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### WMU ScholarWorks Citation

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# **Il Doge and the Liturgical Drama in Late Medieval Venice**

Nils Holger Petersen

The *Quem queritis* ceremony on Easter Day from the basilica of San Marco of the Venetian Republic as it took place in the sixteenth century was conventional in a number of ways.<sup>1</sup> However, it incorporated some interesting and special features combining political and civic ceremonial with traditional liturgical interests. Until recently, the San Marco tradition was strangely unnoticed by scholars of liturgical drama, although its special features deserve examination and interpretation.

The modern nine-volume standard edition of the texts of the *Quem queritis* ceremonies and other so-called dramatic or quasi-dramatic Easter ceremonies by the late Walther Lipphardt prints three sources from Venice. The first two texts (nos. 429 and 429a) are identical and constitute one ceremony, compiled by the liturgiologist Alberto Castellani (1480–1522) and included in the third edition of his *Liber Sacerdotalis* that was printed in Venice in 1523 (reprinted, 1537) and in the edition of 1560. The text does not specify the provenance of the ceremony. By contrast, no. 430 in the Lipphardt edition is a ceremony

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<sup>1</sup> Since the original version of this article was published, further studies of the *Quem queritis* at San Marco in Venice have appeared: Susan K. Rankin, “From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual: ‘Quem queritis’ at St. Mark’s, Venice” in *Da Bisanzio a San Marco: Musica e Liturgia*, ed. Giulio Cattin (Venice: Società Editrice il Mulino, 1997), 137–79 and 180–91 (appendix). This is a substantial article giving a complete liturgical and musical history of the *Quem queritis* at San Marco from the thirteenth century to the end of the republic in 1797. See also Susan K. Rankin, “‘Quem Queritis’ en voyage in Italy,” in *Itinerari e stratificazioni dei tropi: San Marco, l’Italia settentrionale e le regioni transalpine*, ed. Wulf Arlt and Giulio Cattin (Venice: Edizioni fondazione Levi, 2008), 177–207, and Nils Holger Petersen, “Il Doge and Easter Processions at San Marco in Early Modern Venice,” in *Transfer and Spaces*, ed. Gita Dharampal-Frick, Robert Langer, and Nils Holger Petersen, *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual 5* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 301–11. My revisions in the present paper reflect information revealed in this recent scholarship.

from a late printed source of 1736 belonging to the basilica of San Marco. All three are examples of the so-called Type I *Visitatio Sepulchri*.<sup>2</sup>

Each of these three sources contains the three particularly representative ceremonies from the Easter *triduum*: (1) a Good Friday procession in which the *Improperia* were woven together with the burial of the Host, the *Depositio hostiae*, in a very unusual way; (2) the corresponding Resurrection ceremony, the *Elevatio hostiae* of Easter morning; and (3) the liturgical Easter representation of the visit to the sepulcher of Christ, the *Visitatio Sepulchri* containing the *Quem queritis* dialogue.

Lipphardt claimed that, in spite of reliable information about performances of music at San Marco since the fourteenth century, no records existed of a Venetian *Quem queritis* ceremony other than the ones printed in his volumes, and he suggested that the ceremonies of 1523 and 1560 from the Castellani book were learned compilations rather than reflections of a tradition in Venice. On Lipphardt's account, neither the first edition of the *Liber Sacerdotalis* which appeared in Rome in 1497 nor the second edition from Venice in 1520 has been preserved, and so we could not know if they already had contained the Easter ceremonies that were included in the third and the following editions.<sup>3</sup>

However, a few ceremonies from San Marco not mentioned by Lipphardt were noted elsewhere in publications focusing on the civic rituals of Venice. While these did not bring any earlier Venetian texts to light, they verified that performances had in fact taken place at

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<sup>2</sup> Walther Lipphardt, ed., *Lateinische Osterfeiern und Osterspiele*, 9 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975–90), 2:593–607, and additionally 7:347–50 (hereafter *LOO*). For *LOO*, no. 429, see also Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 1:126–29, 622–24; and further Giulio Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia a San Marco: Testi e melodie per la liturgia delle ore dal XII al XVII secolo*, 4 vols. (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 1990–92), 2:500, and 3:46, 50.

<sup>3</sup> *LOO*, 7:347–48.

San Marco in the first years of the sixteenth century. Apparently, divisions between academic interests had caused important sources to remain unnoticed by scholars of the liturgical drama in spite of their availability even in modern editions. This also shows how important interdisciplinary study is in the field of liturgical drama research.<sup>4</sup>

In the same year as the posthumous volumes of the Lipphardt edition appeared, correcting some (but not all) errors and filling in some of the missing ceremonies, three volumes of Giulio Cattin's work on the liturgical manuscripts of the San Marco basilica in Venice were published. Here all previously known *Quem queritis* sources from Venice were mentioned, but further among the sources a musically noted processionale-rituale of San Marco of the thirteenth century containing the essential outline of the same ceremony as the sixteenth- and eighteenth-century sources from the San Marco was addressed, establishing beyond doubt that the *Quem queritis* ceremony at the procession before Mass on Easter Sunday was a living tradition at San Marco for about five hundred years.<sup>5</sup>

Another early *Quem queritis* ceremony is preserved in a thirteenth-century noted gradual from San Marco (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. MS. 40608). This ceremony, however, is placed as a trope before the introit of the Easter Day Mass and thus seems to belong to a different (later abandoned) tradition.<sup>6</sup> Both thirteenth-century

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<sup>4</sup> See C. Clifford Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Drama," in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, ed. Eckehard Simon (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 22, and, in the same collection, Andrew Hughes, "Liturgical Drama: Falling between the Disciplines," 42–43.

<sup>5</sup> Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, MS. Cigogna 1006; see Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 2:499–500 and 3:50, and Susan Rankin's full account of this musico-liturgical history in her article "From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual."

<sup>6</sup> See Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 1:229–30; and also *ibid.*, 2:500 and 3:50.

ceremonies have been analyzed and discussed by Susan Rankin in her account of the historical development of the *Quem queritis* at San Marco.<sup>7</sup>

San Marco, of course, was the state basilica of Venice with its particular state liturgy. Since the Venetian liturgy in general was suppressed in 1456, the so-called *patriarchino* was thereafter only used at San Marco itself. This rite combined the traditional Roman liturgy with special celebrations of local Venetian feasts such as local saints' feasts and the historical or rather legendary events constituting the so-called Venetian myth. Included were celebrations connected with the appearances and miracles of St. Mark in Venice and with the quasi-historic legend of the honoring of the doge by Pope Alexander III in 1177 in gratitude for Venetian help in establishing peace between the papacy and the emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. There were celebrations associated with the office of the doge, and later, for example, the victory over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571 was added to the calendar.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the liturgical calendar in Venice was marked by frequent celebrations and festivals of religious, political, and popular content—e.g., the festival of the twelve Marys during carnival, with large and complicated processions (involving boating) as well as games, and also the so-called Marriage of the Sea on Ascension Day with another boat procession leading to a ritual where the doge “married” the Sea as a sign of true and perpetual dominion. The feast of the Annunciation (25 March) was as much a celebration of the founding of the city (in 421 C.E., according to the myth) as it was a traditional Christian festival. Prominent

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<sup>7</sup> See Rankin, “From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual,” esp. 141–50.

<sup>8</sup> See Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), esp. 74–78, 185–296; Iain Fenlon, “Venice, Theatre of the World,” in *Man and Music, II: The Renaissance*, ed. Iain Fenlon (London: Macmillan, 1989), 102–32, 104–10; and also Iain Fenlon, “Patronage, Music, and Liturgy in Renaissance Mantua,” in *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony*, ed. Thomas Forrest Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 211–12.

roles for the doge, the elected duke of Venice, were provided in these civic and liturgical rites.<sup>9</sup>

Edward Muir describes the participation of the doge in the Easter ritual in some detail. His description of the *Quem queritis* ceremony in San Marco in the sixteenth century is based on three sources: (1) The *Caerimoniale rituum sacrorum ecclesiae sancti Marci Venetiarum* (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS. Marciana lat. III 172 [2276], referred to below as *Caerimoniale rituum*), which gives only the incipits of the items but very full rubrics in Latin (no musical notation), published in 1973 as an appendix to Martin da Canal's thirteenth-century chronicle, *Les Estoires de Venise*;<sup>10</sup> (2) The *Caerimoniale ducale* (Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, MS. Venier, B. V [I], P.D. 517b, referred to below as *Venier*), a late-sixteenth-century ceremonial in Italian which, while it does not provide evidence for a *Quem queritis* ceremony, nevertheless supports the *Caerimoniale rituum* in its references to a ducal procession to a Sepolcro at San Marco on Easter morning;<sup>11</sup> (3) Francesco Sansovini's

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<sup>9</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 103–250, 189–211 for the political connotations of the ducal procession. For the liturgical role of the doge, see *ibid.*, 219–30, and Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall: Studies in the Iconography of the Venetian Republic* (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1974), 213–17. Additionally see Gina Fasoli, “Liturgia e cerimoniale ducale,” in *Venezia e il liante fino al secolo XV*, ed. Agostino Pertusi, 2 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1973), 1, pt. 1: 261–95.

<sup>10</sup> Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1973), Appendix 3, cccxviii–cccxxii; Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 1:89, 3:50–51; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 219–21, esp. n. 21, and 309 for the dating of the manuscript between 1559 and 1564. See also Rankin, “From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual,” 156–58, pointing out that the manuscript actually contains three (closely related) versions of the *Quem queritis* ceremony and also referring to later printed editions of (basically) the same holy week ceremonies.

<sup>11</sup> There is no musical notation in the manuscript, and only one liturgical text belonging to the Easter morning procession is mentioned in the sections I have seen — the Settimana Santa and its sequel, the Ottava di Pasqua. The manuscript is dated in the early seventeenth century by Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall*, 157, n. 3, and 181, n. 6; see also Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 220, n. 21, and 308.

*Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice, 1581), which was reprinted in 1604 with additions by Giovanni Stringa, canon of San Marco. This popular work contains a description of the *Quem queritis* ceremony as part of its description of the ducal public ceremonies in Venice that also include the *Depositio hostiae*. While full texts and quite detailed information about the ceremonial are provided, there is no musical notation.<sup>12</sup>

The Easter ceremonies edited by Castellani (and for which he did not specify the provenance) do not mention the doge or any association with San Marco. In spite of minor differences between the sources there can be no doubt that the processional San Marco *Quem queritis* ceremonies are basically one and the same (including the thirteenth-century ceremony from MS. Cigogna 1006), while the relationship of this ceremony to Castellani's version is somewhat more difficult to assess. Among the differences must first of all be noted the differing liturgical position.

*The Castellani Ceremony of 1523.* The Castellani *Quem queritis* ceremony takes place Easter morning before Matins in connection with the *Elevatio hostiae* ceremony that was carried out as the bells were rung for Nocturns but before the people entered the church. A priest would remove the Host from the sepulcher where it had been placed during the *Depositio hostiae* ceremony on Good Friday, and would then carry it to the chapel where it was usually kept. The *Elevatio* involved the singing of psalms and other chants traditionally used for this occasion, as well as prayers. After the priest had censed the Body of the Lord, a procession was formed, leaving the church singing the responsory *Dum transisset sabbatum*

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<sup>12</sup> Francesco Sansovini, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice: Presso Altobello Salicato, 1604). There is also a 1663 edition with further additions by Giustiniano Martinioni. My references are to the 1604 edition throughout. The ceremony is also discussed in Rankin, "From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual," 158–59.

(traditionally the third responsory of Matins and a link to the *Quem queritis* ceremony when performed at this time). Approaching the church from the outside, the parish priest or another priest, knocking on the closed door with his hand or with a cross, would sing in a loud voice: “Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini porte eternales, et introibit rex glorie.”<sup>13</sup> There would be no answer from the inside, but after a pause the priest would repeat the knocking and the chant, this time even louder. And after another pause with no response he would knock on the door a third time (louder again). Now two deacons, who had remained in the church when the procession was formed, would respond from the inside:

Quem queritis in sepulchro, Christicole?

The ones from the outside would answer:

Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o celicole.

And again the deacons would sing:

Non est hic, surrexit sicut predixerat;

ite, nuntiate, quia surrexit a mortuis.

Then they would open the door, whereupon all would enter the church. The ones from the inside would sing:

Venite et videte locum,

ubi positus erat Dominus,

alleluia, alleluia.

When the procession had entered the church, the priest would go to the sepulcher where he would put his head into its “window,” “plebanus vadat ad Sepulchrum et ponat caput in fenestra Sepulchri.” Then he would sing towards the people: “Surrexit Christus”; and the choir would answer: “Deo gratias.” The parish priest, gradually advancing towards the

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<sup>13</sup> LOO, 2:600–01. For the text see the Vulgate version of Psalm 23:7, which was also used in other representational ceremonies: the Palm Sunday procession, the order for the dedication of a church, and the ceremony of the *Descensus Christi ad inferos*. See Young, *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:92, 103, 150. The use of this text in a *Quem queritis* ceremony, however, is almost unique; see comments in Lipphardt, *LOO*, 9:910–11. There are only two other known examples, for which see *LOO*, nos. 223b and 223c, from Innichen and dated almost a century later than the Castellani ceremony.



people, would repeat the announcement (three times), in each instance a little louder and with the same choral response.

Now everyone would process to the sepulcher. The parish priest would go to the door of the sepulcher and would then give the kiss of peace to the first priest or cleric or to the “Domino terre, si ibi fuerit” (“the ruler of the country if he should be present”). Then he would sing with a subdued voice: “Surrexit Dominus.” And the receiver of the kiss would answer: “Deo gratias.” The same procedure would then individually and mutually be repeated among all. After this, everyone would proceed to the altar of the Blessed Virgin where a special adoration of the Virgin would take place with the singing of the antiphon *Regina celi letare* with its verse and response and two collects, whereupon the procession would return to the choir to sing Matins.<sup>14</sup>

*The Sixteenth-Century Caerimoniale Rituum Ceremony.* In the *Caerimoniale rituum*, in which the *Quem queritis* ceremony is placed in a procession before Prime and Mass, the rubrics give details about the preparations of the clergy on Easter morning before the *vicarius dominus*, the officiating priest, together with the master of ceremonies, deacons, and subdeacons, proceed into the ducal palace. The doge is presented with a large candle, while a similar candle is given to the *dominus procuratori ecclesiae*, the main procurator of San Marco, and a third is reserved for the celebrant. If it is not raining, the procession, including now the doge and his suite, would leave the ducal palace by the *porta aurea* and enter the basilica through the *porta sancti Clementis*. Bells were ringing, and standards had been placed outside the church early in the morning. The procession was headed by *precones*,

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<sup>14</sup> *LOO*, 2:600–02.

heralds, and *tibicines*, flute players, before the crucifer, whereafter follow the clerics from the lowest to the highest in rank.<sup>15</sup>

At the inner door of the main entrance to San Marco the *Quem queritis* ceremony evolves very much as in the *Castellani* ceremony except that there is no mention of the lines from Psalm 23 (AV: Ps. 24). The celebrant knocks three times on the door in three turns with a copper ring hanging from the door. Then the singers from the inside sing “Quem queritis? etc.”<sup>16</sup> As the singers inside continue with *Venite et videte* the door is opened, and all enter the church. The *dominus dux*, the doge, stops before the sepulcher, which is now open with the Host previously removed, and the celebrant ascends to it.<sup>17</sup> Having put his head into the sepulcher from both sides, the celebrant sings from its door: “Surrexit Christus.” He is answered by the choir: “Deo gratias.” As in the *Castellani* ceremony he gradually moves back while this dialogue with the choir is repeated (three times, and in each instance louder). Here it is specified, however, that he should move closer to the doge (though also in the end keeping a “debita distantia”) and give the kiss of peace to the doge and to the procurator, again singing the *Surrexit Christus* while the latter answer “Deo gratias.” Thereafter, the priest gives the kiss of peace to the deacons and subdeacons with the same exchange of dialogue. They, in turn, repeat this procedure with those standing nearby so that the kiss of peace passes down in the order of rank, ending with the lowest.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Precones precedunt, postea tibicines statim ante crucem, postea crux cum cereis, deinde clerus ecclesiae ordinate juxta gradus suos inferiores prope crucem, et sic successive, et cum perventum est processionaliter ad ecclesiam procedunt omnes usque ad secundam januam magnam ecclesiae, quae clausa est” (*Les Estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani, cccix).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> An *Elevatio* ceremony is only thus attested to in the text.

<sup>18</sup> “Illi vero osculum dant propinquioribus sibi, et sic successive usque ad minimos clericos qui adsunt, dicentes et respondentes ut supra” (*Les Estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani, cccxx).

At this point the manuscript contains detailed but not very transparent commentary concerning the placement of the doge and the clerics and also indicating the ceremonial changes:

Postea dominus dux cum senatu ascendit chorum; nos vero, hoc est totus clerus, remanet ad sepulcrum, preter cantores qui ascendunt pulpitem lectionum ubi cantant missam, quia hodie dominus dux, facta confessione missae ascendit pulpitem magnum, in quo audit missam; si vero dominus dux remanet in choro ad missam, cantores ascendunt pulpitem magnum ad canendam missam. . . . Dicta prima sine “Regina coeli,” quia continuatur missa. Olim, post primam fiebat chorus et cantores cantabant introitum ex pulpito suo et sacerdos intonabat: — Gloria Patri — quo intonato omnes intrabant chorum, etiam dominus dux, qui, facta confessione, ascendebat pulpitem. Nunc vero dominus dux intrat chorum accepto osculo a celebrante ut predictum est, nos vero dicta prima, et facta confessione dominus dux ascendit pulpitem magnum. Serenissimus autem dux dominus Andreas Gritti nollebat ascendere in pulpitem, sed residebat in sua sede in choro. In pulpitem duo tantum canonici ascendunt cum domino capellano ad dicendum Introitum missae, Kirie, Gloria et reliqua ut moris est. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Thereafter the lord doge together with the senate ascend into the choir; however, we (that is, all the clergy) remain at the sepulcher except for the cantors who ascend to the lectern where they sing the Mass, for today the lord doge, after having made his confession before the Mass, ascends into the great pulpit where he hears Mass; if, however, the lord doge remains in the choir for mass, the cantors ascend to the great pulpit in order to sing Mass. . . . Formerly, after Prime had taken place, the chorus and the cantors used to sing the Introit from their pulpit and the priest intoned—*Gloria Patri* [“Glory be to the Father”]—whereafter all entered the choir, including also the lord doge who, having made his confession, ascended the pulpit. Now, indeed, the lord doge enters the choir after having received the kiss from the celebrant as prescribed; after we have sung Prime and after he has made confession, the lord doge

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., cccxx; the passage is quoted in part by Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 3:50–51.

ascends to the great pulpit. However, the most serene lord doge Andreas Gritti refused to ascend into the pulpit but stayed in his seat in the choir. Only two canons ascend into the pulpit together with the lord chaplain to sing the Introit of the Mass, the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria* etc. according to custom. . . .

It is suggested that any changes in the Easter morning ceremonial are explicitly connected to Andrea Gritti. These may have been superficial, but it seems likely that they at least would have reflected some rethinking of the Easter morning ritual. Gritti was the doge of Venice from 1523 to 1538 and is known for his general reforms of the ducal ceremonial. He was further instrumental in bringing Adrian Willaert to Venice where he was to serve as maestro di cappella of San Marco for thirty-five years (1527–63). During Willaert's tenure the cappella was transformed into one of the most important musical institutions of all of Europe.<sup>20</sup> The structure—but, as mentioned above, not its liturgical placement—of the Castellani *Quem queritis* ceremony in the edition of 1523 is almost identical with the ceremony recorded in the *Caerimoniale rituum* that continues the tradition from the thirteenth century. Judging from the rubrics that have been quoted above, at least some kind of ceremonial rearrangement of the Easter morning ritual must have occurred during the reign of Gritti.

Moreover, as also noted above, the rubrics in Castellani's presentation of the ceremony mention the ruler of the (unspecified) country in question in connection with the kiss of peace. Lipphardt noted that the Castellani *Quem queritis* is almost identical with a ceremony of 1616 from Innichen in South Tirol; he argued that the latter ceremony originated before

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<sup>20</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 156–81, esp. 162–63. The reform of the civic rituals under Andrea Gritti, formally a decision by the so-called Council of Ten, is dated 1525. Concerning Adrian Willaert and Jacopo Sansovini, who built the famous Loggetta in the San Marco square, see Fenlon, ed., *Man and Music, II: The Renaissance*, 111–12, 128–29, and Iain Fenlon, "Music and Society," in *ibid.*, 51.

1140 and that in his opinion it was Castellani's source.<sup>21</sup> If Lipphardt was correct, Castellani deliberately must have provided for a change at the *pacem* at the end of that ceremony in order to create a role for the ruler of the country.<sup>22</sup>

The early processional *Quem queritis* ceremony of San Marco as it is preserved in the above mentioned MS. Cigogna 1006<sup>23</sup> attests to the same ceremonial at the same door as in the sixteenth century, though it is not clear whether it is a door to the basilica or a door to the sepulcher.<sup>24</sup> However, the announcement ceremony that follows upon the *Quem queritis* dialogue in the sixteenth-century ceremonies at the sepulcher itself is not attested to in this or any other early Venetian manuscript. The same is true for the ceremony of the *pacem* after the *Quem queritis* exchange.<sup>25</sup>

Is it possible that Castellani drew up his version of the ceremony with a further re-working of it in mind—perhaps even as a kind of proposal connected with changes being planned in the state basilica of San Marco? It seems suggestive that the ceremony was printed in Venice in 1523, the same year Andrea Gritti ascended to the ducal throne and where at least some changes were introduced into the Easter morning ceremonial. If the suggestion is correct, Castellani's ceremony was not totally accepted, but seems to have influenced the ceremony that in the end was adopted, especially with regard to the announcement at the

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<sup>21</sup> See *LOO*, 7:171, 348, and cf. n. 12, above. For the Innichen ceremony, see *ibid.*, 6:26–29.

<sup>22</sup> For comparison, see *LOO*, no. 223b (6:28), and the Castellani ceremony (*LOO*, 2:602).

<sup>23</sup> Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, MS. Cigogna 1006, fols. 23r–24r.

<sup>24</sup> See Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 2:500.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, 2:500; and also 2:363–99, 378, with regard to the other early witness to the *Quem queritis* dialogue from San Marco, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. MS. 40608. For a transcription of the trope (from fol. 107v), see Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia*, 4:32 (Addenda).

sepulcher and the ceremonial surrounding the *pacem*. In any case, the sixteenth-century *Caerimoniale rituum* version of the *Quem queritis*, which continued the century-long processional tradition at San Marco, clearly emphasizes the presence of the doge—and so too will the continuation of the *Quem queritis* preserve this emphasis from this time on.

*Other Sources for the San Marco Quem queritis Ceremonies after 1500.* Although the aforementioned *Venier* manuscript from San Marco does not mention the *Quem queritis* dialogue, its very brief liturgical references clearly reflect the same Easter morning ceremony as the *Caerimoniale rituum* manuscript. Under the subheading *Festa di Pasqua* (under the main heading *Ottava di Pasqua*) it gives what amounts to a reference to, but not a description of, a procession to the sepulcher at San Marco on Easter morning. Reference is made to the doge being accompanied by the senior *procurator*, to his carrying a candle in his hand, but to only one point of the liturgy itself, clearly its culmination: the singing at the sepulcher of *Surrexit Christus alleluia*, followed by the gradual approach towards the *principe* for the kiss of peace as a sign of joy, “in segno d’Alegrezza.”<sup>26</sup> The information that is provided accords completely with the much fuller description in the *Caerimoniale rituum*.

Further description of the *Quem queritis* ceremony is provided in the previously mentioned Sansovini-Stringa book; the edition of 1604 describes the preparations of the choir, the seat of the doge and the *pala aurea*, the golden altarpiece then (and now) only used on special festive occasions. According to this source, the canons went up the golden stairs of the ducal palace to meet the doge, whereupon the vicarius or celebrant presented him with a

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<sup>26</sup> *Surrexit Christus alleluia* probably refers to an antiphon, for instance nos. 5076 or 5077 in *Corpus Antiphonarium Officii*, ed. Renato-Joanne Hesbert (Rome: Herder, 1963–79), 3:497–98.

candle—an action quite similar to the *Caerimoniale rituum* text except that here the last candle is given to the *primicerius*, the head priest of San Marco.<sup>27</sup> The procession (with the doge) is then carried out as described in the *Caerimoniale rituum*, though with fewer details.

The *Quem queritis* dialogue begins at the closed inner door of the main entrance to the basilica. In the presence of the doge the vicarius knocks nine times on the door, then four singers from the inside sing:

Quem quaeritis in sepulcro Christicole?

Those on the outside respond:

Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, ò Cælicolæ.

And those inside sing again:

Non est hic; surrexit, sicut prædixerat.

Ite, nunciate, quia surrexit, dicentes:

They continue:

Venite, & videte locum, vbi positus erat Dominus:

Alleluia, alleluia.

During the singing the door opens, and, together with those already inside the church, the procession proceeds towards the sepulcher, where all (including the doge) stop as the vicarius ascends the stairs to it. Looking into it, he does not find the body of the Lord (“il corpo del Signore”)—i.e., the Host. At this point the text provides a parenthetical reference to what may have been an *Elevatio hostiae* ceremony (not mentioned otherwise), since in the morning the Host had been moved back to its usual place by one of the sacristans. The vicarius now turns towards the doge and says (sings) “con molta allegrezza” (“with great joy”): “Surrexit Christus.” He is answered by the chorus: “Deo Gratias.” He gradually moves down the stairs and approaches the doge as in the *Caerimoniale rituum* text and then sings again, for the third time, the *Surrexit Christus* answered by the chorus: “Deo Gratias.”<sup>28</sup> Again the kisses of

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<sup>27</sup> Sansovini, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fol. 350r.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., fol. 350v.

peace follow in the same order as in the *Caerimoniale rituum* but here also mentioning the papal legate and, at the end, the senators: “così di mano in mano fino all’ultimo Senatore” (“in this way onwards to the last senator”). But there is no mention of anything to be sung in connection with the kiss of peace. Thereafter the doge ascends to the choir while the canons stay at the sepulcher for a brief version of Prime, whereupon they proceed to the choir for the solemn Mass. This is in agreement with the *Caerimoniale rituum*.<sup>29</sup> In the final analysis, there can be no doubt that the Sansovini ceremony is again basically the same ceremony as the one described in the *Caerimoniale rituum* and referred to in the *Venier*, and here giving the full text of songs only rendered in incipits in the earlier source.

Finally, the ceremony printed by Lipphardt as no. 430 must be briefly reviewed. After a short reference to the *Elevatio* ceremony, the 1736 *Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae secundum consuetudinem Ducalis Ecclesiae Sancti Marci Venetiarum* gives details concerning the preparations of the clergy that are quite similar to the *Caerimoniale rituum*, for instance concerning the presentation of the candles to the doge, the procurator, and the celebrant himself. The procession follows the same route, and when it arrives at the inner door of the main entrance the wording of the 1736 ceremony is almost entirely identical with the *Caerimoniale rituum* except that the later source gives texts of the complete liturgical items, which are identical to the ones given by Sansovini and Stringa—evidence for close connection between all these ceremonies.<sup>30</sup>

The continuation of the ceremony at the sepulcher follows the *Caerimoniale rituum* text very closely and contains the same procedures and lines, ending again in an almost verbatim

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., fol. 350v.

<sup>30</sup> Compare *Les Estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani, cccxix, with *LOO*, 2:606.



identity between the two ceremonies and also giving the sung exchanges at the *Pacem*. At the conclusion it is briefly noted that the doge and the senate proceed to the choir to attend Mass and that the clergy remain at the sepulcher for Prime, once more very close to the description found in the *Caerimoniale rituum*.

*The Role of the Dominus Dux, the Doge*. Muir, discussing the ritual role of the doge in the liturgy of Holy Week, emphasizes the political motif in the central placement of the doge in these rituals—e.g., in the Palm Sunday procession in which, along with the other magistrates, he carried gold-leaf palm branches around the Piazza San Marco. At the *Depositio hostiae* ceremony on Good Friday afternoon, the doge removed his signet ring, which was then used to seal the ciborium where the Host was buried.<sup>31</sup> Summing up, Muir writes: “At each stage in the dramatization of Christ’s last days the doge himself impersonated Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

The doge, however, is not imitating Christ in the two examples mentioned above, nor does he do so in the *Quem queritis* ceremony. Moreover, even when he could be said to do so, as when he performed the duty of washing feet in the traditional *mandatum* ceremony on Maundy Thursday in imitation of the account in John 13, it is doubtful whether this is the point of the ritual. Staale Sinding-Larsen has criticized Muir on this account:

A ritual by which a State expresses its adherence to the Christological model should not be confused with the role-playing in a religious drama. The State participated in Christ’s triumph, and the doge imitated (in the traditional Roman “imitatio Christi”) Christ in his washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday (a rite not cited by Muir). . . .

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<sup>31</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 219; see also Sansovini, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fol. 349v.

<sup>32</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 219.

[T]his is not the same sort of acting as when someone dresses up like an angel or a prophet in the Venetian Corpus Domini procession.<sup>33</sup>

In the San Marco *Quem queritis* ceremony of the sixteenth century the role of the doge clearly was to be the prime receiver of the proclamation of the Resurrection. Important emphasis was put on the announcement directly to the doge, on his reception and joy on behalf of the people, who are also present and who sing the response *Deo gratias*, and appropriately then he is the first to receive the kiss of peace.

It is helpful to consider the general role of the doge in relation to the state basilica of San Marco when trying to understand the significance of his role in the *Quem queritis* ceremony on Easter morning. As noted above, the doge from early in the Middle Ages combined the secular power of a prince with a role as an almost sacred person. Several more or less historical or mythic events went into the creation of this unique and complicated figure who became endowed with particular symbols and ritual functions re-enforcing his particular status. At the same time, from the ninth century until the fall of the republic to Napoleon in 1797, the doges of Venice were in some way or other elected—and beginning in the thirteenth century their election was a function of the so-called Great Council.<sup>34</sup> Hence, though elected, the doge performed a quite different role from that of a democratically elected politician.

The legend (preserved only from the tenth century) of the translation of the remains of the evangelist St. Mark from Egypt to Venice in 827 or 828 C.E seems to have had strong political connotations from its very origin. The same is true for the later legend (from the

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<sup>33</sup> Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Iconography and Ritual: A Study of Analytical Perspectives* (Oslo: Universitets-forlaget, 1984), 193, n. 138.

<sup>34</sup> See Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 279, 299.

thirteenth century) of the miraculous appearance, the *inventio*, of the forgotten relic of St. Mark during a penitential procession ordered by the doge in 1094. Beside the saint, the doge was the central figure both in the translation and in the invention legend.<sup>35</sup> These legends endowed not only the doge but also the city itself with an enormous prestige. They were fundamental in establishing the Venetian myth according to which the spiritual authority of the saint descended upon the doge to effect what was thought of as an eternal combination of justice and magnificence in the “serenissima repubblica.” Gradually, however, and clearly in the sixteenth-century *promissioni ducale*, it was underlined that the real political power stayed with the Great Council and that the power of the doge primarily was symbolic, though no less important for that reason.<sup>36</sup>

The doge was never anointed, but his ducal coronation ceremony in the basilica of San Marco contained among other features his investiture with a banner which, according to Sinding-Larsen, had the character of a ceremony of fealty with St. Mark substituting for the feudal lord.<sup>37</sup> Sinding-Larsen argues that the coronation ceremony for the doge must be seen as an expression not only of the fealty of the government and the doge to St. Mark but also that it implied the direct participation of Christ; hence through St. Mark a *potestas directa* from Christ was transmitted to the government.<sup>38</sup>

The special position of the doge in the liturgy has been stressed throughout this article. As the patron of San Marco, he was responsible for the election of the clergy in general and

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<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, 78–87.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 84–86, 251–63, 267, 282–83, 300–01.

<sup>37</sup> Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall*, 164; cf. Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 207, 284–85.

<sup>38</sup> Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall*, 166.

hence for the nomination of the head priest, the *primicerius*.<sup>39</sup> The feast of St. Mark on 25 April marked in the Renaissance a renewal of the bond between the saint and the doge.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the position of the doge in the Easter morning *Quem queritis* ceremony should not be seen as a straightforward glorification of the doge. Rather, it seems to reflect the importance of the doge in terms of the *potestas directa* which he had symbolically received as a fief from St. Mark and Christ. The celebration of the resurrection of Christ re-establishes the *potestas* of the government. For this reason it is essential—and even is an act of humility in terms of acknowledging the dependency of the authority of the doge and of the government itself on Christ—that the doge particularly should receive and express his joy at the announcement of the Resurrection since he is the main representative of this mystical connection between Christ, St. Mark, and the Venetian state. The emphasis on the reception of the Resurrection announcement by the doge may thus be understood in relation to the use of the ducal ring for sealing off the sepulcher at the *Depositio* ceremony on Good Friday. The doge's act in taking off his ring as part of this ceremony symbolized a loss of power;<sup>41</sup> as the *potestas* of the doge symbolically was given up with the burial of Christ, so also the celebration at the sepulcher on Easter morning can be seen as a ritual expression of the symbolic resurrection of this *potestas*. Christ's authority and ducal power were intertwined, and this was made manifest for the citizens of Venice through the ritual celebrations during the Easter *triduum*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 179–83; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 261.

<sup>40</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 84.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 270; cf. *ibid.*, 219, and see n. 32, above.

<sup>42</sup> Drawing on theories of cultural memory (esp. Jan and Aleida Assmann) and performativity (Erika Fischer-Lichte), I have interpreted the ritual changes of the early sixteenth century, described here, as attempts at staging a political dimension of the Easter morning liturgy at

The explicit mention of joy at the announcements in the sixteenth- to eighteenth-century sources as well as the responses and kisses of peace must, of course, be understood in a similar way and not as invitations to individual piety. Nevertheless, the religious ritual in sixteenth-century Venice would have been regarded as most useful in the program to reform popular festivals around the time of Andrea Gritti. It must be emphasized that the interest in Catholic reforms was widespread at the time among clerics, and this was particularly so in Venice with its close trade connections to many parts of the world, including Northern Europe. For instance, the Venetian Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), who later became a cardinal and spokesman for the pope on the Reichstag in Regensburg in 1541 at the conference between Lutherans and Catholics, came at an early date to belong to a Venetian circle of men who examined the fundamentals of Christianity in a new manner. In theological matters he in some ways became close to the Lutherans. As a young man in 1511 he even had an experience of justification by faith alone that to some extent resembles the famous *Turmerlebnis* of Martin Luther.<sup>43</sup> Before Luther initiated his public actions in 1517, other members of this Venetian circle in vain tried to influence Pope Leo X toward reform of the Church, thereby anticipating the later reform movement leading to the Council of Trent.

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San Marco through the construction of a (new) cultural memory of the doge symbolically inserting himself into the biblical narrative of Christ's Resurrection, in a certain sense in the role of the Marys, as the first witness to the Resurrection. See Petersen, "*Il Doge* and Easter Processions at San Marco in Early Modern Venice."

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 30, and Klaus Ganzer, "Gasparo Contarini," in *Katholische Theologen der Reformations-zeit*, ed. Erwin Iserloh (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1984), 1:107–15, and Erwin Iserloh, "Evangelismus und Katholische Reform in der italienischen Renaissance," in *Renaissance-Reformation: Gegensätze und Gemeinsamkeiten*, ed. August Buck (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), 35–46, esp. 36.

Through the following years Lutheran books were easy to obtain in Venice, though, of course, they were officially forbidden.<sup>44</sup>

Firmly placed in the Catholic world, Venice at the time of Andrea Gritti was at the same time very much open to the new religious reform thinking that was naturally connected to the stream of late medieval piety which, for instance, found expression in quasi-official rituals, among them the processions of the fraternities, especially the five *scuole grandi*.<sup>45</sup> In Venice, reform interests were also furthered by disturbing political events, not least the disaster of the battle at Agnadello in 1509 in the so-called war of the League of Cambrai formed by France, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papacy, and some Italian states against Venice's expansions on the mainland. This prompted attempts to contemplate the fate of Venice and (not the least) the necessity of re-establishing the original moral virtues as understood through the Venetian myth. Gasparo Contarini wrote his *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* as a response to this situation. For him spiritual and political renewal were closely connected and basically interdependent.<sup>46</sup>

The claim that the ancient *Quem queritis* tradition of San Marco was recast in the sixteenth century deliberately to emphasize the symbolic role of the doge thus seems to be supported also by the general mood of Venice with the particular flavor of its myth as well as with the closely intertwined relationship between Christianity and political authority combined with the early impetus toward reform in the sixteenth century. As I have argued in

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<sup>44</sup> Iserloh, "Evangelismus und Katholische Reform," 37–39.

<sup>45</sup> Fenlon, "Music and Society," 115–20, and Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 39–40. See also Konrad Eisenbichler, ed., *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Ser.15 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), *passim*.

<sup>46</sup> Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 26–31.

this paper, the significance of the ceremony at this time seems to have been to express the dependency of the doge and his government on Christ, not to exhibit ducal splendor.

*Reprinted from The Early Drama, Art, and Music Review 18, no. 1 (1995): 8-24. The author is known for his publications on medieval drama, liturgy, and music as well as their reception in the modern arts. As an Associate Professor of Church History Emeritus at the University of Copenhagen, he is also Editor for Music for the Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception, published by De Gruyter.*