

From Triton Neptvni Tubicen to the Glory of Lepanto The Early Modern Rebirth(s) of a Roman Arch in Zadar

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Abstract The paper discusses early modern reconstructions of a first-century Roman arch preserved in the eastern Adriatic town of Zadar, at the time part of Venetian Dalmatia. Its reconstructions of the 1430s and the 1570s are contextualized within complex cultural and historical references. The *Quattrocento* renovation is associated with the reinterpretation of civic imagery through authentication of its classical roots, while that of the late *Cinquecento* is inscribed within the broader political and cultural context of contemporary Venetian promotion of *Romanitas*.

Keywords Zadar. Arch. Humanist imagery. Venetian self-representation. Battle of Lepanto. Jacopo Foscarini. *Romanitas*.

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The medieval Dalmatian town of Zadar (Zara),¹ and several other eastern Adriatic cities, firmly rooted their communal identity in its long-lasting administrative, religious, and social structures that have been transformed and adapted since its first-century Roman urbanization of previously existing Liburnian settlement. During these transformations, the town's classical orthogonal grid served as the foundation for medieval structures, with prominent buildings often using and misinterpreting Roman spolia. However, in the early Romanesque Zadar, the use of classical spolia and the purposeful imitation of classical structures and forms regained a deeper understanding and art historians were able to recognize a thirteenth-century trend of a classical undercurrent, with

various degrees and strategies of references.²

In order to present a clearer picture of the visibility of classical heritage in medieval Zadar, one should also point out the transformation of two objects that featured quite prominently in its urban environment. The first was the integrally preserved south column of a pair that originally marked the longitudinal axis of the Roman forum. In the Middle Ages it was repurposed as a pillar of shame, furnished with paleochristian and pre-Romanesque slabs that served as inscription boards, and topped with a Romanesque sculpture of a griffin.³ The second, almost entirely preserved self-standing structure was the first-century AD commemorative arch built by Melia Anniana, the transformations of which are the subject of this paper.

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² Babić 2008, 427-40; Vežić 2008, 441-9. Franković 1957, 139-42.

³ Babić 2008, 429.



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1 Early Quattrocento Humanist Circles of Zadar and the Conservation of the Ancient Arch

Examples of the medieval awareness of the communal *longue durée* represented through classical models resurfaced in their full potential by the first decades of *Quattrocento* with the influx of humanist culture, which coincided with the changed political circumstances of the wide-ranging process of integration of Zadar community into the Venetian developing administrative system.⁴ This coincided with the inflow of humanistic cultural codes through the activities of educated local elites that consisted of communal patricians and ambitious commoners. However, the temporarily, or more permanently settled Venetian rectors, officials and ecclesiastical administrators also made a prominent impact. Paduan University played a particularly significant role in educating young patricians who acquired humanist cultural forms and, upon their return to native Dalmatian environments, formed or joined local humanist circles.⁵ Humanist activities that included their participation in literary, architectural, and visual cultural practices were not reduced to a mere transfer of the forms and contents from the established trans-Adriatic cultural hubs to Dalmatian towns, but also the inoculation of these cultural codes onto the local classical traditions and communal continuities and regional/urban identities. The earliest examples of these practices within the eastern Adriatic network of the first generation of humanists were marked by the presence of Ciriaco de Pizzecoli.⁶ Its hub in Zadar was organized around ser Juraj Begna, whom historian Giuseppe Praga described as “quasi il Poggio della Dalmazia”.⁷ Ciriaco’s network was formed with the intention of collecting data on ancient inscriptions and other ancient artefacts, strategically connecting with Begna in Zadar, Petar Cippico in Trogir, and Marin de Resti in Dubrovnik.⁸ We do not know whether Ciriaco met Begna during his earliest noted presence in Zadar in 1417, where he

was informed of the election of Pope Martin V,⁹ or in 1420, when Begna was in Ancona, but their earliest known correspondence dates back to 1431.¹⁰ Ciriaco visited Zadar from November 9th to 26th 1435,¹¹ where Begna gave him a tour of the city and its surroundings, looking for classical antiquities,¹² discussing with his Zadar hosts the merits of Caesar and Scipio of Africa, participating in the debate previously initiated by Poggio Bracciolini and Guarino da Verona, about which he later wrote to Leonardo Bruni in Florence.¹³

Among Ciriaco’s sylloges collected during his 1430s tours of Liburnia and Dalmatia, one of his most interesting relates to the Zadar arch of Melia Anniana,¹⁴ usually dated at the end of the first or the beginning of second century.¹⁵ The inscription testifies that the dedicant Melia Anniana had commissioned the pavement of the nearby emporium and the construction of the arch in memory of her late husband, for which she paid 600,000 sesterces, out of which the twentieth part of the inheritance tax had been paid [Appendix 1].

However, Ciriaco also reports of a now missing bilingual inscription in Greek and Latin, TRITON NEPTVNI TUBICEN, accompanied by the “wonderful master’s craft” he recognized in the sculpted image of a trumpeting Triton in its customary iconographical depiction, which the syllogist may also have drawn.¹⁶ Unfortunately, the transcription does not imply where the image or the creature was actually located in relation to the arch. Melia’s dedication states “et statuas superponi” (and put the statues upon it), which probably implies the arch’s sculptures on its attic. Ciriaco described the arch’s location near the city walls and admired the execution of the relief:

Vidi maritima prope moenia insignem Meliae
nobilissimae mulieris arcum, ubi tubicen ille

4 Payne 2017, 145-82.

5 Grmek 1957, 334-74.

6 Špoljarić 2016, 14-15; Kokole 1996, 238-9; Praga 2012, 333-55.

7 Praga 2012, 326.

8 Praga 2012, 333-4.

9 Scalamenti 2015, 28-9.

10 Lučin 2014, 204; Scalamenti 2015, 29.

11 Scalamenti, 2015, 347 nr. 72.

12 Scalamenti 2015, 74-5; Gudelj 2014b, 159-76.

13 Lučin 2007, 70; 2014, 205; Špoljarić 2019, 87; Anconitanus 2015, 197-21.

14 Suić 1981, 200-2; Gudelj 2014b, 166-9, 173.

15 Ilakovac 1999, 103.

16 Waters 2014, 91 nr. 31.



Figure 1 Rests of the Arch of Melia Anniana. Late first century. Zadar. © Author

aequorei numinis Τριτων mira fabrefactoris arte conspicitur, et consulptum quod habet.¹⁷

I have seen, next to the harbor fortifications, the arch of noblewoman Melia, where Triton, the trumpeter of the sea deity, can be observed, in the wonderful master's craft. (Transl. by N. Jovanović)

The iconographic selection of a Triton that trumpets to calm (or to agitate) the sea waves was entirely suited to the arch's location. It originally stood in the immediate vicinity of the emporium and the city port as the starting point or final destination of the Jadertine maritime traffic.¹⁸ Ciriaco's transcription published in *Eppigrammata* ends here,¹⁹ but CIL III continues with the report

of another inscription on the arch, added by Peter Crissava:

DLIII Olympiadis anno II, Petrus, Cresii filius, Cresiavus, Jadertinus, divini iuris doctor, ac beati martyris et Jadertini patroni Chrysogoni ecclesiae venerabilis abbas, arcum, priori tempore labantem et longa patrum maiorumque incuria obscure atque indigne oppressum, proprio sumptu, hodie idibus Novembribus, ad pristinam suam faciem splendoremque restituit.²⁰

In the second year of the 553rd Olympiad, Peter Cresiavus, son of Cresius, from Zadar, doctor of the divine law and the venerable abbot of the church of Chrysogonus, patron of Zadar, at his own expense reconstructed to its former

¹⁷ Cortesi (s.d.); Anconitanus 2015, 198; Waters 2014, 20, 90-1 nr. 30.

¹⁸ Brunelli 1913, 127-9; Suić 1981, 201.

¹⁹ Anconitanus 1747, 1.

²⁰ Jovanović 2014; Waters 2014, 91 nr. 29.

condition and splendor the arch, damaged by age, and meanly and ignobly dismissed by the carelessness of our fathers and progenitors. (Transl. by N. Jovanović)

This precious lost inscription informs us that in November 1434, a year before Ciriaco's visit, abbot Crissava had the ancient arch restored and supplemented his outstanding humanistic act, which he dated with the second year of the 553rd Olympiad. In this way, the learned Benedictine, member of the respected Zadar patrician family, doctor of canon law and formerly a monk of the monastery of San Nicolò a Lido,²¹ incorporated his early-*Quattrocento* contemporaneity into the revived Olympic tradition reinforcing the thesis of the search for communal classical roots.

During his service as the abbot of St Chrysogonus from 1421 until his death in 1447,²² Crissava attempted to reclaim the splendor of one of once most respected Dalmatian Benedictine monasteries with productive medieval scriptorium,²³ but in accordance with his own cultural inclinations, he made the monastery an assembly of the Zadar humanist circles. However, the mere fact that a Benedictine abbot decided to restore a Roman arch in the 1430s, including its pagan iconography and by adding an inscription that replaced the Christian Anno Domini calendar with that of the ancient Olympics, all within the scope of one of the earliest recorded intentional conservation practices, could be considered as a unique example of an early humanist act.²⁴ The exceptionality of Crissava's restoration was manifested primarily in conserving the entire free-standing structure, which must have preserved much of its original body, and was supplemented with a date of conservation that fully respects and emphasizes this classical

originality. In that regard, he did not merely reinterpret his present moment by subjecting it to the historical framework of the classical past but inscribing it into the contemporaneity of Zadar citizens' daily routine. The discovery of classical arches in *Quattrocento*, such as the Arch of the Sergii in Pula,²⁵ became a popular template for newly formed structures that were built for state and civic propaganda in a classic key. Perhaps one of the earliest applications of such visual strategies in Venice is Porta Magna, at the entrance to the Arsenal, which interprets the classic model of the Pula Arch but eloquently uses Byzantine spolia from Torcello and the twentieth-century capitals, all in the context of promoting *Serenissima* as an impeccably structured state, the embodiment of Plato's ideas,²⁶ a classical form enriched with its Byzantine continuities which became particularly significant after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. It is an early paradigmatic example in which Venice projected - through the use of a classical model and byzantine spolia - an image of *Altera Constantinopolis* and *Altera Roma*.²⁷ Moreover, Venetian Porta Magna is dated "ab urbe Cond (ita) MoXXXVIII", engraved on the pedestal of its left column, highlighting the temporal continuity from its own antiquity,²⁸ just like in the Olympian dating of the restoration of Melia's Zadar arch, that reaches much further into the urban roots.

Ciriaco's reports on the classical eastern Adriatic inscriptions and monuments were not published until 1660,²⁹ but his sylloge circulated among the *Quattrocento* artists,³⁰ among them most probably Francesco di Giorgio Martini, who arbitrarily reinterpreted Melia's Zadar arch, conveying inscriptions recorded by the Ciriaco. Excluding the Triton's figure, he added the pair of hugging spouses to illustrate the dedicant's marital affection.³¹

21 Grbavac 2013.

22 Brunelli 1908, 249.

23 Peričić 1990, 216-19.

24 Gudelj 2020; 2023.

25 Gudelj 2014b, 163-8.

26 Lieberman 1991, 119-20; Fortini Brown 1996, 109-10; 2017, 5.

27 Lieberman 1991, 117-26; Concina 2006, 48-60; Gudelj 2014a, 168-81.

28 Lieberman 1991, 119-20, 123; Fortini Brown 1996, 108-10; 2017, 5; Concina 2006, 63 nr. 83.

29 Waters 2014, 90.

30 Gudelj 2014a, 113-25.

31 Nesselrath 2004, 251; Gudelj 2014b, 168-9.

2 TRITON LEPANTI TVBICEN: Post-Lepanto re-semiotisation of Melia's Arch

The period of humanist conceptualization of the past through the entrenchment of collective identities in classical key in Dalmatian towns coincided with two vital historical processes. Primarily, their inclusion into the Venetian Commonwealth system, during which medieval communal structures went through legal and economic adjustments that occasionally reduced their medieval privileges, imposing taxes and reducing critical sources of income. This was followed by an even more economically devastating process after the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia in 1463, when the marauding incursions of their military forces into the hinterland settlements of the Zadar became more frequent.

The situation worsened during the ill-fated *Cinquecento*, with the advancement of Ottoman troops who conquered the key strongholds of the Dalmatian hinterland, and by the end of the century Zadar was protected with the new ring of strong bastions and forts.³²

The construction of chain four harbor bastions, St. Marcella, St. Rocco, St. Demetrius, and Castello, demanded the closure of minor medieval harbor gates.³³ This included the closing of previous principal harbor gates of San Rocco, and the opening of the new harbor gates at the end of a former medieval dead-end, once enclosed by a graveyard and small houses that belonged to the monastery of St. Chrysogonus.³⁴

Their entire construction consists of a 12 meters long arched passage whose northern harbor facade is a patchwork of several spolia that indicates a hasty and frugal, perhaps even unconcerned improvisation,³⁵ while all the heraldic insignia have been chiseled off.³⁶

The inner, town façade of the Porta Marina is much more elaborated and could be taken as the principal surface of the structure since it was conceived as the monument to the Battle of Lepanto. The Proconnesian marble and Adriatic limestone structure of Melia Anniana's arch is embedded into the wall, sitting on the stone slabs that simulate capital zones. Its classical entablature carries a marble *Cinquecento* attic with the 14 lines of the

inscription that celebrates the victory, flanked by the volutes and topped with a fluted shell acroterion with the relief of an equestrian knight, the patron of Zadar St. Chrysogonus [Appendix 2].

Such a voluminous Lepanto monument is incomparable in regional terms, but even more unique is its structure, since it is the third incarnation, the re-semantization of Melia Anniana's arch. The installation of a classical arch – that previously stood as an independent structure – onto the inner façade of the city gates was probably inspired by similar classical constructions, the nearest and the most recognized at the time being the Arch of Sergii in Pula, which, until its restoration in the 1820s, made part of the inner façade of the so-called Golden Gate, quite early described by Marino Sanudo in 1483.³⁷ However, the late *Cinquecento* installation of Melia's arch has now become the base for the celebration of the victory, at the time perceived as one of the tipping points that shed the new hope in Christian defense against the Ottomans, and therefore inscribed into a much broader narrative than the customary *all'antica* formal and structural citation of the period. Such specific optics calls for the answer to three essential questions: why was this distinctive monument constructed in Zadar? Are there similar Lepanto monuments conceptualized in association with classical structures and finally, who could have been the author of such an ensemble?

The impressive model of Zadar displayed in Museo Storico Navale in Venice, which should be dated around 1565,³⁸ shows the arch of Melia Anniana some 20 meters away from the city walls, overarching the street in front of the monastery. A twentieth-century text based on an untraceable source claims that the removal of Melia's arch from its original location occurred in 1566, during the works on the broadening of the nearby mediaeval fortifications,³⁹ while the eighteenth-century chronicler Francesco Giorda, who abundantly used the lost manuscript *Anonimus Filippi*, claimed that the vault of the harbor gate was completed in October, 26th 1571, after nearby houses

³² Žmegač 2003, 108-18.

³³ Benvenuti 1952, 11-12.

³⁴ Brunelli 1908, 246-8.

³⁵ Cvito Fisković (1961, 69) cautiously dated the external façade of the seventeenth century, but it is more probably contemporary to the whole structure of the gate; Rizzi 2019, 249-50.

³⁶ Benevenia 1890, 4-7. Removal of Venetian administrators' names and heraldic insignia was frequently demanded by the Senate.

³⁷ Gudelj 2014a, 123; Fortini Brown 2017, 12-13.

³⁸ Petricioli 1954, 103. Inscription on the model that indicates year 1617 is subsequent and incorrect. The best reproduction of the large model of Zadar (333 × 135 cm) can be found in Petricioli 1999, 36-7.

³⁹ Bernardy 1928, 29-30. The author does not specify the source of the data.



Figure 2 Harbor Gate, external façade. 1571-72. Zadar. © Author



Figure 3 Harbor Gate, internal façade. 1571-72. Zadar. © Author

were demolished and Melia's arch dismantled.⁴⁰ The date is very suggestive, as it indicates a period just after the news of Lepanto victory reached Zadar. However, the unique concept of the Zadar monument should be interpreted within a broader historical and cultural context, in light of the contemporary celebratory rituals in the centres of the Holy League.

The artistic echoes of the Lepanto victory in the European painterly and sculptural production are numerous and diverse, ranging from rare public sculptures⁴¹ to abundant prints with illustrations of the battle, and paintings with depictions of League's leaders, commanders and heroes.⁴² The longest-lasting memory bearer was certainly its incorporation into the cult of our Lady of

Rosary established by Pope Pius V, intensely promoted over the subsequent decades throughout Dalmatia by the Dominicans and the newly founded confraternities.⁴³

The noteworthy role that the Dalmatian civic galleys performed during the battle is well known. Most of them fought in Venetian section, under Sebastiano Venier's command, with few deployed in other wings of the Holy League. Some Dalmatian towns had preserved Lepanto memorabilia, such as the maiden-shaped figurehead displayed in the Trogir Town museum,⁴⁴ or one in the form of a rooster, allegedly a trophy from an Ottoman galley, shown in Hvar arsenal.⁴⁵ In two instances, the communal galleys' *sopracomiti* tombstones are preserved, such as that Alvis Cicuta in Krk

⁴⁰ Giorda 2, 265-6.

⁴¹ Hanke 2014, 42-3.

⁴² Palluchini 1974, 279-87; Pelc 1992, 95-116; Capotorti 2011; Fenlon 2014; Gibellini 2008, 75-111.

⁴³ Fenlon 2014, 73-6; Gibellini 2008, 145-69; Prijatelj Pavičić 1998, 79-96.

⁴⁴ Omašić 1974, 81.

⁴⁵ Novak Sambrailo 1974, 159.

cathedral, commissioned by the Civic Council⁴⁶ and one in Osor of Collano Drasa, both with inscriptions mentioning their Lepanto merits. However, throughout Venetian Dalmatia, there are no examples relatable to the Zadar Lepanto monument in terms of its focal urban setting and the monumentality of the concept. In the harbor of the Istrian town of Koper (ital. Capodistria, lat. Justinopolis), a memorial column was originally erected on the pier, outside of the harbor gates, with the statue of St. Justine on its top, and the pedestal with an inscription glorifying the victory. The statue of the patron of the city on whose feast day the victory occurred was installed on the first anniversary of the battle, in October 1572.⁴⁷ The example is comparable to Porta Marina for its harbor location and for Koper being the regional capital, just like Zadar.

In Zadar, except for the Porta Marina, there is a private Lepanto *ex voto* by *Capitano del Colfo* Nicola Surian, who had commissioned the two altars and the reconstruction of the façade of the St. Simeon's church (at the time of St. Mary). with the portal sculpture of Madonna with the Child probably by Francesco Segala.⁴⁸ However, the private, votive nature of this commission excludes it from the context of the public commissions relatable to the Zadar monument.

The inscription on the Zadar Lepanto monument, carved in *bigio antico*, reports on the commanders of the Holy League, the number of ships, and the casualties and Christians liberated from slavery. The name of the dedicant of the inscription, none other than Jacopo Foscarini *Provveditore Generale* of Venetian Dalmatia and Epirus is followed by the names of Doge Alvise Mocenigo, Zadar rector Ettore Tron, and the town captain Andrea Barbarigo. Such triangulation of Zadar officials narrows the date of the monuments' execution between October 1571, when the news from Lepanto instigated public feasts and the February 3rd 1572, when the Senate appointed *provveditore* Jacopo Foscarini to the new duty, as the commander-in-chief of the Venetian Navy, to replace the Lepanto hero Sebastiano Venier who would

not succumb to Venetian diplomatic agenda in resolving frictions among the members of the Holy League.⁴⁹ This should be the *terminus ante quem* for the dating Zadar monument to Lepanto.

When the news of the victory at Lepanto reached Zadar, a three-day celebration with public processions that displayed relics ensued repeated on the battle's anniversary.⁵⁰ A contemporary report claims that the gally which first brought the news, appropriately named Angelo Gabrieli, reached Zadar on October 17th,⁵¹ but since it arrived in Venice on the 18th,⁵² the Zadar date should probably be few days earlier. Immediately after, the two ships anchored in Zadar harbor fired honorary plotters, to which 40 cannonballs responded from within the city walls. The toll of all Zadar church bells was followed by the honorary fire from all 109 cannons installed within the city walls. In the evening, the celebratory Mass was held, followed by the processions with torches along the fortification ring.⁵³

Such a reaction is not surprising because Zadar's contribution to the victory had been specific. Its galley had been seized by the Ottomans few months before the Lepanto battle, in July 1571. Following a series of unfortunate circumstances, the ship under the command of *sopracomito* Petar Grisogono Bortolazzi, along with other three Venetian galleys were captured in the waters of Corfu.⁵⁴ Grisogono Bortolazzi and the entire crew were taken hostages in Constantinople, where he was still mentioned as imprisoned in 1575, despite the attempts by the Zadar City Council to liberate this Zadar noble from Ottoman captivity.⁵⁵ *Sopracomito* was ultimately released, since he had commissioned an altar for the church of St. Mary of the Benedictine nuns, for which his son Jeronim acquired an altarpiece from Palma il Giovane with the figures of St. Peter and St. Jerome, dated after 1603.⁵⁶

Regardless of the particularly tragic circumstances that may have instigated great jubilation in Zadar, they were still part of a general European euphoria that created what might be named as the 'myth of Lepanto', regardless of its actual

⁴⁶ Peričić 1974, 84.

⁴⁷ Žitko 2011, 85-7.

⁴⁸ Tomić 2008, 6-9, 63-4.

⁴⁹ Ridolfi Sforza 1745, 35; Molmenti 1899, 189.

⁵⁰ Benvenuti 1944, 122-3.

⁵¹ Peričić 1974, 101.

⁵² Gibellini 2008, 49.

⁵³ Peričić 1974.

⁵⁴ Novak 1964, 56, 64-5; Usmiani 1974, 112-13.

⁵⁵ *Liber tertius Consiliorum Comunitatis Jadrae*, f. 395', December 1585; Benvenuti 1944, 123.

⁵⁶ Hilje, Tomić 2006, 242-4.

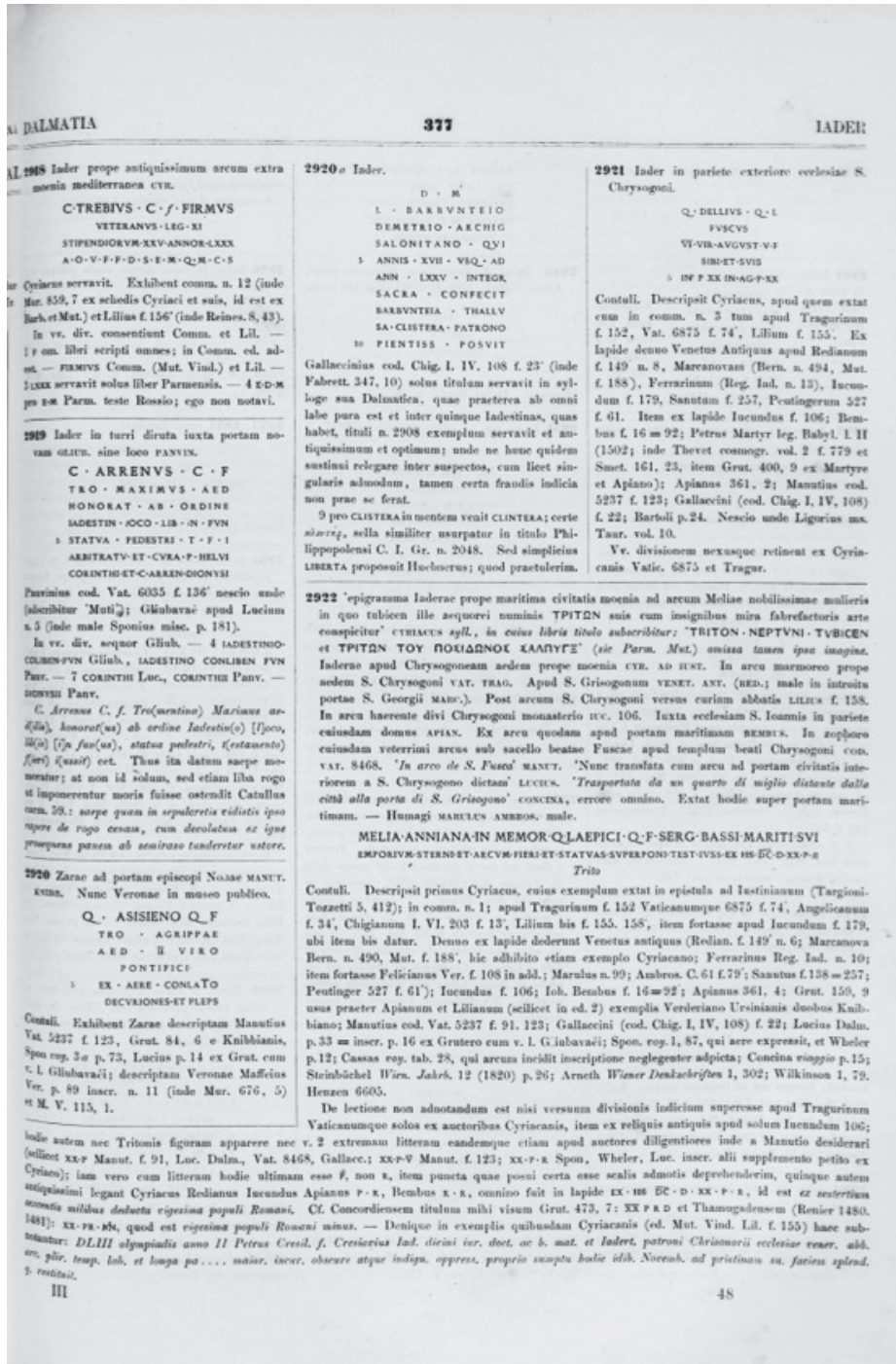


Figure 4 A page from CIL III, with the inscriptions noted by Ciriaco de' Pizzelli. <https://arachne.dainst.org/ent/ty/2140874>

historical significance, particularly when the Venetian possessions are in question.⁵⁷ However, the key question in our understanding of the Zadar monument is related not as much to the reason(s) for its installation, but to the particularities of its assemblage concept and the multifaceted semantical layers it produced.

The particular architectural arrangement of the Lepanto inscription carved in the bluish marble of the *bigio antico* type, installed upon the first-century arch and crowned with the relief of the city patron, is certainly not an improvisation of the type applied on the outer façade of Porta Marina, which clumsily used *Quattrocento* spolia. Zadar Lepanto monument should be considered in the context of similar examples of the early modern historicization of image of the State, as the transformed model of the communal promotion elaborated in the first part of this paper and recognized as the base concept of Crissava's fifteenth-century restoration of Melia's arch, as well as that on *Porta Magna* of Venetian Arsenal. However, it also conveys a slightly different and innovative, classically romanized cultural concept of the Venetian city and the State,⁵⁸ implemented, for example, through *Cinquecento* use of the classical language of architecture as a means of political propaganda manifested in Sansovino's rearrangement of Piazzeta. The prevailing concept of *Romanitas* as the cultural emblem culminated with Scamozzi's accomplishment of the Piazza and by the end of the century in the political-cum-cultural antagonisms between the *Vecchi* and the *Giovani*.⁵⁹ Once entangled into the State propaganda, it incorporated the territories of Venetian commonwealth, particularly those with classical heritage which have previously often been appropriated into *Serenissima's* august distinctiveness. It is visible in the travel records of the young Marino Sanudo, who, according to P. Fortini Brown, did not refer to the towns with classical heritage through Ciriaco's model of precise archaeological reconstruction, but interpreted them as a classical substrate, the basis for Venetian present events.⁶⁰ The architectural structure of Pula arch was transferred to the

Porta Magna of Venetian Arsenale. This resulted in the Roman origins of the subjugated town being incorporated into the enduring and transformative '*Myth of Serenissima*', a concept confirmed by the presence of St. Mark's lion on its top. Similarly, the interpretation of the construction of Zadar monument to Lepanto should be precisely focused to the arch as an architectural model, particularly in comparison with contemporary classical arched structures – temporary or permanent – in *Cinquecento* public ceremonies, as ceremonial scenography up to temporary arched apparati for Venetian civic receptions, such as the one set up on Lido by Palladio for the ceremonial entry of the French King Henry IV.⁶¹

In addition to this pattern of State and civic ceremonies, a more specific narrative was built into the Zadar monument, that which inscribes the Lepanto's victory into the triumphant context of famous ancient naval battles. In 1572, Giampietro Contarini articulated a popular *topos* that compared Lepanto's victory with the celebrated naval battles since Augustus.⁶² When Roman Lepanto commander Marcantonio Colonna returned to Rome, in the early December of 1571, the *Consiglio segreto del popolo romano* organized a *via triumphalis*,⁶³ reconstructing the ritual geography of the classical triumphal processions. Similar ceremonials, which included the appropriately decorated arches with temporary inscriptions, had already been established in Italian *Cinquecento*, for example when Andrea Doria received Charles V in Genoa in 1529,⁶⁴ and when Pope Paul III welcomed him in Rome, in 1536, after the liberation of Tunisia.⁶⁵ For the occasion of Colonna's Lepanto triumphant entrance – which went through all the classical arches of the Forum and continued through *via Papale* to reach St. Peter's – the arches were decorated with temporary celebratory inscriptions.⁶⁶ According to reports they exalted the merits of Marcantonio Colonna and Pope Pius V, comparing the Lepanto victory with the famous triumphs of ancient Rome, associating it, for example, with Constantine's victory on the Milvian bridge.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Fenlon 2007, 175-92; Gibellini 2008; Fenlon 2014, 61-75.

⁵⁸ Fortini Brown 1996, 281-2.

⁵⁹ Tafuri 1989, 161-96.

⁶⁰ Fortini Brown 2011, 37.

⁶¹ Fortini Brown 1996; Cooper 2005, 213-27.

⁶² Fenlon 2014, 61-2.

⁶³ Capotorti 2011, 29.

⁶⁴ Gudelj 2014a, 303-6.

⁶⁵ Cooper 2005, 224.

⁶⁶ Gugliemotti 1862, 265-74; Cooper 2005, 216.

⁶⁷ Giugliemotti 1862, 271-3.

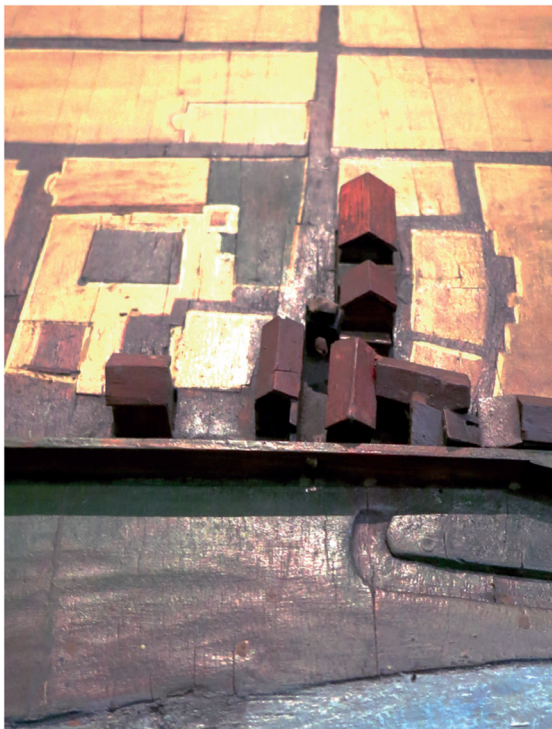


Figure 5 Fragment of the model of Zadar with the location of Melia's Arch. 1560s. Museo Storico Navale, Venice. © Author

When the first news of the victory reached Venice on October 18th, public revelries and gatherings began. The galley Angelo Gabriele that brought the news to Zadar now reached sailed into the city decorated with Ottoman loot and detonating honorary cannon fire. The spontaneous public rejoices were followed by several days, even weeks, of celebrations and public processions that culminated with a *mascherata* for the 1572 Carnival.⁶⁸ A yearly procession led by the State, ecclesiastical and social structures was established on the feast day of St. Justine, memorializing the anniversary of the Lepanto battle in a typical Venetian tradition, intensely intertwining the celebration with the narrative of Serenissima as the perfect embodiment of Christian virtues, Justice and Victory.⁶⁹

During the first days of Venetian public celebrations, two temporary ceremonial *portones* were constructed at Rialto,⁷⁰ which also might

have resonated forming of the Lepanto celebratory model. Shortly after, the celebratory inscription was engraved on the entablature of the *Porta Magna* of the Arsenal: "VICTORIAE NAVALIS MONVMENTUM MDLXXI", accompanied by the reliefs of Victorias in spandrels of the arch,⁷¹ while in 1578 Girolamo Campagna's statue of St. Justine was installed on its pediment.⁷² These examples indicatively complement and modify the *Quattrocento* concept of *Porta Magna* as the reference to Venice as new Rome and new Constantinople, projecting the notion of both the classical roots, the foundation on which the glorious contemporaneity was built and its victories were won. Moreover, the subsequent seventeenth-century arrangement of the terrace in front of the *Porta Magna* additionally confirms these references, incorporating the victories in the Morean war into the established model.⁷³

At the same time, the inscription dedicated to Lepanto appeared on the attic of another arched portal in Venice, that of the Sanmichelli's fort of Sant'Andrea, at the key point of the maritime approach to Venice.⁷⁴ Correspondingly, this route was taken by the French King Henry III during his solemn entrance into Venice in 1574, for which Palladio constructed the temporary arch structure on nearby Lido, which he derived from the arch of Septimius Severus that was pivotal in a ceremonial ritual organized in the fashion of Cinquecento Roman reconstructions of the classical *via triumphalis*. The ceremonies and activities for Henry III's visit were pregnant with allusions to Venetian naval supremacy and the recent battle of Lepanto,⁷⁵ even though the whole event took place after the Peace of Cyprus was signed in March 1573, which exempted the Serenissima from the Holy League.

The urban setting of all these constructions that marked the ritual paths and their classical structural features, accompanied with direct or contextual allusions to the victory at Lepanto, should suffice to establish a link with the Zadar Lepanto monument, either as direct model or as a project derived from the general concept applied in both Rome and Venice, which claims the victory of the successors of the classical heritage over the 'barbarians'.

Zadar monument to Lepanto was installed in 1572 on the inner, urban façade of the main

68 Fenlon 2007, 176-91.

69 Capotorti 2011, 26-7; Fenlon 2014, 65-73.

70 Cooper 2005, 216-17.

71 Lieberman 1991, 123; Bellavitis 2009, 127.

72 Concina 2006, 145.

73 Lieberman 1991, 124 notes 24-6; Bellavitis 2009, 138-45.

74 Lorenzetti 1975, 801.

75 Cooper 2005, 213-27.

passage towards the harbor, the vital point of its geostrategic location on the trans-Adriatic naval routes throughout the centuries. Therefore, it can be recognized in relation to Venetian *Porta Magna*, the principal entrance into the mythologized cradle of the Venetian fleet. Besides, in the narrower context of the Lepanto battle, Zadar harbor was the place of several weeks' long residence of a good part of the Venetian fleet in the spring of 1571,⁷⁶ as well as the starting port of the doomed Zadar galley, whose crew and the commander were still in captivity during the construction of *Porta Marina*. As mentioned, Zadar celebratory inscription of Lepanto contains a thorough description that lists the protagonists of the Holy League, commemorates the dead and remembers the captives, while ending with names the Venetian, *provveditore*, Doge and rectors. The installation of the

figure of the civic patron saint and the absence of St. Mark's lion (though it dominates the outer façade of the *Porta Marina*) might be recognized as an allusion to the town's tragic contribution in the battle, its incarcerated galley crew.

Furthermore, one should note the absence of the Triton figure which Ciriaco specifically mentioned in the description of the arch after Crissava's renovation. Since pagan maritime iconography was not rare in Venetian Renaissance, particularly in its urban identity and the propaganda of its naval power, it is unlikely that it is unlikely that the Triton's figure would have been purposely removed, so it was probably already derelict along with the Latin and Greek inscriptions that accompanied it, such as Crissava's inscription that dated his restoration to the second year of 553rd Olympiad.

3 **Provveditore Generale Jacopo Foscarini as Commissioner of the Zadar Monument to Lepanto**

Question of the commissioner of Zadar monument to Lepanto is evident from the inscription specifically naming its dedicant, a *provveditore generale* Jacopo Foscarini, "...JACOBVS FVSCARENVS DALMATIAE ET EPIRI LEGATVS / GLORIOSI DE HOSTE TRIVMPHI MEMO. AM CONSECRAVIT...". Stemming from the Foscarini dei Carmini branch, this Venetian noble had a fascinating biography.⁷⁷ As a young man, along with his companion Vincenzo Grimani, he gained broad commercial and negotiating experience, living in London and Paris,⁷⁸ and before he was appointed as *provveditore generale* of Dalmatia on November 20th, 1570, he served as *podestà* of Verona.⁷⁹ Aware of his lack of military experience, Foscarini was reluctant to take the appointment as Dalmatian *provveditore*,⁸⁰ expected to supervise the region that was, by 1570, on the brink of a new war. However, he finally managed to establish the governor's authority and got well acquainted with local problems, as emerges from his final report to the Senate, which wisely elaborated on many of the safety issues throughout the province, particularly related to the State of the fortifications.⁸¹

During Foscarini's service in Zadar, works on the fortifications were hastened, including the harbor section, since they were mostly completed for the services of its successors by the end of the century.⁸² These administrative abilities brought him a considerable reputation with Venetian authorities, and on February 3rd, 1572, he was appointed as *Capitano General del Mar* to replace the uncompromising Sebastiano Venier in order to negotiate tense relations with members of the Holy League.

Foscarini's inclination for Roman political and cultural influences and subsequent affiliation with the pro-papal party of *Vecchi* was already manifested at that time. Appointed *provveditore* of Crete in May 1574, in July of that year he was knighted on the occasion of Henry III's reception in Venice, while hosting the king in his palace opposite to the church of Santa Maria dei Carmini.⁸³ In Crete, from 1574 to 1577, Foscarini organized archaeological research, and donated several classical statues to Patriarch Giovanni Grimani, retaining two pieces for his own collection.⁸⁴ His connoisseurship and affection for classical art and architecture were particularly

⁷⁶ Barbero 2010, 62-3.

⁷⁷ Chiapini di Sorio 2007, 209.

⁷⁸ Ridolfi Sforza 1745, 17-19.

⁷⁹ Favaretto 1988, 61-2; Zago 1997.

⁸⁰ Ridolfi Sforza 1745, 25.

⁸¹ Novak 1964, 9-54.

⁸² Benvenuti 1944, 129.

⁸³ Cooper 2005, 213-24; Howard 2011, 83.

⁸⁴ Favaretto 1988, 62.

evident after 1580, when he was elected as Procurator *di San Marco*, in which service he joined the lifelong friend, Marcantonio Barbaro.⁸⁵ As a member of the *Vecchi*, who were promoters of *Romanitas*, along with Barbaro, Foscarini insisted on the implementation of Scamozzi's ideas for the reconstruction of the Piazza and the Rialto bridge.⁸⁶ On several occasions, Foscarini was among the most likely candidates for the ducal honor,⁸⁷ and as one of Barbaro's closest companions, he remained a politically influential figure even after the latter died in 1595,⁸⁸ and the influence of the opposite party of the *Giovani* became dominant in Venetian politics.

Jacopo Foscarini died in January 1603 and was buried in a monumental arch tomb on the counter-facade of St. Maria dei Carmini, right across his palace on the other bank of Rio dei Carmini. The design of the tomb had been acquired in 1595.⁸⁹ Foscarini is depicted in full armor, with a commander's bastion in hand, as a symbol of his post-Lepanto military services and *provveditore's* governance in Zadar and Crete.⁹⁰

A skillful diplomat, wise politician and connoisseur of antiquity who strongly promoted the artistic concept of *Romanitas*, the closest friend of Palladio's and Veronese's patron, Marcantonio Barbaro, Jacopo Foscarini undoubtedly had a profuse understanding and knowledge of the complex structural and semantic aspects hereby

recognized in the Zadar monument to Lepanto, so one should assume that he was not only a mere dedicant mentioned because of his temporary Dalmatian service, but might have been – and most probably was – the one of the authors of its unique concept. In this way, the third incarnation of Melia's arch is a noteworthy echo of *Cinquecento* classical visual and architectural programs, in which Venice is glorified as new Rome. However, it simultaneously endorsed local, communal, and regional connotations, thus enhancing the desired projections of such image. Furthermore, it is not only the glorious past that is promoted through these strategies, but the virtues of contemporary State, particularly through celebrations of its naval power. Since the preservation of Serenissima's virtues required sacrifices of all its members in arduous military campaigns, the particular concept of the monument constructed upon the classical arch and topped with the figure of civic patron, glorifies the State but also honors the ordeals to which Venetian Dalmatia and its capital Zadar went through in order to take part in the future prosperity. There is little doubt that the Zadar monument to Lepanto is indeed *provveditore* Jacopo Foscarini's concept. If so, the principle of *Romanitas* which he represented in subsequent Venetian political and architectural competitions, was here already realized in the full potential of its connotative layers.

⁸⁵ Howard 2011, 173.

⁸⁶ Calabi, Moracchiello 1987, 239-41, 256-98.

⁸⁷ de Maria 2002, 222.

⁸⁸ Tafuri 1989, 170-8. Jacopo Foscarini was also involved with Barbaro by through the marriage of his daughter Marietta to Marcantonio's son, Alvise. In 1595, Marcantonio Barbaro bequeathed his best friend a silver plate while his son, Francesco Barbaro, who would later become an Aquileian patriarch, used an apartment in Foscarini's palace. Finally, the author assumes that two friends are portrayed as old men in Veronese's Viennese version of Suzanne and the elderly. Marcantonio even occupied the upper floor of Palazzo Foscarini in his later life. Cf. Howard 2011, 50-1, 175.

⁸⁹ Rossi 2001-02, 73.

⁹⁰ Manno 2017, 55. Foscarini's portrait attributed to Domenico Tintoretto is displayed in Museo Storico Navale in Venice, no. 949. Howard 2011, 84, pl. 107.



Figure 6 Lepanto inscription on Zadar Harbor Gate. © Author

Appendix 1: Transcription and Translation of Inscription from Melia Anniana's Zadar Arch (by Neven Jovanović)

MELIA ANNIANA IN MEMOR[IAM] Q[UINTI] LAEPICI Q[UINTI]
F[ILII] SERG[IA] BASSI MARITI SUI / EMPORIUM STERNI ET AR-
CUM FIERI ET STATUAS SUPERPONI TEST[AMENTO] IUSS[IT] EX
HS DC[MILIUM D[EDUCTA] XX[VICESIMA] P[OPULI] R[OMANI].

(MELIA ANNIANA, IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND QUINTUS
LAEPICUS BASSO, SON OF QUINTUS OF THE SERGII TRIBE,
HAD ORDERED TO PAVE THE MARKETPLACE AND TO RAISE
THE ARCH WITH SCULPTURES, OUT OF THE TESTAMENT, FOR
THE AMOUNT OF 600,000 SESTERTII, HAVING PAYED THE RO-
MAN TAX OF THE TWENTIETH PART).

Appendix 2: Transcription and Translation of *Provveditore Jacopo Foscarini's* Inscription Dedicated to the Victory at Lepanto (by Neven Jovanović)

DOM /
FOEDERE INTER PIVM. V. PONT. MAX. PHILIP. II. HISP. REG. ET /
SENATVM VENETVM IN SELINVM TVRC. IMP. ICTO /
IOANNE AUSTR. CAR. V. IMP. F. REGIAE / M. ANT. COLUMNA
PONT. / ET SEBASTIANO VENERIO VENETAE CLASS. DVCIBUS /
HORVM ACIE CCXI TRIREMIVM CVM CCLV. TVRC. TRIR. /
AD ECHINADAS NON. OCTOBR. STRENUE CONGRESSA CLXXX
CAPTIS MVLTIS COMBVSTIS PAVCIS FVGATIS /
MAGNO CHRISTIANORVM NVMERO A SERVITVTE LIBERATO /
JACOBVS FVSCARENVS DALMATIAE ET EPIRI LEGATVS /
GLORIOSI DE HOSTE TRIVMPHI MEMORIAM CONSECRAVIT /
ALOYSIO MOCENICO VENETIARVM PRINCIPE / HECT. TRONO
PRAET. ET ANDR. BARBADICO URBIS PRAEF. / MDLXXI

(TO THE HIGHEST AND ALMIGHTY GOD, /
WHEN THE COVENANT WAS STRUCK BETWEEN THE POPE
PIUS V, SPANISH KING PHILIP II AND / THE VENETIAN SENATE,
AGAINST SELIM THE TURKISH EMPEROR, /

UNDER JOHN OF AUSTRIA, SON OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V,
COMMANDER OF THE ROYAL FLEET, /
MARCANTONIO COLONNA, COMMANDER OF THE PAPAL FLEET,
AND SEBASTIANO VENIER, COMMANDER OF THE VENETIAN
FLEET /
IN BRAVE CLASH OF THEIR ARMIES OF 211 TRIREMES WITH 255
TURKISH TRIREMES /
NEAR THE ISLANDS OF ECHINADE ON THE 9TH OF OCTOBER,
WITH 180 [TRIREMES] TAKEN, MANY BURNED DOWN, FEW HAV-
ING ESCAPED /
WHEN A GREAT NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS WAS FREED FROM
THE SLAVERY /
JACOPO FOSCARINI, GOVERNOR OF DALMATIA AND EPIRUS /
CONSECRATED [THIS] IN THE MEMORY OF THE GLORIOUS TRI-
UMPH OVER THE ENEMIES; /
WHEN ALVISE MOCENIGO WAS THE DOGE OF VENICE,
ETTORE TRON THE RECTOR, AND ANDREA BARBADIGO CAP-
TAIN OF THE TOWN / 1571.)

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