

Byzantine church architecture in Italy.

PH.D. Candidate ARBELA KISI

Cel: 0683557836

Fix: 033 228 608

arbelak@yahoo.com

Abstract

Byzantine capitals, characteristic of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Istanbul had spread rapidly to the west. Can not say the same for the architectural forms, especially those with the central layout. Maybe it happened for the excessive complexity of architectural types, changes in liturgical traditions and dogmatic differences that separate the Orient by the West.

Other factors that influenced in certain regions of Italy constructed byzantine basilica with attractive styles and refined. They became unique in their kind and the most representative monuments of byzantine Italy.

Ravenna: Gothic War developed in Italy between 535 – 553 inter the Byzantines and the Ostrogoths ended with the defeat of the latter. Byzantine occupied territories included a good part of Emilia Romagna and knew Ravenna as the capital.

In the San Vitale basilica in Ravenna will be crowned Byzantine victory in Italy. We applied the principles of the greatest architectural works of Constantinople.

Venice associated with Byzantine because of culture, trade and dynastic marriages strongly felt the effects of artistic and architectural orders byzantine construction.

Central layout, the use of light as a divine sign, the variation of indoor and outdoor spaces, the complexity and harmony tell adopting Justiniana architectural forms in the basilica San Marco in Venice.

Basilica Santa Fosca in Torcello built with bricks as most of the churches in the Venice represents a continuation of the byzantine tradition in this region.

Byzantine church architecture in Italy continued and renewed the tradition of early Christian and oriental forming an island Justinian in Roman influences.

Key words: architecture, Byzantium, Ravenna, Venice, church.

Byzantine church architecture in Italy.

The world of late antiquity, from the late third to the seventh century, was a Mediterranean world. Rome was not the political capital of the empire in the third century, when emperors saw themselves on the battlefield and constantly endangered by the seizure of power by the military. However, after the restoration of some order in the fourth century, Rome was the center of culture and tradition, while the court of the Emperor of the West was settled in Milan and Ravenna.¹

Ravenna V and VI centuries was one of the most important medieval cities. This happens for several reasons:

- Advantageous geographical location. Was very close to the sea and connected with one of the branches of the river Po.
- In the year 402, Ravenna was chosen by Emperor Onorio, as the capital of the West. During the years 489-526, back in the residence of the king ostrogot Teodorikut.
- After the war gothic 535-553 Ravenna becomes the capital of Byzantine Italy.

Each of these historical phases has left its traces artistic in the city.²

Between 540 and 600, Ravenna and its port, Classe, was adorned by various churches, most of which was financed by banker originally from Ravenna, Giuliano Argentario. Construction of the church was carried out according donations were made by local leaders but also by bishops of the city. As mentioned early Eclessio, who returned from Constantinople in 525 and Ursicino, which encouraged the construction of important church. Most of them were completed only after the Byzantine conquest of 540.³

Churches that were built, holy and modified in this period were:

1 Averil Cameron, Bizantinet, Dituria, Tirane 2008, fq 269

2.Matteo Cadario, Cristina Fumarco, L'arte tra noi, Bruno Mondadori, 2008, pg 50

3 D.M.Deliyannis, Ravenna in Late Antiquity, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, pg 219-220.

Basilica St. Apollinaire in Classe

This basilica is located about 5 km from the center of Ravenna. Began to be built in the first half of the VI century and was funded by Giuliani Argentario for Ursicino bishop. Was consecrated in 547 by Archbishop Massimiano and was dedicated to Saint Apollinaire, the first bishop of Ravenna.⁴



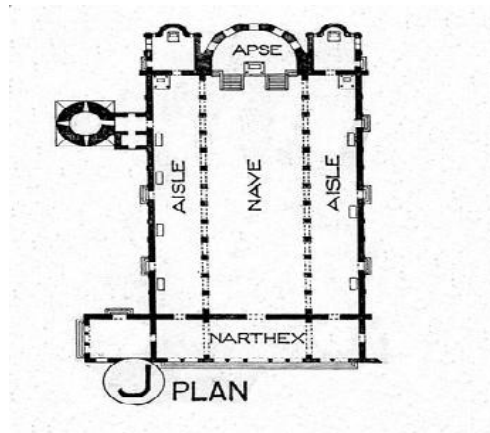
Preceded by a narthex facade beneath which are signed marble. Lintel and side walls are decorated with Greek marble. On the porch is an elegant window triforata. At the left of the church, bell tower is cylindrical, while the windows from the top down are monoforata, biforata and building triforata to give stability

1. Basilica St. Apollinaire in Classe

The interior of the church is divided into three naves and illumined by large windows placed to the side naves and apse to the center. Built by Greek marble architectural material as coming from Constantinople.

4 Pierluigi De Vecchi, Elda Cerchiari, I tempi dell'arte, volume 1, Bompiani, Milano 1999, pg 195.

Decoration done with mosaics, whose tendencies are Byzantine symbols: the cross, Christ, sheep etc⁵



2. The layout of the Basilica



3. The interior of the Basilica

Basilica St. Vital

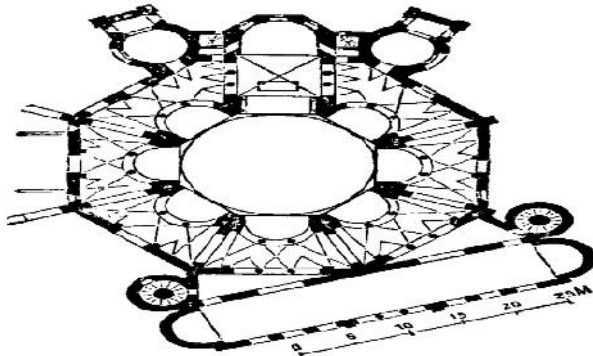
One of the most important buildings in the city belongs, Justiniana era. This Basilica was started to be built around the year 540 and was consecrated by Archbishop Masimiano in 548. San Vitale embodies Byzantine victory celebration in Italy.

It was inspired architectural principles applied by the best works of Constantinople but realized by local masters. Central layout, use of light, the volume variation of indoor and outdoor, uncovered, adoption of innovative principles of Byzantine architecture⁶

Church octagonal plan. Part of its interior consists of eight columns that limit the central space. It is covered by a dome of light and surrounded by seven columns, the capitals of which are pulvin type.

5 Matteo Cadario, Cristina Fumarco, *L'arte tra noi*, Bruno Mondadori 2008, pg 55

⁶ M.Cadario, C.Fumarco, *L'arte tra noi*, Mondadori, 2008, pg 50 – 51



4. The layout of the Basilica



5. Basilica St. Vital

This space welcomes decorations rich in precious marble, frescoes and mosaics. The theme used is coherent and represents a synthesis of the Scriptures.⁷

The interior walls of the apse are two famous mosaics representing the Emperor Justinian and his wife Teodora. Execution is not a high quality and the mosaic tiles are not cut in regular form but nevertheless convey the procession reaching the imperial luxury.



6. Mosaic 540-548 St. Vital

Justinian and processional. Justinian offers bread. To the right of Justinian (without hair) is Massimino, bishop of Ravenna

Justinian Mosaic composed for rich multicolored. While the Theodora mosaic for symbolic elements. Pictures like the icons are flat, without volume and try to highlight their power ranking. Here are excluded faces which are true portraits with a vivid and penetrating glance.⁸

⁷ Patriazia Angiolini Martinelli, *La basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna*, Modena 1997, pg 25 – 32

⁸ Sivia Pasi, *San Vitale, Il corteo di Giustiniano e Teodora*, 2006, pg 72 – 105



7. Mosaic 540-548 St. Vital

Teodora and ladies.
 Teodora offers to drink
 wine
 Represents beauty
 (Venus) and sacrifice
 (St. Mary)

Justinian had been the last emperor of true Roman, who sat on the throne of Byzantium, not because he spoke Greek as a barbarian but he had a spirit of the Latino and reasoned logic of the ancient Roman Empire. Had not realized that it was something empire now obsolete, that had set the time when a man of honor only held hands the whole power and it will not ever return now. The large mosaic in Ravenna, shows most new that sixty-four years old, but his face does not radiate beauty and strength nor even that can be compared with the appearance of Theodora, who sit in front of. Not surprisingly easy maneuvered her husband from her, I accept that the reins of power of carrying it. Justinian, except Theodora, is the prototype of autocracy. There was an energy that is left without a mouth observers and sustainability inexhaustible work. Knew to take care of his appearance, and he took a shine to the citizens mind you want to be the mirror of imperial glory. This is the reason the magnificent processions and extensive programs of public works construction.⁹

St. Marco Basilica in Venice

Venice associated with the Byzantine Empire, because of culture, commerce, dynastic marriages, will be felt strongly influences the

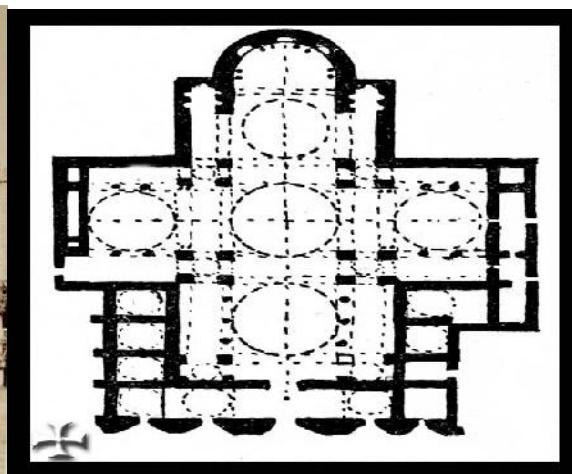
⁹ John Julius Norwich, *Bizanti, Shkelqimi dhe renia e nje Perandorie*, Uegen, Tirane 2005, fq 84

construction Byzantine art. It was created so an attractive and refined style that will make them unique in its kind, the Basilica of St. Marcos, which represents the golden era of the Republic sailor.¹⁰

Basilica, was not born as the cathedral, but as the capella of Doge (Venice governors), part of the Ducal Palace and the center of administrative and judicial power. With this building, Doge, presented by the people, and there waited Pape, Sovereign and Ambassador. This explains the value of civil and representative of St. Marko and ceaseless desire to Venice to see the always excellent.



8. St Marco Basilica.



9. St. Marko layout

The basilica was born in Carolingian era (832) as Venetian merchants stole in Alexandria (Egypt) bones of San Marcos.

Renovation began in 1063 by order of the Doge Domenico Contarini and ended in 1094, the year of the consecration of the basilica and the disposition of the tomb of the saint in Cripta

The layout in the form of Greek cross, consisting of four domes in the wings, and one in the center and is inspired by the church Apostoleion Constantinople.

If the Modena or Pisa to create Romanico style and churches to

¹⁰ G. Ravagnani, *I bizantini in Italia*, Mulino, Bologna 2004, pg 25 – 31

give authority and value, used the classical Roman art, Venice, aimed for its model, the precious Byzantine art.¹¹

Outwardly, today presented us with gothic-Fiorito style, while romanico period, reflecting the oriental style. Original brick structure, with time, spins and precious marble columns, most of which were won by the Crusaders and the conquest of Constantinople in 1204.

The facade presents two orders: the first floor are lined niches large, within which there are doors that lead to the inner porch. Central Niche, is decorated with monumental style columns. The second order backlog compared to the first, forming a terrace of four passable and presented by the blind arcades plus a large central arcade in which is located a lodge.

The interior of the basilica that shines like a precious treasure is lined with multicolored marble and mosaic domes and arcades while creating a widening effect and infinite space¹²



10. Mosaic - Genesis, St. Marko



11. Mozaik - sanctification of Christ, St. Marko

Mosaics decorated by Byzantine models that wear the upper part of the walls, began to be built around the year 1074. But during the twelfth century, after a fire and earthquake, began to realize the most important mosaics. Mosaics porch, belong to the thirteenth century,

¹¹ G.Ravegnani, *Bisanzio e Venezia*, Mulino, Bologna 2006, pg 37

¹² M. Cadario, C. Fumarco, *L'arte tra noi*, pg 109 – 110

while those of the fourteenth century baptistery. Decoration with Mosaic will continue in the next centuries.

Mosaics present a unitary theological and iconographic program though are realized by different masters Byzantine initially and then home.

- Distinguished dome over the sanctuary mosaics. Inspired by Greek and Russian models and have implemented a rigorous monumental style.
- Central dome, presented by a style of living and more expressive.
- Before entering the Dome appear less refined and expressive style implements an intermediate.
- Mosaics porch, appear with great zest and natural detail creation of the world.

Conclusions

In 395 the Roman Empire appeared in two significant differences between them.

In the way of religion and preaching.

- Relations between church and state authority
- The issue of control of the church was accompanied by fierce controversy between Rome and Constantinople. Byzantine emperors called themselves followers of the Roman emperors and also claim for their authority over the church in Italy. A competition that began and grew into a conflict between two centers of Christianity.
- In 1054 opened the collision occurred between the two churches and was finally sealed what had happened in reality, schism.

Until the VI century, especially during the reign of Justinian the Great, Byzantine influence over some regions of strongly felt Apennine Peninsula. Reasons political, military, strategic, dynastic, commercial, cultural, exposed in southern Italy, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, resisting Byzantine influences over.

Byzantine presence in Italy was promoted through the beautiful art and architecture according to these principles:

- Art that was created depending on the bulk of patronage. Rulers, nobility and clergy were Mecenate (fans and funders) of Byzantine religious art.
- Architecture of the Christian basilicas characterized by central layout, use of the dome, brick walls, Greek marble.
- The interior of the church was dominated by refined mosaic of styles, symbolic and natural. An important role, playing the iconography. Art and politics were in the service of religion and the latter calm troubled souls of mortals? However, it is important to say that centuries of Byzantine history are a great creativity, in which the Byzantine genius has produced a painting and a sculpture of a highly spiritual depth unparalleled.

Bibliography

1. Averil Cameron, *Bizantinet*, Dituria, Tirane 2008
2. D.M.Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010
3. Giorgio Ravegnani, *Bisanzio e Venezia*, Mulino, Bologna 2006
4. Giorgio Ravegnani, *I bizantini in Italia*, Mulino, Bologna 2004
5. John Julius Norwich, *Bizanti, Shkelqimi dhe renia e nje Perandorie*, Uegen, Tirane 2005

6. Matteo Cadario, Cristina Fumarco, L'arte tra noi, Bruno Mondadori 2008
7. Patriazia Angiolini Martinelli, La basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna, Modena 1997
8. Pierluigi De Vecchi, Elda Cerchiari, I tempi dell'arte, volume 1, Bompiani, Milano 1999
9. Sivia Pasi, San Vitale, *Il corteo di Giustiniano e Teodora*, 2006