

La chiesa e la parrocchia di San Giacomo dall'Orio (Venice, 9-10 Nov 17)

Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Nov 9-10, 2017

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"La chiesa e la parrocchia di San Giacomo dall'Orio: una trama millenaria di arte e fede" (Chiese di Venezia, Nuove prospettive di ricerca, 6), cur. by Massimo Bisson, Isabella Cecchini and Deborah Howard

Like every Venetian parish church, the evolution of San Giacomo dall'Orio has been closely interconnected with the development of the surrounding area. Its free-standing site, however, remains unusual, shared only by the church of Santa Maria Formosa; like the latter, its facade addresses the canal while the apses project into the campo.

Over the centuries the parish became progressively marginalised: the area within the original parish boundaries is now landlocked, with access to the Grand Canal only possible by means of a network of small canals. The availability of land and the spread of modest, functional housing blocks for artisans and workers – combined with the distance from the centre (which became dominated by the San Marco-Rialto axis) – led to the development of the area around San Giacomo dall'Orio as an industrial zone, dedicated in particular to wool manufacture.

Although the area became primarily a popular quarter, it still preserves several palaces erected by noble families, among them that of the diarist Marin Sanudo. In addition, the city's first anatomy theatre was located in the present Corte dell'Anatomia, while in 1671, thanks to an initiative of the Loredan family, the College of Surgeons was founded on the south side of the church.

This conference, therefore, aims to address the more general social and urban characteristics of the parish, and to contextualise the church within the varied daily life of the campo. This space hosted a range of activities: ludic (remaining unpaved until the eighteenth century, it was used as a football field, even by players from noble families); religious (it was the scene of numerous confraternity processions); and socio-economic (including the practice of crafts).

The church of San Giacomo dall'Orio was probably founded towards the end of the tenth century, even if its documented status as a parish only dates back to 1130. Rebuilt in 1225, the church acquired its main elements thanks to radical restorations after the earthquake of 1345: the aisled transepts and the present ship's-keel roof probably date from this time.

Between the end of the Quattrocento and the mid Cinquecento the church was subject to various renovations in the presbytery, nave and aisles, leading to its present configuration. In particular, following the removal of the rood screen at the entrance to the presbytery, the stalls were transferred to the apse. The organ was relocated to a wooden organ loft over the main entrance portal – one of the oldest surviving examples of this arrangement.

After the mid Cinquecento, various alterations mainly concerned the interior, which houses works by such celebrated artists as Veronese and Palma Giovane. Moreover, the parish became the sett-

ing for the altars and ritual activities of numerous confraternities, including the important Scuola del Sacramento, whose members came from a wide social range.

Interventions since the middle of the Settecento include the addition of partition walls in the transepts (later removed), the construction of a new sacristy during a programme of structural and decorative repairs at the start of the twentieth century, and, fifty years ago, a complete refurbishment of the presbytery.

Spoils and precious marbles – such as the flecked black marble Ionic column and the unusual polylobed holy water stoop – remained long after these had passed out of fashion. The beautiful marble pulpit is unique in the city. At the same time, the almost complete absence of wall-tombs and the relative lack of family chapels serve to underline that this was a popular quarter with few elite families. One of the most important patrons was the parish priest Giovanni Maria da Ponte, who commissioned a cycle of paintings for the Old Sacristy. The eucharistic symbol in the centre of the ceiling by Palma il Giovane, not to mention the Sacrament Chapel itself, indicate the growing devotion to the Holy Sacrament. Even if the apostolic visitations of the late sixteenth-century mention certain deficiencies, the programme of artistic renewal during the Counter Reformation reflects the parish's serious response to post-Tridentine reforms.

The remarkable spatial and artistic coherence that characterises the whole building is not easily explained by the usual practices of art-historical and architectural analysis. It is now recognised, of course, that an appreciation of the ceremonial, liturgical and devotional practices, especially those connected with the life and character of the parish, constitute an essential element in the understanding of a sacred building and its many individual details. The proposed conference therefore seeks to interpret this historic church within its broader historical and geographical context.

The dissemination of knowledge of Venetian churches, to audiences of experts and non-specialists alike, is a characteristic of the conferences organized by the project "Chiese di Venezia. Nuove prospettive di ricerca". The wide participation of the public (at the sessions and guided tours) in the five conferences organized annually since 2011 has demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of gathering.

Visits to the church will be organised as part of the programme.

Program

9, November

- Ca' Dolfin, 10.00-13.00

10.00-10.15 Registration

10.15-10.30 Welcome. Martina Frank (Università Ca' Foscari), Gianmario Guidarelli (Università degli Studi di Padova)

10.30-10.45 Introduction. Massimo Bisson, Isabella Cecchini, Deborah Howard

Session "Il contesto urbano", chair: Deborah Howard (University of Cambridge)

10.45-11.15, Michela Agazzi (Università Ca' Foscari), "San Giacomo dall'Orio, il contesto"

11.15-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-12.00 Edoardo Demo (Università degli Studi di Verona), "Società e vita industriale"

12.00 -12.30 Jane Stevens Crawshaw (Oxford Brookes University), "Life, death and the Anatomy Theatre in early modern Venice"

12.30-13.00 Discussion

13.00-14.30 Lunch

-Ca' Dolfin, 14.30-18.15

Session "La vita della parrocchia", chair Massimo Bisson (Università degli Studi di Padova)

14.30-15.00 Pascal Vuillemin (Université Savoie Mont Blanc, "Una parrocchia tra due sedi: San Giacomo dall'Orio nel Medioevo (XII-XV secc.)"

15.00-15.45 Isabella Cecchini (Università Ca' Foscari) and Jean-François Chauvard (Université de Lyon 2), "Appunti sugli stati delle anime a San Giacomo a fine Cinquecento"

15.45-16.15 Discussion

16.15-16.45 Coffee break

16.45-17.15 Francesco Trentini (Università Ca' Foscari), "L'apostolo, il matamoros, il pellegrino. Le molteplici connotazioni del titolo di San Giacomo dall'Orio (secoli X-XVI)"

17.15-17.45 Elena Quaranta (Università Ca' Foscari), "Musica e musicisti a San Giacomo dall'Orio: un'indagine archivistica"

17.45-18.15 Discussion

novembre, 10th

Ca' Dolfin, 9.30-12.45

-Session "Conservazione e trasformazione", chair Isabella Cecchini (Università Ca' Foscari)

9.30-10.00 Massimo Bisson (Università degli Studi di Padova), "Il complesso dell'organo: trasformazioni architettoniche e funzionalità liturgica"

10.00-10.30 Adriano Amendola (Università degli Studi di Salerno), "Tra Oriente e Occidente: i marmi policromi della chiesa di San Giacomo dall'Orio"

10.30-11.00 Discussion

11.00-11.15 Coffee break

11.15-11.45 Marie-Louise Lillywhite (University of Warwick), "The Decorative Programme after the Council of Trent"

11.45-12.15 Thomas Worthen (Drake University), Altars and other furnishings for the Scuola del SS. Sacramento in San Giacomo dall'Orio

12.15-12.45 Discussion

12.45-15.00 lunch

15.00-17.00 Church of di San Giacomo dall'Orio, Session "in situ", Massimo Bisson, Isabella Cecchini, Gianmario Guidarelli, Deborah Howard.

Reference:

CONF: La chiesa e la parrocchia di San Giacomo dall'Orio (Venice, 9-10 Nov 17). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 19, 2017 (accessed Feb 22, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/16534>>.