

Venice and the Adriatic side of the Kingdom of Naples: Imports and influences of Venetian art

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This project proposal is for the application of IT tools in order to consider a “cross-media” translation of data obtained, so that they can be used as an alternative to simple textual consultation, with respect to the reconstruction of the geography and history of Venetian works of art in the Adriatic regions of the Kingdom of Naples between the Middle Ages and the early modern age. The overall aim of the work is namely to carry out an analysis of Venetian presences and influences in the artistic production of Abruzzo, Molise and Apulia, also considering the transversal relations of this area with the Balkan regions under Venetian rule.

For centuries, the Republic of St Mark had an important role in the spread of works of art along the two shores of the Adriatic. In the fifteenth century, Venice strengthened its position as a political, economic and cultural centre, to such an extent that it was not only an attractive pole for numerous artists, but also the base for the diffusion of Venetian art on both sides of the Adriatic.¹ Illustrative examples of this are the spread of the works of artists such as Paolo Veneziano, Lorenzo Veneziano, Nicolò di Pietro, Zanino di Pietro, Jacobello del Fiore, Lorenzo da Venezia (or Master of Ceneda), Michele Giambono and others.²

Along the merchant traffic routes, the practice of exporting large paintings grew, also arriving in the Kingdom of Naples. For example, the polyptych painted by Jacobello del Fiore, originally intended for the church of Sant'Agostino in Teramo, was commissioned from the Venetian painter by the Augustinian monk Nicholas, a native of the same city in the Abruzzo, a member of the Collegium of Doctors of the Paduan *Studium*, Vicar and then Superior of the Augustinian province of Venice and Treviso.³ Another example was the arrival in the Abruzzo of Giovanni Bellini's *Ritratto di ragazzo* (Portrait of a Boy), now at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham.⁴ This small painting, probably the remaining panel of a

¹ Mauro Lucco, 'Venezia, 1400-1430', in Mauro Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Quattrocento*, Milano: Electa, 1989; Andrea De Marchi, 'Per un riesame della pittura tardogotica a Venezia, Nicolò di Pietro e il suo contesto adriatico', *Bollettino d'Arte*, vol. 44-45, 1987, (25-66), 50-57.

² Charles Dempsey, ed., *Quattrocento adriatico, Fifteenth-Century art of the Adriatic Rim*, Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1996; Pietro Zampetti, 'Carlo Crivelli, Nicola da Ancona, Giorgio Schiavone e la "Cultura adriatica"', in Bonita Cleri, ed., *Adriatico. Un mare di storia, arte, cultura*, vol. 2, Ripatransone: Maroni, 2000, 113-120; Valter Curzi, ed., *Pittura veneta nelle Marche*, Cinisello Balsamo: Arti Grafiche Amilcare Pizzi, 2000.

³ Valentino Anselmi, 'Un episodio del tardogotico veneziano a Teramo: il polittico di Jacobello del Fiore per la chiesa di Sant'Agostino', *Commentari d'arte*, vol. 21, no. 61/62, 2015, 8-25.

⁴ <https://barber.org.uk/giovanni-bellini-about-1430-1516-2/> (last visualisation 6 September 2022).

case intended to protect a sculpted bust, arrived in Atri (Teramo) as a tribute from the Republic to Angelo Probi, ambassador to Venice on behalf of the King of Naples, Ferrante I of Aragon, who died in lagoon city in August 1474.⁵

A considerable number of Venetian artefacts arrived also in the Apulia.⁶ The presence of Venetians in this strategic territory was therefore conspicuous, to the extent that it became necessary to establish a consulate based in the city of Trani already in the thirteenth century.⁷

These sorts of art works demonstrate how quantitative data, regarding a fairly large corpus of artefacts together with geographical-spatial data, i.e. the places where the works ended up in a given time period, are important as the founding criteria in structuring the entire research project. The contents of the research presented here are particularly suited to the application of spatial information systems software.

In this respect, there are several examples of projects that have already been completed or are currently being developed in some of the world's most important institutes from which to draw the right direction. Among others, the project developed by Cristiana Pasqualetti. The project includes, in addition to the digitisation of the text, a mapping of all the monuments mentioned by Angelo Leosini. In this way, a cartographic reconstruction helps visualise the monuments and explore their evolution over time. The mapping process employs special systems that allow the organisation, analysis and representation of georeferenced spatial data, thus offering multiple layers of data, both textual and visual, in an integrated manner.⁸ Another model is the one devised by Ludovica Galeazzo which is structured around an online geospatial research tool based on the principle of temporal progression, which allows a journey through time and space thanks to the intersection of historical data obtained from sources.

My project will use the same connection methodologies between the sources, and through a similar reuse of art-historical and spatio-temporal data, thereby

⁵ Giovanbattista Benedicenti, 'Per Giovanni Bellini: una nuova lettura del ritratto di Birmingham', *Paragone*, no. 36 (513), 1992, 3-9; Luigi Sorricchio, 'Angelo ed Antonio Probi, ambasciatori di Ferdinando I d' Aragona (1464-1482)', *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, vol. 21, 1986, 148-149.

⁶ In general, about Venetian art in Apulia and in Basilicata between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period: Raffaella Cassano, Rosa Lorusso Romito, Marisa Milella, eds, *Andar per mare. Puglia e Mediterraneo tra mito e storia*, Exhib. catalog, (Brindisi, 28 maggio-10 dicembre 1998), Bari: Adda, 1998; Vito Bianchi, Clara Gelao, *Bari la Puglia e Venezia*, Bari: Mario Adda, 2013; Matteo Ceriana, Dora Catalano, Pierluigi Leone de Castris, Marta Ragozzino, eds, *Rinascimento visto da Sud. Matera, l'Italia Meridionale e il Mediterraneo tra '400 e '500*, exhib. catalog, (Matera 19 aprile-19 agosto 2019), Napoli: arte'm, 2009.

⁷ Nicola Nicolini, 'Consolato generale veneto nel Regno di Napoli', *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, 70, 1927; Francesco Carabellese, *Le relazioni commerciali fra la Puglia e la Repubblica di Venezia dal secolo X al XV: Ricerche e documenti*, Trani: Vecchi, 1897. Fernand Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II*, vol. 1, Torino: Einaudi, 1953, 118-127.

⁸ <http://maps.kewerner.name/leosini/#16.71/42.34907/13.397425/0/45> (last visualisation 30 August 2022).

enabling geo-localisation as a useful tool for the contextual visualisation. For each of the works of art surveyed, data sheets could be produced for each pre-established thematic level, thus integrating the various historical-artistic, descriptive and documentary data collected in the course of research, which could be transformed into thematic maps.

The result could resemble the one achieved by the research team led by Lionello Puppi, who in 2011 launched a project, crowned in 2017 with the publication *“Treviso urbs picta. Facciate affrescate della città dal XIII al XXI secolo: conoscenza e futuro di un bene comune”*,⁹ to which a dedicated database was associated.¹⁰ The latter preserves and makes available the contents of the research conducted on the frescoed façades of existing and pre-existing buildings in the city of Treviso. In this case, specific fact sheets have been dedicated to the 614 buildings surveyed, accompanied by images that include descriptions, historical and stylistic data and various types of information, linked with both current and historical maps. Various search filters allow the user to query the system and obtain many interesting thematic maps. The geo-localisation of each evidence also allows anyone to quickly locate the frescoes, with undeniable advantages for the collective use of information.

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⁹ Rossella Riscica e Chiara Voltarel, eds, *Treviso urbs picta. Facciate affrescate della città dal XIII al XXI secolo: conoscenza e futuro di un bene comune*, Treviso: Antiga, 2017.

¹⁰ <https://trevisourbspicta.fbsr.it/> (Last visualisation 30 August 2022).