



NEWSLETTER
Winter 2019



VENICE IN
PERIL

DEAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER

The catastrophic flooding of Venice which began on 12 November has created an existential crisis for the city. Damage to houses, shops and offices, to the very essence of a living community and the infrastructure upon which it depends, has been matched by the impact of the water on historic buildings, churches, palaces, theatres and museums. This is a salt tide whose insidious deposits act like a cancer on the brick, marble or plaster fabric, initiating a gradual decay. The inundation is the worst since the 1966 disaster but the fact that we have learned more, in the intervening half century, about the elements which combined to create that event, adds a whole further range of problems and questions to the business of confronting the present disaster and its potential aftermath.

Blaming and shaming have already started. The flood has been labelled ‘a cultural, civil, political and demographic catastrophe’. Fury is focused on the prodigality and corruption involved in the desperately sluggish process of installing the Mose barriers begun in 2003 and likewise on the structural work in connexion with this that has disturbed the lagoon’s tidal flow. Meanwhile commercial opportunism and what one writer calls ‘the mindless economy that is making tourism the only game in town’ are rightly seen as contributory factors, however indirectly, to the overall situation.

In the wake of further surges and the clean-up to follow, the Association of International Private Committees, to which Venice in Peril belongs, is set to continue its work of sustaining the built environment of the city and its islands. The Italian Parliament has moved swiftly to vote for a range of measures to support the city, from reviving the Legge Speciale, to waiving local taxes, to financing the city infrastructure and its monuments and to extending Art Bonus, the Italian ‘Gift Aid’ to donations to churches. Dario Franceschini, the Minister for Culture, has launched an appeal in Italy and internationally and many separate fundraising initiatives have been set up by citizen groups, individual museums and monuments.

Despite the fact that the challenges facing the lagoon of Venice sometimes appear overwhelming, the value of the conservation projects we undertake is beyond doubt. They are a small contribution to a massive and complex problem but they achieve three things: the practical conservation itself which assures the condition of the monument or object, the involvement of people in Venice and the UK in a collaborative project of understanding of the city’s heritage and thirdly the expression of support to relieve some of the burden of maintaining that world-famous heritage.

We must hope that for Venetians this life-threatening moment will also prove, in a positive sense, to be life changing.

What becomes abundantly clear is that the city’s recent path of quick-fix solutions, of greed and short-termism, of a criminal negligence shown towards the Venetian lagoon’s delicate ecology, is no longer viable. There is a unique chance here for Venice to consider how it really wants to live, what it aspires to

be and how its singularity as an urban model and paradigm, in balance with its marine environment, can go on teaching lessons to the world.

Jonathan Keates
Chairman

ACQUA ALTA 2019 APPEAL

Following the extremely high November tides that have caused extensive flooding, we announce the launch of the Acqua Alta 2019 Appeal. We are very pleased to be working with the Italian Embassy in the UK and urge all those who love Venice to show their support by making a donation to the Appeal.

Funds will be used to help meet immediate challenges and to provide support for longer term conservation projects once damage has been fully assessed.

If you have enjoyed a visit to Venice recently, are planning one, or wish to be part of the international efforts to save the city, please donate to this appeal.

You can donate online at veniceinperil.org, by cheque made payable to Venice in Peril Fund/AA2019, by telephoning 020 7736 6891 or by BACS transfer using these details:

Payment Ref: Your surname/AA2019

Bank: Lloyds Bank

Account Name: Venice in Peril Fund

Account No: 26670568

Sort Code: 30 16 74

IBAN: GB81 LOYD 3016 7426 6705 68

Please email info@veniceinperil.org if this is the first time you have made a donation to Venice in Peril. *Thank You*

NEW PROJECT

Portale di Sant'Antonio – Cloister of Sant'Antonio in the Archivio di Stato at the Frari



This will be the second entrance doorway – or portale - at the Archivio di Stato to be conserved with funding from the Fondation Jean-Barthélemy, in memory of Monica Velay, a long-standing friend of Ashley and Frances Clarke. The first, incorporating a 13th century sarcophagus panel in its lintel, was completed in 2013.

The vast complex of the Archivio di Stato, which is open to anyone undertaking research, occupies the ranges around the two cloisters of the Franciscan convent, which was suppressed by Napoleon and adapted for reuse in 1815. It contains the archives documenting the history of the Venetian Republic (including the 15 volumes of Francesco Morosini's campaign despatches which were conserved in a joint project with other committees this year).

The Holy Trinity cloister abuts the Basilica while the second or inner cloister is named after the Franciscan Saint Anthony whose statue is mounted on its central well. The north range between the two cloisters houses the original winter refectory which dates from the mid-16th century. Used as a storeroom since the 17th century it will shortly be restored as part of a larger government-funded scheme for the Archivio.

The impressive stone doorway to the refectory is dated 1689 and bears the name of the Franciscan Friar Joseph

Cesena de Perugia. A shield set over the door contains the Franciscan coat of arms, the hand of Christ crossed with the hand of Francis, both bearing the stigmata, with the cross behind.

This is contained in a cartouche against an ornate door frame which seems intriguingly uncharacteristic of Venice. On either side of the door, set on pediments, are two further monumental scrolls angled outwards from the wall behind. There is no record of the architect of either the cloister or the doorway, although the Franciscan globe maker, printer and inventor, Vincenzo Coronelli (1650-1718) claimed it was Palladio and commissioned an engraving of it which is one of the only printed sources for the doorway. Later in the 19th century it was attributed to Sansovino.

The team directing the project is led by Superintendency officers Mariarosaria Gargiulo and Lucia Bassotto.

DISCOVERING NEW ROOMS AT THE ACCADEMIA GALLERIES

Venetian painting in the Sixteenth century

The latest phase of the re-organisation of the Accademia Galleries saw the opening, in August, of six new rooms on the first floor, dedicated to the 16th century. The rehang is an opportunity to see familiar and much-loved pictures in a more coherent and stimulating arrangement with new explanatory labelling in English.

The sequence of Rooms VI to XI follows on from the gallery above the entrance hall, which was the heart of the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* as conceived by its founders in the early 19th century. It is shown in Giuseppe Borsato's painting, densely hung with paintings identifiable in the collection today, that had just been returned to Venice after Napoleon's defeat. Leaving this historic space the visitor enters the new sequence beginning with Room VI which shows how

pictures were used for private devotion. Included here are small altarpieces and Holy Conversations – pictures showing the Virgin and Child with saints.

They feature illusionistic interiors and architectural settings as reassuring extensions of the real space in which the person was praying.

In paintings by Bellini, Cima da Conegliano and Mansueti we see how the faithful were invited to enter into spiritual and emotional empathy with the images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints in ways suggested by devotional texts of the time.

In Room VIII the cycle of huge paintings from the Scuola di San Marco helps to tell the story of that particularly Venetian speciality, the confraternity - the charitable and religious institutions that built the great Scuole. At meetings held in the Sala d'Albergo of the Scuola di San Marco,

against the backdrop of these scenes of the life of St Mark, set in Alexandria with Venetian merchants as bit-players, the members would have derived both confidence and comfort from their connections with the Levant.

The next room traces the history of 16th-century collecting in Venice, with pictures by Hieronymus Bosch, from the rich and varied collection of the humanist Cardinal Domenico Grimani who transformed his family palace at Santa Maria Formosa into an art gallery. A second collection, that of Gabriele Vendramin, is also represented by three paintings that belonged to him, by Giorgio da Castelfranco, better known as Giorgione. The influence of Leonardo da Vinci and the suggestion that Giorgione may have been part of intellectual humanist circles in Venice and Padova, are considered, before the visitor's attention is directed to the influence he, in turn, exerted on Sebastiano del Piombo, whose beautiful organ shutters from the German community's church of San Bartolomeo at the Rialto now hang here.

These artists, together with Leonardo and Durer, introduced what Vasari called *Maniera Moderna* to Venice, which is explored in Room IX.

When, in the 15th century, the Venetian Republic expanded its territory on the mainland as far as Bergamo and Friuli, the balance of its economy shifted from its maritime Empire, but it also brought new artists and ideas to Venice. Among these was Jacopo Negretti known as Palma Vecchio whose pictures found ready buyers among Venetian collectors, Rocco Marconi, who trained in Giovanni Bellini's workshop, and Lorenzo Lotto who, although born in Venice, spent long periods in Treviso,

Bergamo and the Marches.

In the early 19th century Giannantonio Selva, a teacher in the Academy art school, built the huge spaces which are now Rooms X and XI, where Paolo Veronese's *Feast in the House of Levi* covers the end wall in a similar position to its original site in the refectory of the Dominican convent of San Giovanni e Paolo. This famous teleri, or huge canvas, is flanked by smaller paintings such as Veronese's *Crucifixion* from the demolished church of San Nicolò della Lattuga which is hung so that visitors have the opportunity to compare it to Tintoretto's painting of the same subject, thereby gaining insights into Veronese's well-organised family workshop.

The final Room XI is dedicated to Titian - with his *Saint John the Baptist* and the *Deposition* painted for his tomb - and to Tintoretto with the latter's 'breakthrough' painting of the *Miracle of the Slave* and paintings by Pordenone.

Many visitors find the Accademia challenging precisely because of the richness of its collections, a feast, with all that that entails for the digestion, but the gradual reorganisation, funded by the Italian government, is revealing a clearly told story with new prompts and cues of impeccable scholarship to make each return visit rewarding.

As director of the Accademia Galleries from 2015-2018, Paola Marini oversaw the opening of these rooms with Giulio Manieri Elia, current director and curator Roberta Battaglia. Paola became Chair of the Association of International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice in 2018. She gave a talk on the new rooms to supporters in London in October.



Room VIII: St Mark's cycle from the Scuola di San Marco

Photo: Accademia/ Paola Marini

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Domus Grimani, 1594–2019 at Palazzo Grimani, Venice
7 May 2019 – 30 May 2021

In 2008 Palazzo Grimani, Venice, opened to the public after a ten-year restoration to reveal its glorious Renaissance interiors adorned with frescos, precious marbles and stuccos. The current exhibition temporarily restores to the palace the collection of antiquities that Giovanni Grimani bequeathed to the Venetian Republic on his death in 1593.

A post-mortem inventory recorded copious displays of antiques in the courtyard as well as in the interior. One year later, in 1594, the sculptures from the *Sala della Tribuna* were installed in the vestibule on the first floor of Jacopo Sansovino's Marciana Library in Venice, which was specially fitted out for the purpose.

For the present exhibition, most of the antiquities have been reinstated in the *Sala della Tribuna*, the last and most private room in Giovanni Grimani's private apartment (Fig.1). This corner room, top-lit by an enormous lantern, has always felt spatially disconcerting. Now the blank, marble-framed niches are once again filled with works of antique sculpture, drawing attention away from the vertiginous coffered ceiling. The whole effect is offset by the sumptuous floor of coloured marble.

Thanks to the symmetries and cross-references between objects, the sculptures seem to enact a silent visual dialogue. The architectural framework makes sense of the disjunctions of scale, giving prominence to small

pieces and grandeur to the larger statues. Works set high look good from below, while those at eye level engage the viewer in a mutual exchange of looks. Colour relationships, often enhanced by Renaissance additions in a different hue, draw attention to the specific materials. The subtle polychromy in red, cream and grey unifies the display and sets up a rhythmic play of shades and colours across three dimensions.

The pieces displayed in the reinstallation underline the creative approach to the display of antiques in the period. Broken statues were repaired and missing parts were recreated; plinths, bases and draperies were added, sometimes in a deliberately contrasting material, such as a female head from the Hellenistic period, to which a bust and drapery were added in the sixteenth century. (Fig. 2) Several pieces were even created anew to resemble antiques, including *all'antica* busts of both children and adults.

The sculptures have now returned 'home' for more than two years, allowing viewers to appreciate the magical ensemble created for Grimani in the *Sala della Tribuna*.

Deborah Howard



Sala della Tribuna, Palazzo Grimani, Venice. Photograph: Deborah Howard

This review is a shortened version of a review originally published in the Burlington Magazine, vol. 161, July 2019, pp. 581-2. *Catalogue: Domus Grimani 1594-2019: The Collection of Classical Sculptures Reassembled in its Original Setting*, Edited by Daniele Ferrara and Toto Bergamo Rossi. 160 pp. incl. numerous col. + b. & w. ills. (Marsilio, Venice, 2019), €26. ISBN 978-88-297-0125-4.

CURRENT PROJECT

Nativity Triptych – Bellini Workshop

Since we launched this campaign to raise £55,000 in the Summer 2019 Newsletter we are delighted to report that the panels of the Nativity triptych have been transferred to the Accademia's conservation studio in the ex-*Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia* in Cannaregio (where they have been unaffected by the November flooding).

Initial non-invasive investigations have taken place including infra-red reflectography, digital x-rays and XRF investigations and photographic documentation with UV fluorescence and raked lighting. The central Nativity panel has also undergone a photogrammetric survey. The X-ray surveys have demonstrated how four

wooden strips were added to the edges of the lunette in 1922 so that it would fit a frame commissioned for the ensemble by Superintendent Gino Fogolari as part of a new exhibition display in the Accademia Galleries.

The data collected in this first diagnostic phase enabled us to understand the damage suffered by the wood panels and paint layers attached to them. For example it has become clear that the nails inserted in 1922 to fix wooden additions are hindering the natural expansion and contraction of the panels, while the thickness of the old varnish layers and plaster infills carried out in 1947-8 by Mauro Pelliccioli, together with subsequent maintenance, have

caused repeated lifting of paint layers.

An appropriate methodology for the delicate, gradual and controlled removal of the layers applied in the 20th century and earlier, is being established so as to safeguard the integrity of the original paint surface. Excitingly, the test patches have revealed it to be of extremely high quality - despite several areas of paint loss. Cleaning is being done under digital binocular microscope and documented both microscopically and using UV photography.

Historical research is underway into how the panels were originally arranged on one of the altars below the 15th century choir gallery that originally spanned the church of the Carità between the sanctuary and nave. The church is now part of the Accademia Gallery having been absorbed into the site in the early 19th century. Research will also focus on how the panels were displayed after entering the Accademia collections. Historic images show the panels arranged in at least three different ways.

We expect to be able to report more fully on these findings in our next newsletter.

Thank you to all those who have given so generously to this campaign. There is still time to make a donation and contribute towards the project costs of £55,000.

CURRENT PROJECT UPDATE

Stonework screen and its 13 panel paintings in the cathedral of Torcello

The stonework screen was reassembled in time for the Feast of the Assumption on 15 August 2019 while the 13 panels are in the Mauve Srl conservation studio on the Fondamenta Nove.

The November high tides flooded the cathedral and there is particular concern for the marble inlay floor but the screen itself, having just been treated, was able to withstand the inundations.



*Treating the lunette The Nativity panel showing a test patch that has been cleaned.
Photo: Archivio Fotografico G. A. V. E., by kind permission MiBACT*

BOOKS

Highlights from John Sandoe Books

Buy books on Venice and Italy from the dedicated Venice in Peril Booklist online at www.johnsandoe.com or call 020 7589 9473 and 10% of the cover price will go to Venice in Peril John Sandoe (Books) Ltd, 10 Blacklands Terrace, London SW3 2SR.

GENERAL

A Month in Siena

by Hisham Matar £12.99

To See Clearly: Why Ruskin Matters

by Suzanne Fagence Cooper £12.99

The Ultimate Christmas Cracker

by John Julius Norwich £14.99

His last cracker and a selection from previous crackers by Artemis Cooper, his daughter

Carrying off the Palaces: *John Ruskin's Lost Daguerreotypes by the Jacobsons* £85

FICTION

The Baron in the Trees by Italo

Calvino, *a new translation by Anne Goldstein* £9.99

The Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories £25

Venice Stories (Everyman)

Selected by Venice in Peril Chairman Jonathan Keates £10.00

FOOD

Venice: Four Seasons of Home

Cooking by Russell Norman of Polpo fame £26

Trullo – *book of the delicious restaurant, outstanding pasta etc* £25

CHILDREN'S

The King of the Golden River *by John Ruskin, illustrated by Quentin Blake* £14.95

Silver Spoon for Children £17.95

The Glassmaker's Daughter £12.99

ART EXHIBITION

Secrets of Venice at Gladwell & Patterson Gallery. 15 January - 7 February 2020

Gladwell & Patterson Gallery's Venice exhibitions have supported Venice in Peril projects for over 25 years.

This year funds raised will go to the Acqua Alta 2019 Appeal.

14 JANUARY

Friends of Venice in Peril are invited to attend the exhibition preview, to be opened by His Excellency, Raffaele Trombetta, the Italian Ambassador at 6.30pm

22 JANUARY

Gallery talk with Jonathan Keates, The Secrets of Venice Uncovered Doors open 6:00pm for 6:30pm: £20 Friends, £25 others – *to include refreshments*

RSVP or purchase tickets:

020 7584 5512 or

emily@gladwellpatterson.com

Gladwell & Patterson 5 Beauchamp

Place, Knightsbridge

London SW3 1NG

IN MEMORY

NATHALIE BROOKE 1923 – 2019

Nathalie Brooke was the last survivor of the original signatories of the Declaration of Trust, which on 5th February 1971 created the Venice in Peril Fund; she lived to 96. If the surplus transferred from its predecessor body (set up to bring first aid to flood-stricken Florence in 1966) was a modest £4,211, the Deed drawn up by Arnold Goodman, with advice from the retired British Ambassador Sir Ashley Clarke, was high-minded and ambitious in the extreme. Summoning support from UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the House of Commons, it appealed to the world to save its most brilliant city. In every way, Nathalie was the woman to rise to that great aspiration.

She worked tirelessly in its little office, as Honorary Secretary, organising fundraising events. The first was a concert in St James's church, Piccadilly, the nearest to the Royal Academy where her husband Humphrey Brooke (whose name she always took) was Secretary, so uniting her own family's musical tradition with the wider sense of belonging which the British have felt for Venice. Much later she arranged an evening supporters' reception for the unforgettable loan exhibition of Treasures of Venice, greeting guests on the stairs with an Imperial confidence born of her Russian background at the court of the last Czars. Only Nathalie could have the vision to hold a Venetian Ball in the magnificent painted halls at Greenwich and let this seem a natural

twinning between two of Europe's great capitals – as the Fund made it seem Venice still was. Drawing on the noble standing of her family, the Counts Benckendorff, in St Petersburg till the tragedy of Ekaterinburg, she proved gifted in raising large sums for Venice, as she had for Florence. It is astonishing today to recall the senior trustees' decisions to start restoring an impoverished city by adopting whole churches: the Madonna dell'Orto, San Nicolò dei Mendicoli, and her cherished Santa Maria Mater Domini, and then publishing volumes to show how this was done. Other countries, from the Americans' Save Venice on, soon set up their own committees, and some 22 of these now flourish in Venice, linked in an Association chaired by a series of eminent Venetians. Serving for many years with the Fund's founding chairman, John Julius Norwich, almost until its Silver Jubilee, she then pronounced it should be closed – though that did not stop her paying recently to restore musical scores in San Marco, in memory of her mother the harpist Maria Korschinka. By now, of course, it was too late for that. What began as a brave sortie of White Knights has become a model for international conservation efforts, and for that alone Venice in Peril is needed more than ever. In Venice itself, the determination and wisdom of the founders has had, and still has, a profound influence, and the lamps thus lit are not to be extinguished.

Richard Haslam

CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON ART SCHOOL

Graduate Internships and Venice visit of BA Conservation Stonework students

The School's annual study tour to Venice during the week of 11-15 November 2019, for Conservation Studies, Historic Carving and Art and Materials History students, coincided with the second and third highest tides in Venice since records began. The flooding, which on 13 November, covered almost 90% of the historic city, brought the vulnerabilities of Venice into sharp focus for us, illustrating the disastrous impacts of Acqua Alta events on the city's residents, businesses, infrastructure and historic buildings.

We heard about damage to library collections and saw at first hand efforts to clear water, mud and other debris from building interiors.

We were also aware of the resigned but determined sense amongst Venetians to undertake the long process of recovery and conservation. In spite of the disruption, we all found the visit informative and fascinating.

Our graduate interns, Miyuki Kajiwara and Jonida Mecani, have been enjoying the opportunity to explore Venice, from historic churches to this year's Biennale; they have also travelled to other cities including Florence. At San Giorgio Maggiore they have dry cleaned the sculptures at high level at the west end of the building, removing dust and frass, and have continued with the important process of documenting the condition of the church interior.

FUNDRAISING BY YOU

Some generous supporters have offered to organise their own initiatives. We can provide you with leaflets and postcards. Write to us at info@veniceinperil.org

BECOME A FRIEND OF VENICE IN PERIL

Benefits include:

- Opportunities to understand Venice through supporting conservation projects
- A popular programme of expert but accessible talks on Venetian subjects.
- Twice-yearly Venice in Peril printed Newsletter covering conservation stories.
- Regular e-newsletters with conservation updates.
- A membership network of those who share your love of Venice.

	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	STANDING ORDER
FRIEND	£60	£50
JOINT* <i>(*two adults at one address)</i>	£100	£80

TRUSTEES

Lady Clarke CBE (Hon President), Dr Geri Della Rocca de Candal, Lady Hale, Richard Haslam (Hon Secretary), Deborah Howard, Jonathan Keates (Chairman), Gaia Penteriani Cosulich (Hon Treasurer), John Millerchip, Marina Morrisson Atwater, Sarah Quill, Jon Rayman, Tim Sanderson

IN MEMORY

RICHARD KING 1934-2019

Richard King was Treasurer of Venice in Peril from 2013 to 2018. An entrepreneur and lawyer, he brought brio and humour to the role of Treasurer as well as the wisdom of many years.

SPRING 2020

Event series

20 JANUARY

Venetians in the Levant: from Constantinople to Aleppo

Philip Mansel

A joint event with Levantine Heritage Foundation

When Venetians were not fighting the Ottoman Empire, they were trading with it, writing about it, or in the case of the last court painter of the Ottoman sultans, painting it. Philip Mansel, author of three acclaimed histories of the Levant and co-founder of the Levantine Heritage Foundation explores these rich and varied connections.

17 FEBRUARY

The Snowball Revolt – Renaissance politics in the Lagoon of Venice

Claire Judde de Larivière

A joint event with the British-Italian Society

In 1511 the fishermen and glassmakers on the island of Murano staged an unusual challenge to their patrician ruler. Claire Judde de Larivière, political historian and author, takes the Snowball Revolt as a starting point to show how ordinary citizens played a part in shaping politics in the Venetian Republic.

16 MARCH

Francesco Morosini, Warrior Doge: Venice and the end of empire

Jonathan Keates

Francesco Morosini (1619-1694) was Venice's last great doge. Fighting the Turks in the Peloponnese, he brought us – indirectly – the Elgin Marbles and gave Venice its final burst of prestige as a Mediterranean power. Jonathan Keates evokes the thrilling yet also tragic career of this compelling figure – not forgetting the favourite cat he took everywhere on his campaigns.

At the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly W1J 0BE.

Tickets and timings: Doors open 6.30 for 6.45pm

£18 Friends, £20 Others - to include a glass of wine.

From www.veniceinperil.org or 020 7736 6891

*To find out more about our projects and how you can donate please contact Venice in Peril Fund,
Hurlingham Studios, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PA*

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