The Church and Monastery of San Nicolò del Lido (Venice, 25–28 May 25)

Venice, Italy
Deadline: Dec 31, 2023

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"Between the Lagoon and the Sea: The Church and Monastery of San Nicolò del Lido", International conference, edited by Martina Frank, Gianmario Guidarelli, Myriam Pilutti Namer.

The project “Churches of Venice. New Research Perspectives” started in 2010 and since 2017 has been promoted by the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage) and sponsored by Save Venice Inc. The project consists of a multi-year programme of interdisciplinary conferences, each one focusing on a specific Venetian church. The project aims to involve scholars from diverse disciplines in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex social and religious phenomena embodied by Venetian churches as physical spaces designed to hold multiple religious functions and meanings. Besides investigating Venetian churches from 'new research perspectives', the project also aims to disseminate recent research to a wider public by publishing the conference proceedings in a special book series edited by Viella (https://www.viella.it/catalogo/collana/75).

After having investigaded the churches of San Bartolomeo (2011), Scalzi (2012), San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti (2013), San Zaccaria (2014), San Pietro di Castello (2015), San Giacomo dall’Orio (2017), San Polo (2019), Santa Maria dei Servi (2020-2021), San Rocco (2021), San Nicolò dei Mendicoli (2022) and San Giovanni in Bragora (scheduled for December 2023), the conference planned for May 2025 aims to investigate the monastic church of San Nicolò del Lido as a landmark of the connection of Venice with the sea, over a chronological span ranging from the 11th to the 20th century. The reason for holding the conference in this period is due to its coincidence with the Festa della Sensa, culminating since at least the 11th century in a service in the church. The conference is scheduled over three days, with the last sessions taking place on site in the church. Participants will be provided with a professional photographer, who will be able to take photos on request to be included in the conference and in the resulting publication.

According to tradition, the origins of the church date back to the foundation by the bishop of Olivolo and the namesake doge, Domenico Contarini, together with the patriarch of Grado, Domenico Marengo, in 1053. According to tradition, in 1100 and after a fierce debate among religious, political and civil authorities, the building was deputed to host the relics of St Nicholas, St Nicholas Uncle and St Theodore. Regarding the aspect of the church in the Middle Ages, the main source is provided by the Annales Mundi by Stefano Magno (16th century), which report the description of Abbot Bartolomeo da Verona (1422-1458). He was a leading figure in the monastery annexed to the building and a promoter of restorations in the medieval church, which at that time was already

in a poor state of preservation. The incorporation of the monastery into the Congregation of St Justine in 1451 led to a gradual and systematic redefinition of the entire monastic complex, with the subsequent dismantling of the medieval church and the building of a new temple (1627-1628). Once the new church was completed, all the traces of the previous one were lost. Thanks to investigations and surveys carried out in 1942 by architect Mario Guiotto for the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti del Veneto Orientale, part of the remains of the original right aisle that were incorporated in the 16th century cloister, were rediscovered. This finding was followed by the discovery of the mosaic floor currently in situ (1956) and early restoration work on site. The operations continued on behalf of the Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici del Veneto between September and October 1982: the archaeological excavations, leaded by Michele Tombolani, resulted in the identification of the area of the first Church of San Nicolò, part of its structures (including the central apse and the two side apses) and the discovery of numerous finds, particularly fragments of wall and floor mosaics and other architectural elements.

In particular, we suggest to address the following thematic issues:
1) The 17th century church: architecture and layout (altars, statuary, wooden choir)
2) The contribution of archaeological investigations: history and perspectives
3) The Benedictine church in the Middle Ages and early Modern age (architecture, structures, building techniques, pictorial decoration, mosaics, opus sectile, sculpture and reused materials) until its demolition
4) The Benedictine monastery in Medieval and Modern age
5) San Nicolò and the Lido: relations with the local community and with the cemeteries
6) San Nicolò and the port mouth: anthropological and religious aspects; militarisation processes in the area
7) The cult of St Nicholas and his relic, within the city and the Mediterranean context
8) The role of St Nicholas in the State’s ceremony

Paper proposals, consisting of a short abstract (250 words max.) and a short CV, should be sent as an e-mail attachment to chiesedivenezia@gmail.com by 31 December 2023.
Accepted proposals will be announced by 15 March 2024.

Reference:
CFP: The Church and Monastery of San Nicolò del Lido (Venice, 25-28 May 25). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 17, 2023 (accessed Nov 13, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/40636>.