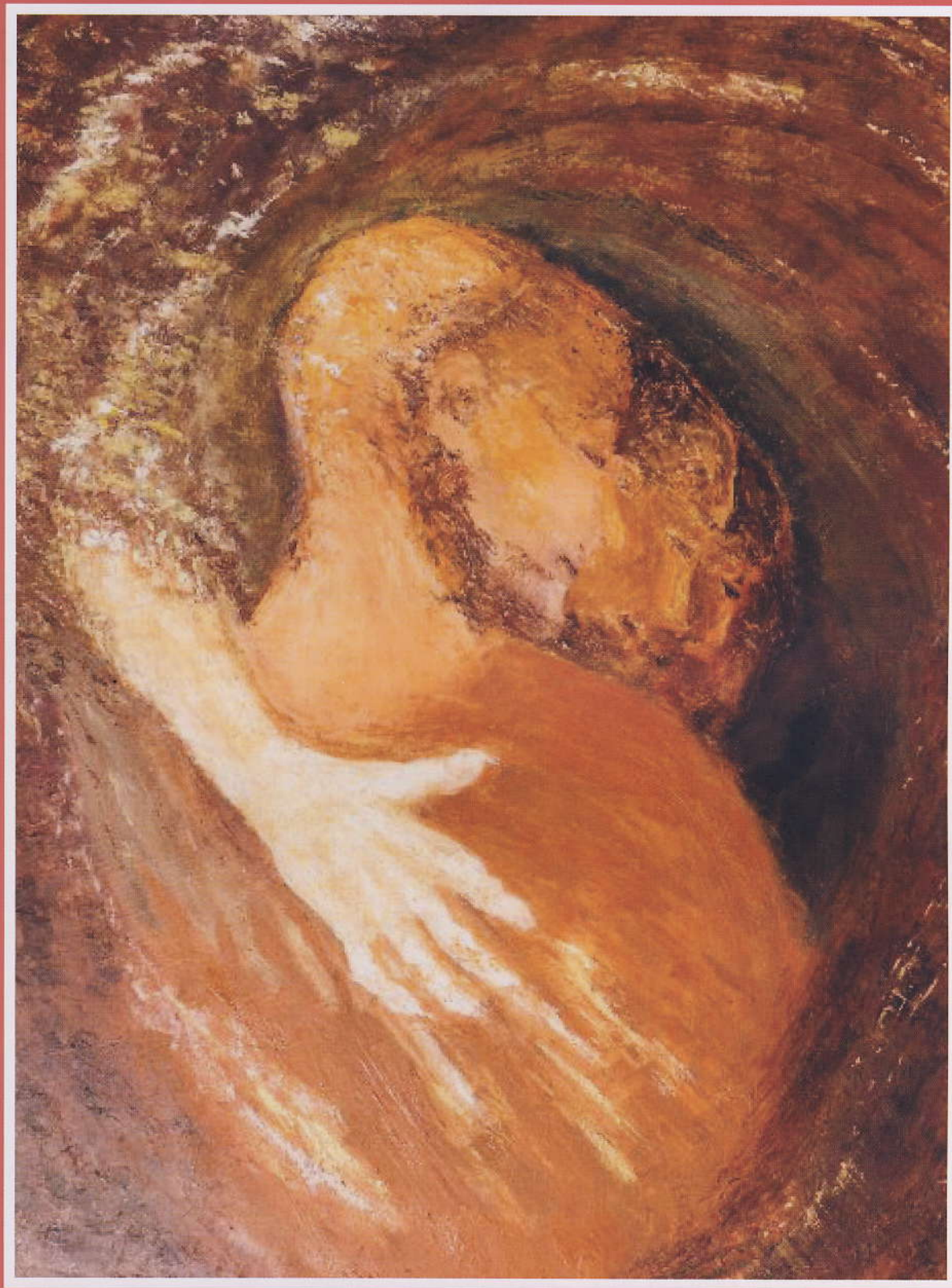
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IL RITORNO DEL FIGLIOL PRODIGO DI REMBRANDT

WELLS IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCHES OF VENICE

UN VOLO TRA PASSATO E PRESENTE DELL'ARTE

A COSA SERVE (ANCORA) L'ARTE?

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Wells in the Medieval Churches of Venice¹

Anna Tüskés

Gli studiosi specializzati nell'arte Romanica a Venezia sostenevano l'ipotesi, sino agli anni più recenti, che i primi pozzi a Venezia come a Roma venivano commissionati dalla Chiesa. Il limitato numero di documenti riguardanti la costruzione di questi pozzi e la facilità di trasporto dei rivestimenti marmorei rende molto difficile dare una risposta certa sulla provenienza delle sculture e le possibili differenze sul tipo del materiale impiegato e poter stabilire se le commesse venivano da ordini ecclesiastici o secolari. Infatti sui pozzi di Venezia si possono trovare simboli religiosi ma risulta sconosciuta la loro origine. Inoltre sorge la domanda se questi temi svolgevano un ruolo simbolico o solo ornamentale. Per investigare su questo tema ho analizzato la funzione dell'acqua e i pozzi nella liturgia ecclesiastica a Costantinopoli esaminando l'influenza dei riti Bizantini nelle cerimonie ecclesiastiche a Venezia. Non ho trovato alcun riferimento al pozzo che si riempie d'acqua come nel significato tradizionale riportato nel libro dei riti della Basilica di San Marco che risale al 14° secolo. Parlando dei cinque pozzi nell'opera di Marin Samudo si può trarre la conclusione che nel Medioevo le cerimonie Bizantine avessero un impatto sulle cerimonie di Venezia. All'inizio del 14° secolo i pozzi non erano più in uso e sostituiti da serbatoi d'acqua che venivano riempiti durante le celebrazioni Pasquali. Quando nel 1563 la cripta della Basilica divenne inutilizzabile a causa delle infiltrazioni d'acqua le cerimonie della benedizione dell'acqua venivano celebrate nel coro e fu introdotto un apposito contenitore per l'acqua santa.

Until quite recently, researchers specialised in the Romanesque sculpture of Venice maintained a hypothesis that the early Venetian well-heads – just like in Rome – were made to orders of the Church². The reason of uncertainty is that the small number of documents on well-heads and their easy transportability make it significantly more difficult to give an explicit answer to the questions regarding the provenience of the carvings and the possible differences between the motives of the well-heads that were made to ecclesiastic or secular orders. We cannot draw any sure conclusions from the inscriptions of the drawings of Grevembroch either; nevertheless, it deserves attention that the Flemish artist represented the Devil well of the S. Maria Mater Domini presbytery on a sheet of the ms. 107 collection of drawings (fig. 1). On one side of the cubical well-head, which has since gone missing and is only known from this drawing, there was the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) with a halo holding a cross with his left fore-foot and on the other side an eagle with wings spread, holding an animal in his talons. The question arises whether it can be concluded from the emphasized representation of the two Christ symbols that the well-head was made to an ecclesiastic order and function. In early medieval Italy, the first

motif always appears on ecclesiastic carvings. In Venice, it appears, besides the well-head that was captured by Grevembroch, on a much older piece (fig. 2) and on a wall disc (patera) from the 14th century³. The second motif was much more prevalent in Venice, besides the well-heads it also appears on the reliefs that decorate the facade of the palaces in the city (fig. 3)⁴. Religious symbols can be found on numerous Venetian well-heads, the origin of which is unknown. Furthermore, the question arises whether these motifs played a symbolic or just ornamental role on the well-heads. To investigate the question it is worth analysing the function of water and the wells in the ecclesiastic liturgy in Constantinople and examining the influence of the Byzantine rites on the ecclesiastic ceremonies of Venice.

Wells in Medieval Churches in Europe and in the Middle East

The role of the wells in the origins of medieval Christian worship places could vary. The churches were mostly built above or next to such wells, 1. that were mentioned by the Bible or that were connected with the life of Jesus; 2. that were at a pagan place of worship; 3. at which Mary appeared according to historical tradition, 4. that served as the

scene of martyrdom; 5. in which some representations of Mary were claimed to be found; 6. the water of which was regarded as having healing power. I illustrate the types with some examples below.

1. The wells mentioned in the Bible or in connection with the life of Jesus are the well of Abraham in Mambre where the prophet invited the three angels for a feast, and the well of Jacob and the woman of Samaria. The latter well became the centre of worship very soon. An unknown pilgrim from Bordeaux wrote about it in 333 as follows: "balneus qui de eo puteo lavantur"⁵. A church with a cross-shaped ground plan was built over it. Saint Ephrem was the first to write about it and then it was mentioned in the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius that was translated by Saint Jerome. Jerome adds to the text: "Today a church is standing there."

The Mary well of the church of Saint Gabriel of Nazareth is in the focus of worship. The legend about several wells on the path of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt says that they rested in these places and later a church was built above the wells, as for example in Tel Basta and Matariya⁶. These places were visited by the medieval pilgrims too. About a sacred well in the crypt of a Copt church in Egypt the legend says that the child Jesus lived there for a month.

2. The ancient Christian churches were often built on barbarian cult places that were also respected in the Roman era. One such example is the Santuario di Santa Maria del Pozzo in Somma Vesuviana⁷. The legend says that a church was standing here in the Roman time that was sacred to Jupiter and was converted in the Christian times. According to the archaeological explora-



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tions, it was actually a wine cellar that stood here in Roman times. The entrance of the wagon-roofed cellar is similar to a well and the name of the sanctum originates from here.

A further example of this type is the Roman Bocca della verità that was the top-stone of the sacred well of the Mercury church according to the legend⁸. The Basilica of St. Bartholomew on the Island in Rome is located where formerly a church was dedicated to Aesculapius (fig. 4). The church of Santa Venera in Reitana stands in the place of a church consecrated to Venus. According to another tradition, the body of Saint Venera – some sources say that only her head – was thrown into the well after her martyrdom and its water became miraculous.

A further example of the Christian church that was built above an ancient cult place in connection with water is the S. Vittoria church in Monteleone Sabino that was built above the place devoted to the goddess of waters, Sabine Feronia⁹. A church was built in the 8th century at the place of the sanctum, which had previously been erected for SS. Victoria and Anatolia in the 3rd century. In the middle of the nave of the church there was a well, its water believed to have had a healing effect.

A further example for this type is the rotunda of Battistero di Santa Maria Maggiore in Nocera Superiore that was built

1. Giovanni Grevembroch, *Well-head*, Venice, 1761. Ms. Gradenigo-Dolfin 107, Bibl. Correr, Venice, 34940.

2. *Well-head*, Venice, Museo Archeologico (M. Correr cl. XXV-143, M. Arch. 900). Foto by Anna Tüskés, 2006.

in the second half of the 6th century and shows a parallel with the Santa Constanza in Rome¹⁰. Two rows of columns are holding the cupola; the octagon-shaped basin is surrounded by a walk-around. The building was erected over the former plot of Roman era houses, the mosaic flooring of which was discovered in the walk-around. The Corinthian crowns and shanks originate from Roman era buildings.

3. An example for a church built at the scene of Mary's appearance next to the well is the Santa Maria del Pozzo parish church in Albano in the 11th century. According to the legend the name originates from Mary having appeared to a number of girls not far from the well next to the former church¹¹.

4. The well of the crypt under the apse of the church, still existing today in S. Lorenzo in Fonte in Rome, from the 3rd century is an example for a well as the scene of the martyrdom of an ancient Christian saint. According to the legend Saint Laurence was in captivity here¹².

5. The early example for finding a painted or engraved image in the well is the S. Maria in Via church in Rome about which records exist from the 10th century onwards¹³. In 1256 a miracle happened. The well of the stable next to the palace of Cardinal Pietro Capocci overflowed in the third year of Alexander IV's



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popedom and flooded the whole surroundings. The phenomenon only stopped when a Madonna picture was found in the water flooding out of the well. Cardinal Capocci had a church built at the location, which also included the well. The legend says that until the era of Pope Alexander VII, there was a stone in the well that originates from the well of the Samaritan woman. People said that the water of the well had a medical effect. A further example is the "Madonna di Mellito" church in Mellito: according to the legend the Madonna picture was found by a shepherd in the well where he took his kettle to drink. In the shepherd's dream Mary asked for a church to be built there for her.

6. The S. Nicomede church was built in S. Nicomede over a spring with healing water in the 9th century to guard the relics of the saint. The miraculous water of the spring was attributed to the relics of the saint during the time of Christianity. In the three-aisled crypt there are two Roman and two Longboard columns; the marble well-head was placed on the spring at the time of the Carolings. The pilgrims from all of Europe visited the church next to the Via Francigena in order to drink from its water.

The function of the well-head that was originally in the middle of the nave of St. Martin's church in Canterbury is unknown. This cylindrical well-head consists of 22 pieces of stone, somewhat unusual for the Middle Ages. It is decorated by entwined circles in the two lower strips and intersecting arches on the top. The two upper borders are also decorated just like two lower stripes with the exception of a single stone on which one can see a carving just like a dog tooth or a half star. The stone seat did not belong to the well originally, it was added when the well was removed from its original place in the mid of the 19th century.

One can also notice the presence of wells in the churches of Germany in the late Middle Ages and the early modern times. The two significant pieces still existing today are the late Gothic well in front of the southern wall of the St. Peter's southern cross-house in Regensburg and the Mary well from the 17th century that was placed by the southern wall of the Münster walk around in Freiburg in Breisgau. The history of the dome in Regensburg that was built between 1273-1525 is in close connection with the water. The public well that was south of the Roman

church was incorporated into the new cathedral with the 15th century superstructure. The cult of the healing wells is often in connection with the respect of Mary as the source of life¹⁴.

Function of the water and the wells in the ecclesiastic liturgy in Constantinople

The problem of water supply, if not so expressively like in Venice, was a key question in Constantinople too. The water-conduit and the cisterns provided the big part of water supply but e.g. Liutprand of Cremona mentions in his description of the city that he saw selling water on the streets of Constantinople¹⁵. Both the quantity and the quality of water meant a significant problem in the summer months. Water with the source together was the symbol of life and purification. Christening and blessing the water formed the important part of the Byzantine liturgy. Saint Basil the Great traced back the introduction of the blessing of water to the early traditions¹⁶.

Water played a significant role in the different rites in Constantinople. In the 6th century, Paulus Silentiarius mentions a phiale in his eulogion describing the wonders of Hagia Sophia. From the phiale "water bursts out from a bronze tube into the air so noisy and with so much power that drives the devil away. In the month of gold [January], at the divine start of night, people draw from the imperishable water into pots and for the reason that it cannot be contaminated, even if people have been drawing from its source for many years, it can be held in a jug and kept at home"¹⁷. The Holy Well was supposedly next to the southwestern edge of the church.

Blachernitissa is the second most important church of Constantinople after the Hagia Sophia that is the greatest church of Mary in the city and it was

next to the imperial palace¹⁸. The first church was built here over the holy spring in the mid-5th century. Later it was extended by the hagiaσμα (saint well), the hagion lousma (saint bath) and the hagia soros (place where the cloak and clothes of Mary were kept). Every Friday night people kept awake with litany in front of the miraculous Mary icon. The emperor had a bath every Friday in the hagion lousma domed basin that collected the water of the miraculous spring.

The *Book of Ceremonies* (*De ceremoniis*) of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos describes the rite where the emperor submerged in and emerged from the basin of the Blachernitissa church three times: "finally they entered the sacred Photeinos, the innermost part of the domed building where there are bright lights opposite the marble icon of the Mother of God from the hand of whom the sacred water is running"¹⁹. On the relief water was flowing from a tube inserted in the middle of both of Mary's palms of the marble icon of the Mother of God into the basin. The emperor is wearing a golden costume during the rite. The ritual bathing in the sacred water of Blachernitissa symbolizes death and revival on Good Friday. The submergence repeated three times symbolizes the three days that Christ spent in the tomb (Mt 12,40), and at the same time it is the rite of revival of the divine emperor.

The rite is supposedly in connection with one legend of Emperor Constantine the Great who was respected as a saint in the Eastern Church. According to the legend, the lepered emperor did not pay attention to the barbarian priests who recommended diving in a basin full of children's blood for his recovery but followed the encouragement of Peter and Paul apostles who appeared in



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his sleep. Consequently, asked Pope Sylvester (who had retreated to Mount Soratte at the time) for advice, got christened and recovered²⁰.

The Blachernitissa church was not restored after the fire in 1434 and a small church was only erected over the spring in the 19th century. It is standing even today and Muslim women usually visit the well. During the excavations an apse with polygon closing was explored. According to Robert Krautheimer, the hagion received its lousma form from the baptistery: in the hexagonal building there was an octagonal basin²¹. Nicholas Temple reveals that one can draw a comparison between the church and palace complex in Constantinople and the group of the Lateran in Rome²². From this aspect the view, appearing in literary works from the 5th century onwards that Constantinople is the second Rome, becomes emphasized²³.

The presence of hagiaσμα can be noticed in other churches in Constantinople too, for example in the Saint George of Samatya Armenian church (Sulu Manastir, "Water Monastery"). The recently explored

hagiaσμα that supposedly belongs to the monastery of the Hodegoi contains water even today and a Theotokos-fresco remained in it²⁴. Further churches were also built above miraculous springs in Constantinople and in its surroundings and the Blachernitissa type of Mary icon was prevalent in them. So, for example, emperor Justinian I had the "Life-giving Spring" (Zoodochos Pege) Mary sanctuary and monastery built above a miraculous source outside the city walls of Theodosius. Until the 14th century, some miracles happened to those who drank from the water of the spring, recorded by Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos in his work titled *Historia ecclesiastica*²⁵. The church was ruined in the 15th century and it was rebuilt only in the 18th century. The emperor usually visited the church on the holiday of Mary's Assumption, according to the *Book of Ceremonies*²⁶. One could approach the marble basin collecting the water of the miraculous source by stairs in the church.

The building of sanctums over springs was widespread in all of Byzantium. The Hagios Deme-



3. *Patera*, Venice, Basilica of Saint Mark, north facade. Foto by Anna Tuskés, 2012. Per gentile concessione della Procuratoria di San Marco.

4. *Well-head*, Rome, S. Bartolomeo sull'Isola Tiberiana. Foto by Anna Tuskés, 2014.

trios in Thessaloniki was built over an ancient nymphaeum that was reconstructed for the respect of the saint²⁷. The reason why the place of the Roman bath was selected for the site of the Christian church might have been that Demetrios was imprisoned in a caldarium, according to the legend. Lemerle separates three phases of the building operations here: 1. sanctum, 2. martirium, 3. basilica that was built in the mid or in the second half of the 5th century. The five-nave basilica is divided into three main parts. 1. crypt with hagiasma under the transept and the apse, 2. reliquary under the altar, 3. ciborium with hexagon ground-plan in the nave of church, next to the narthex by the northern colonnade. One could reach the crypt in two ways: on the one hand through the eastern front from the street, on the other hand on the stairs from the basilica.

The presence of hagiasma can be noticed in many Byzantine churches, for example in the Lystra basilica in Asia Minor²⁸, in Aghiasma in Patras that was reconstructed from a Roman bath²⁹, and in Serbian orthodox complexes, for exam-

ple in the monastery church of De?an in the 14th century.

The Blachernitissa marble icon represents the full figure Virgin Mary orans, with the child Jesus against her chest³⁰. Mary orans often appears on the coins and stamps in the 11th century³¹, and many still existing marble icons represent the type of the relief icon of the church of Blacherna³². Academic literature has also connected a further type of representation, the Playtera Mary, with the name of Blachernitissa: this is Mary orans too, against her chest with the picture of the child Jesus in a medallion³³. The questions in connection with the naming is further complicated by the fact that there is a Mary picture called Blachernitissa in Saint Catherine's monastery in Sina that is a representation of the Eleusa type³⁴.

Although the marble icon of the Blachernitissa church in Constantinople did not survive, the Byzantine Museum in Athens, the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (fig. 5)³⁵, the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul (fig. 6)³⁶, the Museum of Messina and the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt hold several similar relief representations from the Byzantine churches. Several reliefs remained in churches, in original, secondary or further placing, just for example on the front façade of the S. Maria in Piazza in Ancona, on the high altar of the S. Maria in Porto in Ravenna and on the facades and inside of the Basilica of Saint Mark in Venice (figg. 7-8). In some cases one can see the

holes on the palm of Mary emitting the water-jet, so, for example on the piece that originates from Thessaloniki and is kept in the Byzantine Museum in Athens today; on artifacts in Messina and Ravenna and on the relief of S. Maria Mater Domini and S. Marco in Venice very well. Gabelentz says that the relief of Ravenna could get to Italy from Constantinople around 1100 but according to Demus only after 1204³⁷. It cannot be excluded that the marble icon of S. Marco got to Venice after Constantinople was looted in 1204 and some copies were made of it afterwards. Also in case of the primary or even secondary placing of these reliefs we can expect the spring and water basin to be connected to the marble icon. For other reliefs we face the local imitations of the original Byzantine carvings. The marble icons which got into Venice became the centre of a cult and the local craftsmen started copying them. Some imitations are of so high quality that it is difficult to decide whether we face a Byzantine original, Venetian copy, a Venetian work of a Greek craftsman or a Venetian re-carving of the original Byzantine relief³⁸.

The still existing Blachernitissa marble icons can be grouped into two main types: I. Mary orans in a rectangle-formed frame³⁹. II. Mother of God under a round-arched arcade held by two columns, with extended arms, with the child Jesus in a clipea against her chest, the spandrels filled with foliations between the arcade and the upper corners⁴⁰.

On the facades of the Basilica of Saint Mark and inside one can find six of the 1st type and two of the 2nd type Blachernitissa Mary reliefs (figg. 7-8)⁴¹. The earliest relief that shows the Byzantine icono-

graphy and stylistical marks perhaps the most clearly can be found in the northern side-aisle⁴². The relief was respected by the name of Mater gratiae or Madonna della Grazia. Demus says that the marble icon was re-carved after getting to Venice, the grooved halo probably originates from this period. However, its Byzantine character can be perceived as well.

Very close to this in style is the relief above the Porta San Clemente on the western wall of the southern side-aisle and could be a copy of it (fig. 8)⁴³. The drapery handling is simplified, the two ends of the girdle fall down in a line of waves. This must be a Venetian work and it was custom made for its location today.

The Venetian stone-cutter followed the prototype of Madonna della Grazia who carved the Madonna on the western side of the north-western pillar of the main-cupola and probably the orans above the Porta San Clemente too⁴⁴. However, one can also detect Venetian elements on the former relief, the face is rounder and it turns a little bit to one side. The drapery is simpler than that on the other members of the relief group, modelling is softer.

As far as its type is concerned, the Mary orans next to the Cappella dei Mascoli is very close to them (fig. 7)⁴⁵. The Mother of God is standing with extended arms under a round-arched arcade held up by two columns with an octagonal ground-plan. The arches between the arcade and the upper corners are filled with leaf ornaments. Its forerunner can probably be found in the relief of S. Maria Mater Domini of a similar type.

The relief of Mary orans on the western front is matched with the relief of Gabriel archangel and it is the paraph-

rase of an original Byzantine relief that got into Venice and has already disappeared by today⁴⁶. Considering its type it belongs to the group of reliefs that got from the Mangana monastery in Constantinople to the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul.

The Blachernitissa marble icons became the centrum of cult in Venice and several local copies were made. For example the Mary orans that can be found in the S. Giovanni Crisostomo church⁴⁷ and on the front of the S. Maria della Misericordia⁴⁸. Is the work of a Venetian master. In the latter, the half figure of Mary appears in a double dentils frame, with the child Jesus in her mantle and Latin-Greek text on both sides beside her halo.

There is disagreement in the research about the origin of the Blachernitissa Mary orans that was taken from the house next to the S. Nicolo del Lido church into the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna⁴⁹. It can be inferred that the Greek text of the relief representing Saint Pantaleon originates from Byzantium.

As opposed to this, the Blachernitissa Mary orans that is placed on the wall of the house Nr. 4589-92 in Camp S. Luca is certainly an imitation from the 20th century (fig. 9)⁵⁰. In the double dentil frame, Mary is standing with extended arms, against her chest with the bust of the enfant Jesus in a clipea under the round-arched arcade that is held by two plain-shaft columns.

In connection with the Blachernitissa marble relief of the Basilica of Saint Mark one can raise the question whether we can expect the spring and water basin belonging to the icon based on the analogy of the Constantinople practice here too. The statement is trivial that while the Venetian

5. *Blachernitissa Mary-icon*, Skulpturensammlung, Bode Museum, Berlin. Foto by Anna Tüskés, 2011.

6. *Blachernitissa Mary-icon*, Archaeological Museum, Istanbul. Foto by Anna Tüskés, 2010.

liturgy has a Roman orientation, the secular ceremonies show a strong Byzantine effect. Out of the relics, church vessels and works of art, Venice has overtaken specific elements from the Constantinople imperial ceremonies too, for example the habit that the newly elected doge sprinkled money among the public similarly to the Constantinopolitan emperor. This tradition was introduced by Doge Sebastiano Ziani when he was elected in 1173⁵¹.

Marin Sanudo writes in his work *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetiae* that there are five wells in the Basilica of Saint Mark⁵². These pieces of information were overtaken by Giovanni Stringa in his work named *Venetia città nobilissima*⁵³. Until now two wells have been explored during the research⁵⁴. For the exploration of the carvings in connection with the wells I analyse the liturgies about water of the ceremony books of the Basilica of Saint Mark⁵⁵.

Influence of the Byzantine rites on the ecclesiastic ceremonies of Venice

The earliest existing ceremony book dates from the beginning of the 14th century. The manuscript mentions "fons" relating to the source or water in two different locations but within the framework of the same liturgy, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. In the nine-



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teenth paragraph of chapter four of the part introducing the habits of the Basilica of Saint Mark chapter, in connection with the christening on Holy Saturday reads as follows: *"On Good Friday, after nine o'clock at night the well has to be filled with water before vespera for the Holy Saturday christening of the next day and emptied in the appropriate place and in due time as ordered. All of these should be performed at the expense of the chapter of the cathedral church"*⁵⁶.

Chapter eighty five of the same section introduces the habits of celebrating Easter in the Basilica of Saint Mark. After having executed all as described, the cantor starts the antiphon until the "Magnificat". After having sung the psalm each canon who was in the choir has to go down to the

well with the two lit and blessed Easter candles that have to be carried by the deacon of the gospel. Singing the "On the day of resurrection" antiphon and after having arrived at the well and when the antiphon is finished the cantor of the officium has to start the "Hallelujah" antiphon. Afterwards the "Hallelujah resurrection" follows, then the poem starting with "The followers were delighted" or "Jesus, stay with us" is recited in front of the Saint Mark altar. Directly afterwards comes the antiphon with the "Magnificat" psalm and after having sung it the choir has to go down to the well singing the "On the day of resurrection" antiphon as usual. After having finished and sung all, they have to return to the crucifix singing the "Christ rose again"

antiphon. The evening service has to be finished there, in front of the crucifix. All that was told has to be fulfilled on the day of Saturday. The water of the well will be emptied in the evening hours while the "I saw the water" antiphon is to be sung. Having sung this the choir has to return to the crucifix and complete all as it is told⁵⁷.

I translated the expression "fons" with the word "well" throughout, however, the "fons" is a water holding pot that is filled with water in the evening of Good Friday, then after the ceremonies of Holy Saturday it will be emptied. The use of the verb "descendend" does not clearly mark where they go down to the well. The author uses this verb also when the priest comes down from the pulpit or leaves the choir. It cannot be excluded that the author refers to a well, so that the reference is to a water holding pot in the crypt.

We can only gather a summary picture of the ceremonies, so about water blessing on the Twelfth Day on the basis of the references scattered in the ritual book⁵⁸. On the Twelfth Day the chapter usually has breakfast with the doge. The church provides two small and two big candles for the ceremony. During this ceremony the Saint Mark altar is opened. Requiems are postponed in the period from Christmas until the eighth day of Epiphany. On the vigil of the Twelfth Day the "Laudate pueri" antiphon is sung.

If the well or the water holding pot was in the crypt, its use was terminated or relocated in 1563 at the latest when the level of the floor was lifted up for the first time because the water had been filtering in from the nearby channel. At this point, many ceremonies held in the crypt until that time were relocated into the church. Bartholomeo Bonifa-

cio probably wrote his handwritten – until now unpublished – ritual book named *Caeremoniale rituum sacrorum ecclesiae S. Marci* for this occasion in 1563–1564.

The study of Bonifacio's ritual book significantly contributes to understanding the process of water blessing⁵⁹. The structure of the work is as follows: at first the author takes the feasts of the ecclesiastical year and the saints one after the other, then he describes the instruments and clothes needed to the ceremonies in details. The description of the only part that can be connected with the use of water, the ceremony to be executed in the eve of Epiphany is as follows: "*In the morning of the wake the well is placed in the mid of the choir that has two wooden stairs. The lower stairs are quadratic, the upper stairs circular and these are kept by the Saint Victor altar. These stairs and the water holding pot are placed by the parish-clerk in charge on the given week who is obliged to decorate them properly. The pot is filled with water*"⁶⁰.

The to this day unpublished liturgy book of Giambattista Pace written in 1678 describes the ceremonies of the Basilica of Saint Mark. It deals with the ceremony order of the church on the first hundred pages, then writes about the outstanding events typical of life in Venice on two hundred and fifty pages, just like for example

the ceremony of the doge's election and funeral. In terms of the question whether one can assume the presence of the well in the Basilica of Saint Mark, three parts of the work deserve attention. Pace uses the expression of "pozzo" in two places, in the eve of the feast of the doge election and the Epiphany, for the description of the water blessing performed with great pageantry, procession, singing and organ music⁶¹. After the doge election, the primicerio (the main canon of the Basilica of Saint Mark) endows the new doge with the symbols of his power, then the doge will be taken around the S. Marco square⁶². The expression "pozzo" certainly does not mean "well" here but it can mean a) the wooden structure called "pozzetto" in which the doge was taken around the square while sprinkling money among people⁶³, or b) the opening with square ground-plan also called "pozzo" and connecting the nartex of the Basilica of Saint Mark and the choir⁶⁴.

In the description of the ceremony of water blessing Pace uses the expression of "pozzo" again⁶⁵. From the description one can clearly see that the „pozzo" is standing on two stairs next to the reading stand. The "putheus", i.e. "pozzo" is nothing else than a water holding basin that is placed on two stairs that was set

7. *Blachernitissa Mary-icon*, north facade, Cappella dei Mascoli, Basilica of Saint Mark, Venice. Foto by Anna Tüskés, 2012. Per gentile concessione della Procuratoria di San Marco.

8. *Blachernitissa Mary-icon*, relief above the Porta San Clemente, Basilica of Saint Mark, Venice. Foto by Anna Tüskés, 2012. Per gentile concessione della Procuratoria di San Marco.

up in the mid of the choir during the time of Bonifacio and in the period of Pace it was next to the reading stand during the blessing of water.

In sum, it can be established that I did not find any reference to a well filling up from water in the traditional meaning of the term in the ritual book of the Basilica of Saint Mark that survived from the 14th century. From mentioning the five wells in the work of Marin Sanudo one can draw the conclusion that the Byzantine ceremonies had an impact on the Venetian ceremonies in the Middle Ages. The wells were not used in the early 14th century any more and they were replaced by water holding pots during the Easter water blessing. When the crypt became unusable in 1563 due to the water filtering in and the ceremonies that were held there previously were changed, the ceremony of water blessing was relocated into the choir and a holy water basin was used for it.

(1) Revised chapter of my PhD dissertation entitled "Questions of Venetian Ornamental Sculpture in the Light of the Early Medieval and Romanesque Well-Heads" (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2009).

(2) W. DORIGO, *Venezia romanica, La formazione della città medioevale fino all'età gotica*, Venezia, 2003, p. 494, n. 50.

(3) A. RIZZI, *Scultura esterna a Venezia. Corpus delle sculture eratiche all'aperto di Venezia e della sua Laguna*, Venezia, 1987, p. 443.

(4) R. POLACCO, *Sculture paleocristiane e altomedievali di Torcello*, Treviso, 1976, cat. 134.

(5) B. BAGATTI, *Nuovi apporti archeologici sul pozzo di Giacobbe in Samaria*, in "Liber Annuus", 16, 1966, pp. 127–164.

(6) O. F. A. MEINARDUS, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, Cairo, 2002, pp. 18, 21–22.

(7) G. FIENGO, *La chiesa e il convento di S. Maria del Pozzo a Somma Vesuviana*, in

"Napoli nobilissima", [3.Ser.] 4.1964/65 (1965), pp. 125–132.

(8) K. RIESSNER and K. RANKE, *Bocca della verità, Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 2, ed. by R. W. Brednich, Berlin, 1979, 543–549.

(9) B. PREMOLI, *La Chiesa di Santa Vittoria a Monteleone Sabino*, "Palladio", N.S. 22.1972, pp. 187–204.

(10) M. STETTLER, *Il battistero di Nocera Superiore, Il battistero di Nocera Superiore: un*



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capolavoro dell'architettura paleocristiana in Campania, ed. by U. Pappalardo, Napoli, 2007, pp. 19–69.

(11) It is a common motif of legend, among pilgrimage places also in Hungary, for example in case of Mátraverebély and Tétsszentkút. G. TUSKÉS, *Bücsújárás a barokk kori Magyarországon a mirálulumirodalom tükrében*, Budapest, 1993.

(12) M. M. TRINCI CECHELLI, S. Lorenzo in fonte: novità sulla memoria laurenziana della subura, *Historiam pictura refert: miscellanea in onore di Padre Alejandro Recio Véganzones O.F.M.*, ed. by J. Martí-Aixala, E. Allia and F. Bisconti, Città del Vaticano, 1994, pp. 127–139.

(13) S. DE ANGELIS and G. FAILLA, Roma: S. Maria in Via, *Dalla carta al cantiere: la Carta 1987 della conservazione e del restauro del C.N.R.*, Roma, 1989, pp. 84–88.

(14) In Hungary for example: Hogyész, Chapel of the Holy Trinity and the Name of Virgin Mary. The chapel was built between, during the era of the counts Mercy. The chapel and the so called saint well of Csicsó (Maria Brunnen) is a pilgrimage place. The allegory of Mary as the well of life is also a known motif in the fine arts of the 21st century, for example the Mary-well by the sculptor Wolfgang Auer in Ludwigshafen Oggersheim.

(15) Liutprand of Cremona, *Relatio de legatione constantinopolitana*, PL 136:910c.

(16) PG 32:188B.

(17) Paulus Silentarius Poeta, *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae*, in PROKOP, *Werke*, ed. by O. Veh, vol. 5., Munich, 1977, pp. 306–358, 594–604.

(18) C. MANGO, *The origins of the Bla-*

chernae shrine at Constantinople, *Acta XIII congressus internationalis archaeologiae christianae*, *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* suppl. vol. 87–89, Split–Roma, 1998, pp. 61–76.

(19) Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae*, Libri due, vol. 1. ed. by J. J. Reiske, Bonn, 1829, pp. 554–556.

(20) For example: Jacobi a VORAGINE, *Legenda Aurea*, Recensuit J. G. T. Graesse, Dresdae–Lipsiae, 1846, p. 72. Cf. Rome, Santi Quattro Coronati, Cappella di S. Silvestro, fresco; F. PAPENCORDT, *Cola di Rienzo e il suo tempo*, Torino, 1844, Capitolo III. 123.

(21) R. KRAUTHEIMER, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Baltimore, 1965, p. 497, n. 8.

(22) N. TEMPLE, *Conversion and Political Expedience: Imperial Themes in the Early Christian Baptistry*, in "Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas", 24, 2002, num. 80, p. 13.

(23) W. HAMMER, *The Concept of the New or Second Rome in the Middle Ages*, "Speculum", 19, Jan., 1944, No. 1, pp. 50–62.

(24) East from the Blue Mosque, in the street Mimar Mehmet, under the rugstore Sedir. I thank Jan Kostenec for his advices about hagasmas in Constantinople.

(25) PG 147:72–77. book 15, chapter 25.

(26) Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, 108.13–114.9, 774.19–775.6.

(27) P. LEMERLE, *St-Démétrius de Thessalonique et les problèmes du martyrium et du transept*, "Bulletin de Correspondance Helléni-

que", 77, 1953, pp. 660–94; J.-M. SPIESER, *Remarques sur Saint-Démétrius de Thessalonique*, *Mélanges M. Chatzidakis*, Athens, 1992, pp. 561–9; C. WALTER, *St Demetrius, The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Aldershot, 2003.

(28) T. HARY, *Historical genesis of newtestamental cities in central Anatolia*, Institut für Alte Geschichte und Altertumskunde, Universität Graz, Stand-alone Projects P15211. Report accessed April 26, 2016, http://pf.fwf.ac.at/project_pdfs/pdf_final_reports/p15211e.pdf

(29) Cyriacus of Ancona described it in detail when he visited Patras in 1436.

(30) Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, 555.8–10.

(31) For example nomisma of Leo VI, miliaresion of Basil II and Constantin IX.

(32) R. LANGE, *Die byzantinische Relieffikone*, Recklinghausen, 1964, p. 43.

(33) C. BELTING-IHM, "Sub matris tutela" *Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna*, Heidelberg, 1976, pp. 50–56.

(34) G. A. SOTERIOU, *Eikones tes Mones Sina*, Athenai, 1956, pl. 148.

(35) 1. 155 x 102 cm. Inv. 3248: K. WESSEL, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Rom – Byzanz – Russland. Ein Führer durch die Frühchristlich-byzantinische Sammlung*, Berlin, 1957, pp. 143–144, fig. 26.

(36) O. DEMUS, *The Church of San Marco in Venice. History, architecture, sculpture*, Washington, 1960, p. 131.

(37) H. VAN DER GABELENTZ, *Mittelalterliche Plastik in Venedig*, Leipzig, 1903, p.



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132; Demus, 1960, 121.

(38) Demus, 1960, p. 121.

(39) 1. Ancona, S. Maria in Piazza, facade; 2. Athen, Museum of Byzanc, originates from Thessaloniki; 3. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. 2429; 4. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. 1. 3248; 5. Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müz., from the St. George Church Mangana of Constantinople; 6. Messina, Museo Regionale; 7. Ravenna, S. Maria in Porto, high altar; 8. Venice, S. Marco, west facade; 9. Venice, S. Marco, northern aisle, Madonna della Grazia; 10. Venice, S. Marco, northern transept.

(40) Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini. The 12th-century orans Mary Blachernitissa marble icon arrived probably into the church following the 4th crusade. GABELENTZ, 1903, p. 134, fig. 4; L. PLANISCIG, *Geschichte der venezianischen skulptur im XIV Jahrhundert*, Wien-Leipzig, 1916, p. 38, fig. 7; Demus, 1960, p. 121; Dorigo, 2003, p. 513, 515. The exact copy of this can be found in the house campo S. Polo 2175. Planiscig, 1916, p. 38, fig. 8; Demus, 1960, p. 121; Dorigo, 2003, p. 515.

(41) I. 1. Western facade, as the pendant of Archangel Gabriel, 2. Western outer wall of the Cappella dei Mascoli, modern copy, 3. in the north aisle, gilt, 4. on one of the pillars of the north aisle, 5. next to the entrance of Cappella S. Isidor, 6. on the west wall of the south aisle, over the portal; II. 1. on one of the pillars of the northern transept, 2. Cappella del Sacramento.

(42) Demus, 1960, 124.

(43) Demus, 1960, 124.

(44) Demus, 1960, 124.

(45) Demus, 1960, 124–125.

(46) *Documenti per servire alla storia dell'augusta ducale Basilica di San Marco*, ed. by Ferdinando Ongania (Venezia, 1888), Testo, fig. h, p. 138; Demus, 1960, 123, 125, 131.

(47) Dorigo, 2003, 515.

(48) Greek marble, 130 x 90 cm. F. S. FAPANNI, *Sponde veramente pregevoli di Pozzi, e per l'antichità e per l'arte, disposte cronologicamente*, 1877, Bibl. Marciana, Venezia, ms. 9125/3; A. VUCETICH, *Pietre e frammenti storici e artistici della città di Venezia*, I–III, s.d., ms. P.D. 2 Bibl. Correr, I, f. 87 n. 52; C. A. LEVI, *Pietre infisse nelle case e nei palazzi di Venezia, Le collezioni veneziane d'arte e d'antichità dal secolo XIV ai nostri giorni*, Venezia, 1900, p. 35; Gabelentz, 1903, p. 134; COMUNE DI VENEZIA, *Elenco degli Edifici Monumentali e dei Frammenti Storici ed Artistici della Città di Venezia*, Venezia, 1905, p. 83; H. A. DOUGLAS, *Venice on foot*, London, 1907, p. 161; L. PLANISCIG, *Die estensche Kunstsammlung. I. Skulpturen und Plastiken des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Wien, 1919, p. 10; G. LORENZETTI, *Venezia e il suo estuario. Guida storico-artistica*, Roma, 1956, p. 400; G. PIAMONTE, *Venezia vista dall'acqua. Guida dei rivi di Venezia e delle isole*, Venezia, 1966, p. 99; Rizzi, 1987, p. 275; Dorigo, 2003, p. 513, 515.

(49) Planiscig, 1919, p. 9, fig. 16–17; RIZZI, 1987, pp. 658–659.

(50) Rizzi, 1987, p. 672.

(51) In 1678 Giambattista Pace wrote about this in his *Ceremoniale magnum*: „Il pmo Doge, che gittasse dinari nella sua creazione fu Sebastiano Ziani l'anno 1173 costume tratto dall'Imperatori di Costantinopoli.” G. PACE, *Ceremoniale magnum sive raccolta universale di tutte le ceremonie Spettanti alla Ducal Regia Capella di S. Marco Alla Persona del Serenissimo, de Eccmi Procuratori, Et circa il Suonar del Campanile*. Anno orbis sospitis M.DC.LXXVIII. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana Mss. Italiani Cl. 7 N. 396 Ruzzini 7423, 1678, p. 167, lines 30–33.

(52) M. SANUDO, il Giovane, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae ovvero la città di Venetia (1493–1530)*, ed. critica di Angela Caracciolo Aricò, Milano, 1980, XV, d [p. 110 r. e v.].

(53) G. STRINGA, *Venetia città nobilissima*, Venezia, 1642, pp. 251–252.

(54) W. DORIGO, *Venezia origini*, vol. 2., Milano, 1983, p. 569.

(55) On the ceremonial books of S. Marco see: A. HOPKINS, *The influence of Ducal ceremony on church design in Venice*, „Architectural History”, 41, 1998, pp. 30–32 (30–48).

9. Blachernitissa Mary-icon, Campo S. Luca, Venice. Foto by Anna Tuskés, 2012.

(56) B. BETTO, *Il Capitolo della Basilica di S. Marco in Venezia: statuti e consuetudini dei primi decenni del sec. XIV.*, Padua, 1984, p. 149.

(57) Betto, 1984, pp. 174–175.

(58) Betto, 1984, p. 115, 159, 171–172, 185, 190.

(59) B. BONIFACIO, *Caeremoniale rituum sacrorum ecclesiae S. Marci*, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia, ms. Lat. Cl. III, 172.

(60) Bonifacio, *Caeremoniale rituum*, 3–4.

(61) I am grateful to Suzy Marcon and Andrew Hopkins for their help in the analysis of the ceremoniale of S. Marco. G. CATTIN, *La liturgia di San Marco e le sue fonti*, in G. CATTIN, *Musica e liturgia a San Marco*. Con testi di Giordana Mariani Canova e Susy Marcon, Vol. I, Venezia, 1990, pp. 92–93 (27–93).

(62) Pace, 1678, p. 315.

(63) For example on the oil painting entitled *Il giro della piazza del doge in pozzetto* by Gabriele Bella made between 1779–1792. 98 x 147 cm. Venezia, Museo Querini Stampalia.

(64) Demus, 1960, 81–82; O. DEMUS, *The mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, Chicago, 1984, p. 22, 315; V. HERZNER, *Die Baugeschichte von San Marco und der Aufstieg Venedigs zur Grossmacht*, „Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte”, 38, 1985, pp. 46–47 (1–58). According to the dictionaries of the Venetian dialect the meaning of the word „pozzetto” is well-head, cistern, wall, pulpit. G. BOERIO and D. MANIN, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, Venezia, 1829, p. 460; F. MUTINELLI, *Lessico veneto che contiene l'antica fraseologia volgare e forense*, Venezia, 1851, p. 309.

(65) Pace, 1678, pp. 22–23.