

СВЕТ СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНИХ УТВРЂЕЊА,  
ГРАДОВА И МАНАСТИРА

*Омаж Марку Појовићу*

The Medieval World of Fortresses, Towns and Monasteries. *Homage to Marko Popović*



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*Турци освајају Београд 1521,*  
Отелијусов бакорез из 1602. године  
(М. Поповић, *Београдска тврђава*,  
Београд 2006, сл. 5)

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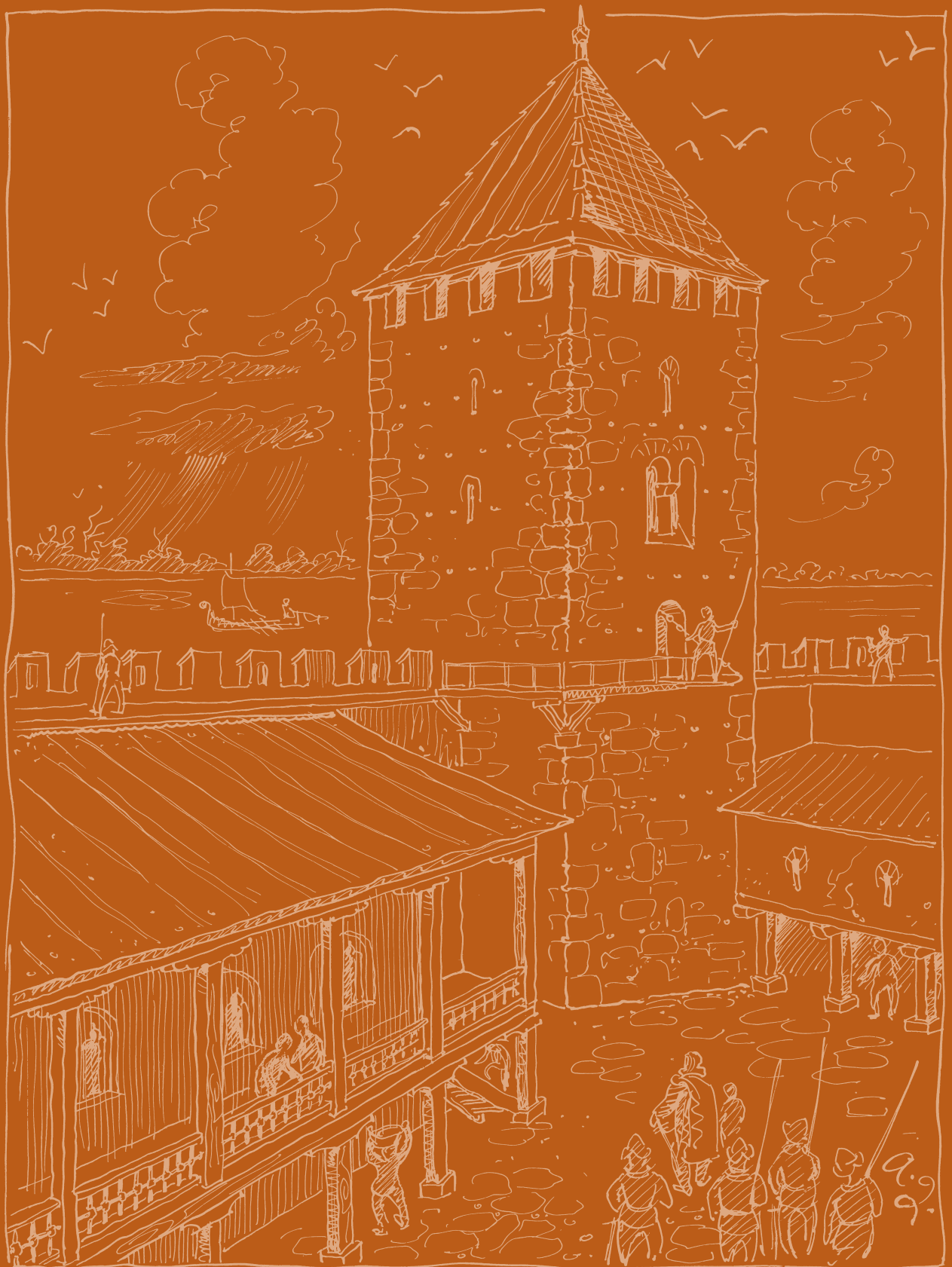
*Turkish capture of Belgrade in 1521,*  
engraving by Otelius, published 1602  
(М. Поповић, *The Fortress of Belgrade*,  
Belgrade 2006, fig. 5)



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*Омаж Марку Појовићу*

The Medieval World of Fortresses, Towns and Monasteries. *Homage to Marko Popović*

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Београд 2021.

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Фотографија: Архива Полиџике  
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Изрека каже: „Човек снује, а Бој одлучује“. Тако је и са књигом **Свети средњовековних утврђења, градова и манастира** – намера уредничтва и жеља приложника била је да она буде зборник радова у част Марка Поповића. Уз велико поштовање према његовим доприносима у сазнавању средњовековне прошлости Србије и очувању националне културне наслеђа, зборник је такође требало да покаже, како стручној јавности тако и самом Поповићу, а на начин уобичајен у научном свету, да његово дело представља истинску инспирацију истраживачима различитих дисциплина и генерација. Нажалост, пред крај рада на уобличавању публикације зашлекла нас је шужна вест о његовом одласку.

Овом књигом одајемо почаст великом археологу, колеги и пријатељу Марку Поповићу.

*The saying goes that man proposes, but God disposes, and it has proved to be true for the book **The World of Medieval Fortresses, Cities and Monasteries**. Its editors and contributors intended it as a festschrift to honour Marko Popović. With great appreciation for his many contributions to unravelling the medieval past of Serbia and preserving the national cultural heritage, it was also meant to show, to specialised publics and Marko Popović himself, in the form common in the academic world, how truly inspiring his exhaustive work has been to researchers from different disciplines and generations. To our deep regret, the sad news of his passing came just as this collection of essays was being put into final form.*

*With this book, we pay homage to the great archaeologist, colleague and friend Marko Popović.*

## Омаж Марку Поповићу

У ДРУГОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ 20. ВЕКА АРХЕОЛОГИЈА ДОЖИВЉАВА ПРЕПОРОД НА ЗАПАДНОМ БАЛКАНУ, у некадашњој Југославији, па самим тим и у Србији. Након обимних ископавања у оквиру значајног пројекта изградње хидроелектране Ђердап, археолошка истраживања настављена су, између осталог, опсежним програмима заштите и очувања средњовековног културног наслеђа, од којих поједини трају практично до наших дана. Комплексни археолошки пројекти захтевали су људе „од формата” – истовремено добре организаторе ископавања и научно акрибичне истраживаче. Оба та знамена, али и много више од њих, била су садржана у личности археолога Марка Поповића. Дуже од педесет година он је био доминантна фигура српске археологије средњег века, са изузетно вредним резултатима на захтевном пољу изучавања, заштите и промоције културног наслеђа.

\* \* \*

Марко Поповић је рођен 1944. године у Ужицу, а школовао се у Београду. На Филозофском факултету у Београду дипломирао је 1966. године, магистрирао 1971, а докторирао 1980. Професионалну каријеру започиње 1968. године у Заводу за заштиту споменика културе града Београда, за који остаје везан током целе своје каријере, како учешћем у реализацији низа конзерваторско-рестаураторских пројеката на Београдској тврђави, тако и уређивањем његовог гласила *Наслеђе*, чији је и покретач. У Археолошки институт долази 1976. године и у њему остаје све до одласка у пензију 2011. године. Поред тога што је руководио бројним истраживачким пројектима, годинама је водио и научну политику те куће у својству председника Научног већа. Пензионисање није означило крај његове каријере. Многе велике послове урадио је у претходној деценији, при чему можемо истаћи импресивне резултате истраживања и конзервације Новог Брда, тим пре што су се ти радови одвијали у сложеном политичком амбијенту.

Научно усмерење Марка Поповића на археологију пуног и позног средњег века исказано је већ на самом почетку његовог професионалног ангажмана, где је с једнаком пажњом приступао истраживањима и фортификација и сакралних комплекса. Ипак, његов највећи, неисцрпан научни изазов било је проучавање утврђења и система одбране у српским земљама средњег века и на почетку новог доба – са Београдском тврђавом у средишту пажње. Био је један од оснивача и дугогодишњи руководилац Научноистраживачког центра за Београдску тврђаву при Археолошком институту, где је прикупљена огромна грађа и организована датотека старих планова и фотографија, као и документације археолошких истраживања и покретних археолошких налаза, која се односи не само на тврђаву већ и на историјско подручје града Београда.

Изузетан допринос остварио је у изучавању средњовековних утврђења Београда – од времена градње византијског кастела у 12. веку, доградње у време цара Душана и, нарочито, градитељске делатности деспота Стефана Лазаревића која осликава веома значајну етапу развоја српске средњовековне војне архитектуре. Проучавањем развоја фортификација и урбаног језгра Београда у каснијем периоду, између 16. и 18. века, подстакао је развој нововековне археологије у Србији, која је послужила као узор земљама у окружењу. Уз то, дотакао се и проблематике античког Сингидунума, с посебним освртом на преостале материјалне трагове у савременој урбаној матрици, при чему је покренуо и уређивао тематску едицију зборника радова *Сингидунум*, у којој су до сада изашла четири тома.

Више од двадесет година посветио је Марко Поповић истраживањима на подручју Рашке, Новог Пазара и Сјенице – централне области средњовековне Србије. У средишту његове пажње био је комплекс на Градини изнад Пазаришта – Трговишта, који је након укупних сазнања до којих се дошло препознат као Тврђава Рас – знаменито седиште првих Немањића. У наставку изучавања кључних проблема наше националне прошлости посветио се систематским истраживањима Градине у Врсеницама, на рубу Сјеничког поља. Ту је, осим остатака античког и палеовизантијског утврђења, откривен раносредњовековни културни хоризонт са веома значајним траговима утврђивања из 9. века и материјалном културом из времена уобличавања Србије. Резултате тих радова објавио је у детаљним, узорно састављеним монографијама. Обиман пратећи програм теренских рекогносцирања у читавој тој области, приликом којих је откривено више десетина а истражено преко двадесет касноантичких и рановизантијских утврђења, донео је сасвим ново виђење граничног подручја долине Рашке и Пештерске висоравни у доба сутона антике и у раном средњем веку, што је снажно утицало и на развој рановизантијске археологије код нас. У том кључу би требало споменути и истраживања утврде Светиње, по свој прилици Виминакиона 6. века.

Велики део опуса Марка Поповића обухвата проучавање фортификација и настанка урбаних насеби на – градова у српским земљама средњег века. Истраживањима тих проблема он је приступао темељно, повезујући исходе сопствених археолошких истраживања, анализе изворне историјске грађе и резултата ранијих истраживача, што се може видети у публикацијама о Ужичком граду, Магличу и најновијој о Новом Брду. Комплексност утврђених градова у вези је и с питањима која се тичу владарских и властеоских боравишта, њиховог просторног распореда и структуре. Компаративном анализом расположивих података о боравку првих Немањића у области Расе и сазнања о познијим дворovima крај ишчезлог језера на Косову и, доцније, у градовима Београду и Смедереву, успоставио је моделе резиденција средњовековних српских владара.

Други велики тематски круг у научном раду Марка Поповића чине истраживања сакралних комплекса – како манастирских целина тако и појединачних црквених здања. На основу резултата археолошких истраживања, његова проучавања била су усмерена на анализу и тумачење физичких структура, то јест архитектонских остатака објеката у манастирским комплексима и њихове функције у оквиру целине. Још као млад истраживач, крајем шездесетих година прошлог века, открио је и обелоданио црквене комплексе у Панику код Билеће и Св. Петра код Требиња, да би током свог радног века заокружио истраживања средњовековне Митрополије у Београду, Куманице на Лиму, цркве Св. Николе у Станичењу, катедрале града Новог Брда и Шудикове у Будимлји. Обавио је систематска археолошка истраживања комплекса манастира Студенице, која су омогућила целовит увид не само у настанак и развој тог знаменитог светилишта него и

у поједине аспекте живота његове монашке заједнице током средњег века. У склопу проучавања сакралне архитектуре истакли бисмо и његово бављење ктиторским гробовима. Уводна реч је кратка да би објединила све токове плодотворне научне мисли Марка Поповића, па стога овде само спомињемо да је оставио трага и на пољу сигилографије, а нарочито хералдике.

Важно је, међутим, нагласити да је Марко Поповић био археолог изузетно широке ерудиције и великог талента. Захваљујући томе он је утирао нове путеве научне спознаје, превазилазећи конвенционалне оквире чисто археолошке методологије. Уз беспрекорну теренску документацију, на којој је инсистирао, то се односи, с једне стране, на умешно коришћење старе картографске грађе у истраживањима, а, с друге, на архитектонске анализе за које је имао нарочитог дара. Разумевање архитектонског простора и „читање”, често скромних, теренских остатака здања, уз минуциозан стратиграфски приступ истраживањима, обезбедили су читав низ препознатљивих аксонометријских реконструкција којима обилују његове публикације. Веома образован и у сфери историје уметности, још за потребе свог магистарског рада извео је пионирску компаративну анализу археолошких налаза и њихових представа на фрескама у средњовековним црквама. Та веза ће нарочито добити на значају током деценија истраживања српске сакралне архитектуре. Интердисциплинарни приступ Марка Поповића подразумевао је и коришћење аерофотографија, израду стереофотограметријских планова великог формата и организовање геофизичких истраживања на Београдској тврђави још пре распада Југославије, када су такви екскурси представљали праву реткост у нашој археологији. Вреди истаћи и то да је подстакао рана археозоолошка истраживања налаза из Тврђаве Рас. Ипак се по добрим последицама истиче његов кључни утицај на увођење у праксу препознатљивог система обраде и изучавања археолошке керамике што се већ деценијама спроводи у Научноистраживачком центру за Београдску тврђаву.

Посебан значај археолошке делатности Марка Поповића јесте у томе што је своја истраживања по правилу крунисао садржајним публикацијама, често монографијама. Иако је већину радова написао самостално, није се либио коауторстава, у духу правог руководиоца, свесног потребе за тимским радом и интердисциплинарним приступом. Импазантна библиографија, одштампана у овом зборнику, упутиће заинтересованог читаоца на још много детаља његове плодне активности.

У својој пола столећа дугој каријери обављао је различите стручне и друштвене функције. Био је председник Српског археолошког друштва (1987–1990), председник Управног одбора Завода за заштиту споменика културе града Београда (до 2010) и председник Комисије за споменике од изузетног значаја и српска културна добра у иностранству при Министарству културе (2008–2013). Главни је уредник часописа *Наслеђе* и едиције *Синџидунум*, уредник је *Зборника Народног музеја* и члан редакције часописа *Саопштења*. Запажен допринос дао је као члан редакција *Новойазарској зборника* (1982–2007), *Старинара* (1997–2016) и посебних издања Археолошког института. Био је члан Одбора за историју Босне и Херцеговине САНУ.

За свој научни рад и укупан ангажман на очувању и презентацији српског културног наслеђа стекао је угледна признања. Добио је три пута Октобарску награду града Београда: 1974, 1976. (колеktivна) и 1983. године. Добитник је и Априлске награде града Београда 2005. године (са В. Бикић), затим награде града Ужица „С. Пенезић – Крцун” 1989. године и Награде града Новог Пазара 1985. године. У фебруару 2018. одликован је орденом Круне I степена, године 2019. уручена му је Велика повеља града Ужица, а у фебруару 2020. одликован је Сретењским орденом III степена за нарочите заслуге у области културе.

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Марко Поповић словио је за посвећеног, енергичног и ауторитативног археолога, а његов захтеван карактер надалеко је познат. Војничка дисциплина и штедљивост ресурса, нарочито изражени у току теренских истраживања, а многим незамисливи како у оном а још више у овом времену, често су мамили осмехе његових сарадника. Сарадња с њим представљала је изазов свакојаке врсте, али у коначници резултат је увек био утемељен и неспоран. Неспорна је и његова несебична помоћ коју је пружао колегама у свакој ситуацији и под свим условима. С великим поносом и захвалношћу можемо да истакнемо да је Марко Поповић створио препознатљиву школу у оквиру Археолошког института. Доста рано у каријери постао је синоним за српску средњовековну археологију и узор многим колегама и у земљи и у окружењу, а то је – због широког знања, изузетне мотивације, ефикасности и изванредног истраживачког дара – остао и до данас.

Зборником који посвећујемо успомени на Марка Поповића одајемо почаст његовој непресушној истраживачкој радозналости.

*Уредници*

## *Homage to Marko Popović*

THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SAW A REVIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE WESTERN Balkans, the former Yugoslavia, and thus in Serbia. Large-scale rescue excavations ahead of the construction of the Djerdap hydroelectric power plant were followed by other archaeological projects, including extensive and, in some cases, still ongoing programmes of medieval cultural heritage protection and preservation. Complex archaeological projects required persons of high calibre, combining the qualities of a competent excavation leader and a scrupulous scholar. The archaeologist Marko Popović was both, and much more. For more than fifty years he was a dominant figure in Serbian medieval archaeology with exceptional achievements in the demanding area of the study, protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

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Marko Popović was born in Užice in 1944 and educated in Belgrade, graduating from the Faculty of Philosophy in 1966, taking his master's degree in 1971 and his PhD in 1980. His professional career began in 1968 when he joined the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade, remaining tied to it ever since through participating in a number of conservation-restoration projects for the Belgrade Fortress and as the initiator and editor of its journal *Nasledje/Heritage*. In 1976 he joined the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade and remained its member until his retirement in 2011, directing a number of the Institute's research projects and steering its research policy in his capacity as chairman of its Scholarly Council. But retirement was by no means the end of his working days. During the past decade he accomplished much important work, notably the project of the excavation and conservation of Novo Brdo, all the more impressive for its results because it was carried out in complicated political circumstances.

Marko Popović had been focused on the archaeology of the Central and Late Middle Ages from the very beginning of his career, dividing his research attention equally between fortifications and religious complexes. But what remained his biggest and inexhaustible challenge was the study of military architecture and defence systems in the Serbian lands in the medieval and early modern periods – with the Belgrade Fortress at its centre. He was one of the founders and long-standing director of the Institute of Archaeology's Research Centre for the Belgrade Fortress, which has accumulated vast documentation and set up a database of old plans and photographs concerning not only the Fortress but also the whole historic area of Belgrade. He made an exceptional contribution to the study of Belgrade's medieval fortifications – from the twelfth-century Byzantine castellum and the additions built under Emperor Stefan Dušan to, especially, the fifteenth-century building activity of Despot



Stefan Lazarević which marks a particularly important stage in the development of medieval Serbian military architecture. His research on the development of the defences and urban core of Belgrade in a later period, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, encouraged the development of the archaeology of the modern era in Serbia, setting a model followed in neighbouring countries. His research interests included the period of Roman Singidunum as well, focusing especially on its surviving traces in the contemporary urban fabric. He initiated and edited a collective series on the subject, *Singidunum*, consisting of four volumes to date.

Marko Popović devoted more than twenty years of research to the region of Raška, Novi Pazar and Sjenica – the core area of medieval Serbia. His focus was on the complex at Gradina above Pazarište (Trgovište), now identified as the Ras Fortress, the illustrious seat of the first rulers of the Nemanjić dynasty. Continuing his research on important issues of the national past, he embarked on the systematic excavation of the site of Gradina in Vrsenice, at the edge of Sjeničko Polje. Apart from the remains of a Roman and Early Byzantine fortress, the site yielded an early-medieval cultural horizon with significant vestiges of ninth-century fortification and the material culture from the period of the crystallisation of a Serbian polity. These excavations produced an exemplary monographic study. An extensive project of field survey of the whole area, which discovered several dozen and investigated more than twenty late-antique forts produced a very different picture of the border area of the Raška Valley and Pešter Plateau in the period of the decline of late antiquity and in the Early Middle Ages, strongly influencing the development of Early Byzantine archaeology in Serbia. To be mentioned in the same context is the excavation of the fort on the site of Svetinja, most likely identifiable as sixth-century Viminakion.

A good part of Marko Popović's work was concerned with the study of fortifications and the genesis of fortified urban settlements in the medieval Serbian lands. His approach was always thorough, drawing on the results of his own archaeological investigations, rigorous scrutiny of surviving written sources and the work of earlier researchers, as can be seen from the books on the fortresses/castles of Užice, Maglič, and the latest, Novo Brdo. The issue of fortified urban settlements is closely tied to the issue of royal and aristocratic residences, including their layout and structure. Based on a comparative analysis of the available information about the early Nemanjić rulers residing in the Ras area and the discoveries about the later royal residences by a now-vanished lake in Kosovo and, later still, in the cities of Belgrade and Smederevo, he established the patterns of medieval Serbian rulers' residences.

Another important set of topics addressed by Marko Popović concerned sacral complexes, both monastic enclosures and individual church buildings. Basing his research on the archaeological evidence, he focused on the analysis and interpretation of physical structures, i.e., structural remains, within monastic complexes and their original function. Even as a young archaeologist, in the late 1960s, Marko Popović discovered and draw attention to the sacral complexes in Panik near Bileća and St Peter's near Trebinje, wrapping up in the course of his career the exploration of the medieval complex of the metropolitan church in Belgrade, Kumanica on the Lim, the church of St Nicholas in Staničenje, the cathedral of the city of Novo Brdo and Šudikova in Budimlja. His systematic archaeological investigation of the monastery of Studenica has made it possible to create a comprehensive picture of the origin and development of this illustrious religious house, and of some aspects of the everyday life of the monastic community in the Middle Ages. His work on religious architecture also included topics such as the tombs of the founders of churches or monasteries. This short introductory text cannot possibly

cover all areas of Marko Popović's wide-ranging scholarly work, but it should be noted that he also made a contribution in the field of sigillography and, especially, heraldry.

Owing to his exceptionally broad erudition and archaeological talent Marko Popović was able to open new avenues of research, going beyond the boundaries of conventional archaeological method. Apart from impeccably kept excavation records, on which he always insisted, this involved the competent use of historic cartographic sources, and the analysis of structural remains, which was one of his fortes. His understanding of architectural space and skilful reading of frequently meagre structural remains, combined with a meticulous stratigraphic approach, resulted in many axonometric reconstructions typically enriching his texts. Comprehensively knowledgeable about art history as well, even his master's thesis offered a pioneering comparative analysis of archaeological remains and their visual representations in frescoes in medieval churches, establishing a link that would prove its importance particularly in the flourishing decades of the study of medieval Serbian religious architecture. Marko Popović's interdisciplinary approach involved the use of aerial photography, large-format stereophotogrammetric plans and geophysical surveys in the Belgrade Fortress area even before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, when such techniques were still a rarity in the country's archaeology. It should also be noted that he gave impetus to early archaeozoological studies of the finds from the Ras Fortress. But the part of his legacy that stands out for its beneficial impact is that he was instrumental in introducing the distinctive system of processing and studying archaeological pottery that has for decades now been standard practice at the Research Centre for the Belgrade Fortress.

A particularly important aspect of Marko Popović's archaeological work was that he as a rule crowned his research by publication, frequently in the form of insightful monographs. Although the sole author in most cases, he was never ill-disposed towards co-authorship, being aware, as a true leader, of the necessity of teamwork and interdisciplinarity. His impressive bibliography, provided in this volume, will introduce the interested reader to his fruitful archaeological work in more detail.

In his fifty-year-long career Marko Popović held various professional and social positions. He served as president of the Serbian Archaeological Society (1987–1990), president of the Managing Board of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade (until 2010) and chaired the Ministry of Culture's Committee on Monuments of Outstanding Importance and Serbian Cultural Assets Abroad (2008–2013). At the time of death, he was editor-in-chief of the journal *Heritage* and the *Singidunum* series, editor of the annual of the National Museum in Belgrade, *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja*, member of the editorial board of the journal *Saopštenja/Communications*, and member of the Committee on the History of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He also made a considerable contribution in his capacity as member of the editorial board of the journals *Novopazarski Zbornik* (1982–2007) and *Starinar* (1997–2016), and of the Monographs series of the Institute of Archaeology.

His scholarly work and overall achievement in the preservation and presentation of the Serbian cultural heritage earned him prestigious awards. He was a three-time recipient of the October Award of the City of Belgrade: 1974, 1976 (collective) and 1983; of the 2005 April Award of the City of Belgrade (with Vesna Bikić); of the 1989 S. Penezić Krcun Award of the City of Užice; and the 1985 Award of the City of Novi Pazar. In February 2018 he was awarded the Order of the Crown 1<sup>st</sup> Class, and in 2019 the Order of Sretenje 3<sup>rd</sup> Class for Distinguished Contributions in Culture.

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Marko Popović was reputed to be a dedicated, energetic and authoritative archaeologist, and his demanding nature preceded him. Unconceivable to many in earlier times and even more so today, his iron work discipline and careful management of resources, which could best be seen during fieldwork, often brought a smile to the faces of his colleagues. Working with him was a challenge in many ways but, at the end of the day, the results were always there, well founded and indisputable. And he generously shared his knowledge and assisted his colleagues in all situations and under all circumstances. It is with great pride and gratitude that we can say that Marko Popović created a recognisable school within the Institute of Archaeology. Quite early in his career he became a synonym for Serbian medieval archaeology, and a role model for many colleagues both in the country and in the region. And he remained one by virtue of his broad knowledge, exceptional motivation, efficiency and outstanding research talent.

With this volume dedicated to Marko Popović we pay homage to his insatiable spirit of inquiry.

*Editors*



## Jumping on the dunes: Venice and the Myth of Origin

**Sauro GELICHI**

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### **An acorn is not an oak**

“Le chêne naît du gland. Mais chêne il devient et demeure seulement s’il rencontre des conditions de milieu favorables, lesquelles ne relèvent plus de l’embryologie”.<sup>1</sup> In discussing the Myth of Origin, to which the great French historian associated the metaphor regarding the acorn and the oak, Marc Bloch claimed that this problem was an obsession of those who dealt with history and that “dans le vocabulaire courant, les origines sont un commencement qui explique. Pis encore : qui suffit à expliquer”.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as Montanari rightly points out, “qui sta l’ambiguità, qui il pericolo: confondere una filiazione con una spiegazione. Perché una ghianda non è una quercia”.<sup>3</sup>

An amazing city like Venice could not help but be influenced by the Myth of Origin. Precisely because the city is not of Roman origin, but was established in an unspecified period during the Early Middle Ages, its origins proved not only to be a problem for the Venetians themselves (when they wished to reconstruct their past), but also for those who, over time, had had connections with Venice: “Venezia Origini” (The Origins of Venice), for example, is the title of a famous and rather influential book, published by Wladimiro Dorigo in 1983<sup>4</sup> and, even, “Il Mito delle Origini” (The

<sup>1</sup> M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l’histoire ou Métier d’historien*, Paris 1952<sup>2</sup>, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> M. Montanari, *Il mito delle origini. Breve storia degli spaghetti al pomodoro*, Bari – Roma 2019, 3.

Myth of Origin) referring to a more recent publication on Venetian chronicles.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, while speaking of the history of Venice, Michael McCormick claimed that “origin” is a process, not a single point in time”.<sup>6</sup> Yet if the origins are rightly considered to be a process and if, even more rightly so, Venice “was not founded by a king”,<sup>7</sup> it is questionable whether history or, better still, archaeology are capable of reconstructing this process: in other words, of establishing times, methods and, above all, reasons that resulted in a location that was almost deserted and rather unsuitable to choose as a settlement that subsequently would become a city. It is believed that it should be necessary to give an affirmative answer to this question, yet the way in which this should be done remains of paramount importance. In this article, how this was carried out, what results were achieved and what should be done in the future will be briefly discussed.

### Venice and the Myth of Origin

In discussing the processes that led to the foundation of the city, the majority of historiographies simply followed the reasons behind and the periods mentioned in the historical narrative sources, starting from the most ancient of these, the *Istoria Veneticorum*,<sup>8</sup> or the *Chronicon Altinate*, even when these sources (or parts of them) have been openly considered to be false or, in part, without historical foundation.<sup>9</sup> Prominent among these texts, for example, is one that mentions a more detailed episode that directly refers to the location where Venice was founded, and the fleeing

hordes of the people of Padua towards the archipelago of Rialto, around the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (“[Patavini]... decreverunt urbem portualem et refugialem construere circa hostia fluvii Realti, ubi dicitur Rivus altus”).<sup>10</sup>

Generally speaking, these texts tend to give credence to the idea of the transfer of populations from the ancient cities on the mainland to the lagoon, in fear of the barbarians, also establishing relationships which were of a rather mechanical nature: from Padua to Metamauco (or Rialto itself, as has been seen), from Altino to Torcello, and from Concordia to Caorle.<sup>11</sup> Beyond an accurate analysis of the written documents that refer to these issues, aptly subjected to attentive philological criticism, the fact remains that these narratives appear to overlap the Myth of Origin with the archetype of myths about migration: moreover, stories dating back to ancient times and the Middle Ages contain a plethora of these. In this specific case, they are also used to explain, in a rather simple way, the origin of a city that is difficult to classify, such as Venice. In this way, the most attentive historians certainly noticed the trap that was hidden behind these texts (and, in some cases, they also avoided it). However, the explanations they adhered to ended up being the updated, historically justified, versions of those narratives: narratives, therefore, that are not rejected, but regenerated in order to make them plausible for critical modernity.

However, Venetian mythography also has other stereotypes that refer to original ‘characteristics’, that would have represented distinguishing features of the

<sup>4</sup> W. Dorigo, *Venezia Origini. Ipotesi e ricerche sulla formazione della città*, Milano 1983; Another text on Venice that contains the word “origins” in its title is: A. Carile, G. Fedalto, *Le origini di Venezia*, Bologna 1978.

<sup>5</sup> S. Marin, *Il mito delle origini. La cronachistica veneziana e la mitologia politica della città lagunare nel Medio Evo*, Ariccia 2017.

<sup>6</sup> M. McCormick, *Where do trading towns come from? Early medieval Venice and the northern emporia*, in: *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*. Vol. 1. The Heirs of the Roman West, ed. J. Henning, Berlin – New York 2007, 42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>8</sup> This is a text attributed to a certain John the Deacon, ambassador of Duke Peter II Orseolo (991–1008), in his relationships with the Emperor Otto III and, therefore, written at the beginning of the year 1000: L. A. Berto, *Introduzione*, in: *Giovanni Diacono Istoria Veneticorum*, a cura di L. A. Berto, Bologna 1999, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Another very important work dating back to this period is one written by Costantino Porfirogenito: G. P. Bognetti, *Natura, politica e religioni nelle origini di Venezia*, in: *Le origini di Venezia*, Firenze 1964, 3–34; a painstaking work of the de-structurisation of such sources can be attributed, in particular, to G. Cessi, *Venezia ducale, I. Duca e popolo*, Venezia 1963.

<sup>10</sup> *Documenti relativi alla storia di Venezia anteriori al Mille, I, Secoli V–IX*, a cura di R. Cessi, Padova 1942, doc. I, 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> C. La Rocca, *Città scomparse in area veneta nell'alto medioevo: dati archeologici, fonti scritte e memoria storiografica*, in: *L'Adriatico dalla Tarda Antichità all'età carolingia*, Atti del convegno di studio, Brescia 11–13 ottobre 2001, a cura di G. P. Brogiolo, P. Delogo, Firenze 2005, 287–307.

lagoon populations. One of these ‘characteristics’ could be recognised in isolation, which would have generated what could be defined as the Myth of ‘wild origin’, echoes of which can even be found in a hugely famous letter written by Cassiodorus, dating back to between 537 and 538.<sup>12</sup>

As may be understood, the complexity of the processes that led to what we can define as the colonisation of the lagoon, over time became differently configured (and with different political and cultural aims). In addition to this series of explanations, there was also what could be defined as the Myth of Roman origin. Last century was characterised by different moments in which this myth punctually re-appeared. Gaetano Marzemin resumed and re-contextualised it in 1937, in a publication that was just as famous as it was criticised and soon afterwards forgotten.<sup>13</sup> Wladimiro Dorigo went back to discuss this in the 1980s, with many other, more founded, topics,<sup>14</sup> which inevitably attracted strong criticism.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the theme of Roman origins in the lagoon area runs subterraneously through almost all recent archaeological literature: a distance is kept (in some cases) from scientific bodies and newspaper articles, however (almost always), in different moments and on various occasions, it is not possible to resist its appeal.<sup>16</sup>

### Peach stones

Recently, and following an extremely intense period of archaeological excavation, the problem has been faced once again. More specifically, two contributions have revived the discussion regarding the origins of Venice, with some other analytical data. The first of these can be attributed to Albert Ammerman (who has been involved in the Venetian archaeological field for several years),<sup>17</sup> who wrote it in collaboration with other scholars,<sup>18</sup> while the second, also a co-authored article, was written by researchers who have worked in Venice for years and who have resumed and critically analysed that text.<sup>19</sup> In a scientific context where archaeological articles generally dealing with Rialto-based themes are relatively rare, this presents an opportunity to be seized upon in order to discuss not only the topic of origins but, above all, archaeological research.

The first of these works consists of three new examples of 14C dating, placeable between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, which include two peach stones deriving from core boring activities carried out during the filling of a canal beneath St Mark’s basilica. Subsequently, these new datings have been correlated with other data collected previously, also from core boring activities, however, this time carried out close

<sup>12</sup> Cassiodoro, *Variae*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, rec. T. Mommsen, Berlin 1894, II, 24. In this text, an almost all-encompassing vision of the lagoon society is given. In fact, the inhabitants of these locations, literally almost entirely lived on fish, which was their wealth (*Habitatoribus igitur una copia est, ut solis piscibus expleantur*) together with salt (*In salinis autem exercendis tota contentio est*). With regard to this text, see G. Luzzato, *L’economia veneziana nei suoi rapporti con la politica nell’alto medio evo*, in: *Le origini di Venezia*, Firenze 1964, 145–146.

<sup>13</sup> G. Marzemin, *Le origini romane di Venezia*, Venezia 1937.

<sup>14</sup> W. Dorigo, *Venezia Origini*.

<sup>15</sup> In some cases also considered to have been rather ungenerous towards him, such as the review written by L. Bosio, *Note per una propedeutica allo studio storico della laguna veneta in età romana*, *Atti dell’Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 142/1983 (1984) 95–126. Critical observations regarding these positions were also provided by historians in the Middle Ages and Late Antiquity, such as A. Carile, *Il problema delle origini di Venezia*, in: *Le origini della Chiesa di Venezia*, Venezia 1987, 83, n. 17, and L. Cracco Ruggini, *Acque e lagune da periferia del mondo a fulcro di una nuova “civiltas”*, in: *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, I. L’età ducale, a cura di L. Cracco Ruggini, M. Pavan, G. Cracco, G. Ortalli, Roma 1992, 21, 38.

<sup>16</sup> S. Gelichi, *L’archeologia nella laguna veneziana e la nascita di una nuova città*, *Reti Medievali Rivista* XI/2010 (2011) 137–138.

<sup>17</sup> A. J. Ammerman, M. De Min, R. Housley, *New evidence on the origins of Venice*, *Antiquity* 66 (1992) 913–916; A. J. Ammerman, M. De Min, R. Housley, C. E. McClennen, *More on the origins of Venice*, *Antiquity* 69 (1995) 501–510; A. J. Ammerman, C. E. McClennen, M. De Min, R. Housley, *Sea-level change and the archaeology of early Venice*, *Antiquity* 73 (1999) 305–312; A. J. Ammerman, C. E. McClennen, *Venice before San Marco. Recent studies on the origins of the city*, Hamilton (NY) 2001; A. J. Ammerman, *Venice before the Grand Canal*, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 48 (2003) 141–158.

<sup>18</sup> A. J. Ammerman, C. L. Pearson, P. I. Kuniholm, B. Selleck, E. Vio, *Beneath the Basilica of San Marco: new light on the origins of Venice*, *Antiquity* 91 (2017) 1620–1629.

<sup>19</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence of early settlement in Venice: a comment on A. J. Ammerman et al. (2017)*, *Antiquity* 92 (2018) 1640–1649.

to St Mark's basilica and its adjacent square (including the Biblioteca Marciana). The overall conclusion is that there is a certain chronological coherence between all these datings. Such a chronological coherence makes it possible to suggest the theory that the area around what would later become St Mark's chapel could have been permanently occupied between the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The two peach stones, in addition to providing a high resolution chronology (therefore "a new level of chronological refinement for early Venice"),<sup>20</sup> would have been found "in the context of an anthropic sediment".<sup>21</sup> The final result would confirm a different temporality of the occupation of the lagoon: the central area (where the Rialto archipelago can be found) would have been

permanently colonised at a later date in the northern part of the lagoon (where archaeological traces relating to earlier permanent occupations have been documented). In any case, chronologies regarding a permanent settlement, at least in the area of what was to be the future St Mark's square, should be brought forward by a century compared to the traditional data (the transfer of the location of Doge's Palace in 810 as well as the arrival of the Saint's relics in 828).<sup>22</sup>

These results, driven by the presence of the peach stones, have had a certain degree of luck in the mass media but they have been, at least in part, corrected, or better still, incorporated into the second contribution mentioned. This latter article constitutes an appropriate opportunity for bibliographic integration;<sup>23</sup> it also



**Map 1.** Modern Venice, showing sites with 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century settlement evidence and (dashed line) the axis of early development proposed by A. J. Ammerman (after: J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, fig. 1)

**Карта 1.** Савремена Венеција, назначени су локалитети са насеобинским траговима 7. и 8. века и оса раног развоја (испрекидана линија) према предлогу А. Ј. Амермана (према: J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, fig. 1)



adds new references to 14C (and dendrochronological) datings from other sites in the city (expanding, therefore, the case study); and finally, it introduces some brief references to the results of the excavation campaigns that have been carried out in the city over the past thirty years (Map 1). The conclusion reached is much more cautious than the one envisaged in the first article. There is no definite proof that there was a permanent presence in the location that was to become Venice prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, even if “the dated land reclamation structures demonstrate extensive settlement activity in Venice during the seventh to eighth century”:<sup>24</sup> therefore, “a plausible scenario is that much of the area between Rialto, San Polo, San Marco and Castello was first settled in the middle third of the seventh century AD”.<sup>25</sup> Thus, a conclusion was reached that, in essence, is not much different, except for its topographic scale, to that proposed by Ammerman et al. Therefore, is this a case of “much ado about nothing”?

These two articles are, in any case, of paramount importance, for at least two good reasons. The first is that fresh archaeological data is published, even if of a punctiform nature. The second is that this data is discussed within its topographic context. Ammerman was one of the few, apart from Dorigo,<sup>26</sup> to use results

of archaeological research (in particular always deriving from core boring activities) to propose a reconstruction of the inhabited space of the lagoon, more specifically, of the archipelago of Rialto. In 2003, he published an article in which he proposed a new, and in certain respects, captivating interpretation of the primitive Rialto settlement.<sup>27</sup> This settlement was probably not built around the Canal Grande (as it is today), but along another canal (today no longer existing) that flowed in the north, consistent with the position of the most ancient churches. Moreover, this reconstruction would have enhanced the value of the site of Olivolo, the Episcopal see that became rather peripheral compared to the centre consisting of the Palatine complex adjacent to St Mark’s basin as from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Although this hypothesis was criticised precisely on the basis of the uncertain chronology of the foundation of the churches,<sup>28</sup> it seems to have become increasingly less credible when specifically considering the new data produced in the second of the articles that we have discussed on this occasion.<sup>29</sup>

Over 1,200 excavations have been carried out in Venice during the past thirty years.<sup>30</sup> It is rather disconcerting that the only attempts to interpret the initial stages of the Rialto settlement are almost exclusively

<sup>20</sup> A. J. Ammerman, C. L. Pearson, P. I. Kuniholm, B. Selleck, E. Vio, *Beneath the Basilica of San Marco*, 1625.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1623.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1626–1628.

<sup>23</sup> In fact, it is surprising how in A. J. Ammerman, C. L. Pearson, P. I. Kuniholm, B. Selleck, E. Vio, *Beneath the Basilica of San Marco*, the archaeological bibliography (moreover reduced to essential self-referentiality) also lacks references to texts that discuss chronologies obtained from 14C base: J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1641.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1641, 1646.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1647.

<sup>26</sup> W. Dorigo, *Venezia Origini*. Along with the text written by Dorigo (*Venezia Origini*), the works written by Ernesto Canal are, at the very least, worthy of note (to whom Dorigo himself owed a great deal due to the archaeological information received), recently collected in E. Canal, *Archeologia della laguna di Venezia 1960–2010*, Venezia 2015.

<sup>27</sup> A. J. Ammerman, *Venice before the Grand Canal*.

<sup>28</sup> Thanks go to Fulvio Baudo for his new revision of the chronologies of the Venetian religious buildings. He noted how the structures that had been traditionally considered to be more ancient were those that had a greater difference between the date of the first certain document that refers to it, and that of the foundation, generally accepted on the basis of historical-narrative sources: F. Baudo, *Stato degli studi, linee di ricerca e prospettive future per l’archeologia dell’edilizia religiosa altomedievale nella laguna di Venezia*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Venezia 2004. This data has been used for some time in order to discuss Ammerman’s hypothesis: S. Gelichi, *La storia di una nuova città attraverso l’archeologia: Venezia nell’alto medioevo*, in: *Three empires, three cities: identity, material culture and legitimacy in Venice, Ravenna and Rome, 750–1000*, ed. V. West-Harling, Turnhout 2015, 57–59.

<sup>29</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1646: radiometric data referring to other parts of the city are published in this article. Such datings would demonstrate a more or less coeval occupation of most of the archipelago. This data is obviously of great interest and must be taken into due consideration. However, the number of these archaeological documents is insufficient and they are still too insignificant to be able to describe the characteristics of such occupations (see *infra*, 4).

<sup>30</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1644.

based on core boring activities, which were, however, carried out for 'other' aims and not for archaeological purposes. It is true that these can help us "to begin to understand the location, timing and direction of spread of the first settlement of this historic centre",<sup>31</sup> but they are not capable of revealing much more. Indeed, precisely their reduced number, their often random relocation, the limited nature of the analysable sediments and, finally, the degree of reliability of the individual cores, further reduce not only our ability to understand the processes but, above all, to explain them. Obviously, it is almost certain that the Romans rarely passed through these areas, confirming what has been said for some time now about the Roman nature of the lagoon.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, it is almost certain that a good part of the Rialto archipelago must have been intensely colonised no earlier than the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Yet the archipelago is huge and the forms and ways to occupy it still remain unclear. For example, these articles that have been taken into consideration lack the discussion regarding one of the few excavations published (albeit in a preliminary form), or rather the one in San Pietro di Castello, carried out towards the end of the 1980s.<sup>33</sup> Ammerman makes a brief reference to this to dispute that the chronology proposed by Tuzzato (5<sup>th</sup> century) for the early occupations of that site "is no longer accepted", even if the archaeological objects coming from the excavation are almost entirely unprocessed and the objections to this chronology come from excavations that were just as unpublished.<sup>34</sup> Almost nothing (the sequence of the first excavation in St Peter's basilica has at least been published) against nothing (the new excavations near the basili-

ca), one might say. Yet, in this way, any other obstacles are removed: *and tout se tient*. However, the fact is that today Olivolo is, as mentioned previously, in a more marginal space compared to the heart of the city: but it probably was not like this in the Early Middle Ages. Written sources must always be taken with a pinch of salt, however, there should be no reason to doubt that, right on this islet on the margins of the archipelago, the Episcopal see of Olivolo was established (in around 775–776), the most ancient lagoon Episcopal see together with the one in Grado. Prior to the transfer of the ducal seat in 810, therefore, this was the only area of the archipelago where such an institution was present.<sup>35</sup> The (final?) answer should obviously be left to the study of materials (and therefore a re-examination of the contexts) regarding the chronology of the sequence of San Pietro di Castello, however the archaeological data currently available (and above all its nature and quality) urges caution in generalising homogeneous settlement profiles for the entire archipelago and, together with these, to hypothesise unambiguous reasons (in addition to times and methods).<sup>36</sup>

### Should the origins be forgotten?

Venetian archaeology, only a little of which has been published over the past thirty years, seems to be more prone to synthesis than analysis. In 2006 (with data processed in 2004), I published a chart from which it emerged that, with regard to the many excavations carried out, there was an inadequate number of corresponding publications.<sup>37</sup> Fifteen years later, the number of excavations had definitely increased; how-

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 1646.

<sup>32</sup> S. Gelichi, M. Ferri, C. Moine, *Venezia e la laguna tra IX e X secolo: strutture materiali, insediamenti, economie*, in: I tempi del consolidamento. Venezia, l'Adriatico e l'entroterra tra IX e X secolo, a cura di S. Gasparri, S. Gelichi, Turnhout 2017, 82–85.

<sup>33</sup> S. Tuzzato, *Venezia. Gli scavi a San Pietro di Castello (Olivolo). Nota preliminare sulle campagne 1986–1989*, Quaderni di Archeologia del Veneto 7 (1991) 92–103.

<sup>34</sup> A. J. Ammerman, C. L. Pearson, P. I. Kuniholm, B. Selleck, E. Vio, *Beneath the Basilica of San Marco*, 1627 write: "Most recently, Marco Bortoletto returned to the area of the site where Tuzzato dug, took the excavation to a greater depth and demonstrated that the oldest levels date to no earlier than the sixth century AD (Bortoletto personal communication)."

<sup>35</sup> W. Diacono, *Istoria* II, 19: "... undecimo sui ducatus [implied Duke Mauricius] anno apud Olivolensem insulam apostolica auctoritate novum episcopatum fore decrevit..."

<sup>36</sup> Regardless of the correct chronology of the initial stages of occupation recognised at the excavation site, it is certain that this has highlighted levels of use with materials prior to the date of the foundation of the Episcopal see (that is in the third quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century). It is an aspect that could make it easier to understand the true function of this island, which must have had to carry out an important public role even long before the arrival of the bishop. This problem was covered extensively in S. Gelichi, *La storia*, 72–78.

ever, the number of publications relating to such did not do likewise. The number of fully (or almost entirely) published excavations is still extremely low.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, however, there is a greater number of preliminary reports, with varying degrees of elaboration even if, generally speaking, they are limited to only a few pages each. In order to obtain an idea of the archaeology carried out more recently in Venice (and in the Rialto archipelago), it is necessary to refer to texts of a more general and popular nature.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, at the moment, it is not possible to have direct access to those that have recently been described as raw data or grey literature.<sup>40</sup> On the contrary, there is no shortage of summary attempts, on different specific themes: housing, Venetian wells, canal bank containment systems, the landscape and food.<sup>41</sup>

The lack of funds available for post-excavation analysis and publications<sup>42</sup> is a justification that can be shared only in part. The main problem lies in the fact that archaeology in Venice, thus far, has not been a “well-oriented” kind of archaeology. Even the emergency situation could be better managed and addressed and the accumulation of data (that still has not been published) makes sense only to the extent that this data is used within the context of a project, which, to date, appears to be lacking. However, there is another aspect to be taken into consideration. Archaeological data, in the very few cases in which it is used on the interpretation-side of settlement processes, relates to stereotypes (one of the most frequent is that which refers to the Roman nature of the lagoon) or it tends to comply with traditional historical readings regarding

<sup>37</sup> In 2000, about a hundred excavations were carried out. Information taken from: L. Fozzati, M. Bortoletto, L. Anglani, M. Minini, *Archeologia delle fondamenta veneziane*, in: “Tra due elementi sospesa”. Venezia, costruzione di un paesaggio urbano, a cura di E. Concina, Venezia 2000, 135. However, in 2004 it was possible to access only 35 of them, since no information had been published regarding the others. The results of that study (including the charts) can be found in S. Gelichi, *Venezia tra archeologia e storia: la costruzione di un'identità urbana*, in: *Le città italiane tra la Tarda Antichità e l'Alto Medioevo*, a cura di A. Augenti, Firenze 2006, 156–163.

<sup>38</sup> Remaining in the archipelago of Rialto, the final editions regarding the excavation of Ca' Vendramin Calergi are worthy of note (yet with a certain benevolence): L. Fozzati (a cura di), *Ca' Vendramin Calergi, Archeologia urbana lungo il Canal Grande di Venezia*, Venezia 2006. Recently, a study has also been published relating to the excavation carried out on the nearby island of Murano: F. Cozza (a cura di), *Vicende stratificate a Murano: un susseguirsi di sedimentazioni naturali e antropiche nell'area ex Conterie*, Padua 2016 (Monograph issue of the journal *Archeologia Veneta* XXXVII 2014), and a volume on the archaeological research carried out in San Giacomo in Paludo: M. Ferri, C. Moine, *L'isola di domani. Cultura materiale e contesti archeologici a San Giacomo in Paludo*, Firenze 2014; and the study on the work on the most recent archaeological interventions carried out in San Lorenzo di Ammiana: S. Gelichi, C. Moine (a cura di), *Isole fortunate? La storia della laguna nord di Venezia attraverso lo scavo di San Lorenzo di Ammiana*, *Archeologia Medievale* XXXIX (2012) 9–56, can be added to this list, even if these are excavations that have been carried out on islands in the northern part of the lagoon. With regards to the southern part of the archipelago, the publication relating to the excavations carried out in the area of the monastery of San Benedetto di Gambarare in Mira: C. Moine, E. Corrà, S. Primon, *Paesaggi artificiali a Venezia. Archeologia e geologia nelle terre del monastero di Sant'Ilario tra alto Medioevo ed Età Moderna*, Firenze 2017, is worthy of note; moreover, always referring to the southern part of the lagoon, the preliminary studies on the excavations and research on the island of Malamocco are to be noted: L. Fozzati, C. Pizzinato (a cura di), *Malamocco. Studi di archeologia lagunare e navale*, Venezia 2008. A unique case is represented by the island of Torcello, where archaeological excavations have been carried out since the 1960s, a part of which, to date, has been fully published: L. Lecejewicz, E. Tabaczyńska, S. Tabaczyński, *Torcello. Scavi 1961–1962*, Rome 1977; L. Lecejewicz (a cura di), *Torcello. Nuove ricerche archeologiche*, Rome 2000, or at least partially published: L. Fozzati (a cura di), *Torcello scavata. Patrimonio condiviso. Gli scavi 1995–2012*, Venezia 2014; D. Calaon, E. Zendri, G. Biscontin (a cura di), *Torcello scavata. Patrimonio condiviso. Lo scavo 2012–2013*, Venezia 2014.

<sup>39</sup> L. Fozzati, *Sotto Venezia. L'archeologia dimenticata*, Venezia 2011; L. Fozzati, A. Asta, *L'archeologia a Venezia*, Venezia 2014.

<sup>40</sup> M. L. Gualandi, *L'archeologia di fronte alla sfida dell'open data: il MOD-MAPPA Open Data archaeological archive*, in: *La democrazia della conoscenza. Patrimoni culturali, sistemi informativi e open data: accesso libero ai Beni Comuni?*, a cura di R. Auriemma, Udine 2017, 43–51.

<sup>41</sup> M. Bortoletto, *De canalibus, rivis, piscinisque: primi passi verso un'archeologia idronomastica veneziana*, in: “Tra due elementi sospesa”. Venezia, costruzione di un paesaggio urbano, a cura di E. Concina, Venezia 2000, 136–152; Idem, *Evidenze archeologiche di strutture per la lavorazione delle stoffe nella Venezia bassomedievale*, *Archeologia Veneta* 31 (2008) 237–249; Idem, *Archeologia e edilizia sulle rive del Canal Grande tra XII e XV secolo*, in: L. Fozzati (a cura di), *Ca' Vendramin Calergi, Archeologia urbana lungo il Canal Grande di Venezia*, Venezia 2006, 23–37; M. Bon, D. Busato, P. Sfameni (a cura di), *Forme del vivere in laguna. Archeologia, paesaggio, economia della Laguna di Venezia*, Venezia 2011; M. Bortoletto, *Venezia: sistemi costruttivi delle “cisterne alla veneziana” dal tardo medioevo all'epoca moderna*, *Antichità Alto Adriatiche* LXX (2011) 193–203.

<sup>42</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1644.

migrations. In short, even archaeology in Venice cannot escape, with only a few exceptions, from what could be defined as confirmatory or decorative archaeology: a kind of archaeology that supports what the written sources have left behind or at most, provides its visible version. Thus, even those contributions that aim to deal with general themes, do so by following the traces left behind by written sources (aside from the chronicles, very few of these date back to before the year 1000). Therefore, the problem regarding origins returns, formulated within the context of an already existing programme, to which, at most, a few missing pieces, a few small, insignificant integrations, can be added, just as Venetian historiography, even the most recent and with a few rare exceptions, has done.<sup>43</sup>

Archaeology of this type is of little use. Paradoxically, recovering all the unpublished material stored in warehouses and archives (and there is a great deal) would also actually be a useful activity to perform, although it would definitely be a long and expensive way to achieve significant results and, therefore, it would not only trace a new, more coherent path relating to the initial stages of the lagoon settlement, but it would also provide a plausible explanation. We must not forget the origins, but we must definitely re-examine them, both from an epistemological and a planning standpoint.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance to provide an answer, not only, to the questions *when* and *where*, but also, and above all, *how* and *why*. Many randomly performed, unpublished excavations are of no use to us, while a different kind of archaeology could prove to be a very useful tool for this purpose, as the archaeological tool is also capable of producing new

sources and, therefore, has a constantly increasing heuristic potential. Land reclamations are, unquestionably, a tangible, if not the only, sign of the existence of a permanent settlement<sup>44</sup> and, undoubtedly, its progress can also be followed, with regard to more recent times, through written sources,<sup>45</sup> while for those of a more ancient nature, by cross-referencing different types of data.<sup>46</sup> However, also in this case, the finity and precision of the data available (with the exception of very few cases, such as that regarding the Ca' Foscari site)<sup>47</sup> still prevents us from having a clear idea of the methods and time in which these land reclamations took place. Moreover, without prejudice to a probable colonisation of the Rialto archipelago that took place later when compared to the northern part of the lagoon (while, to date, almost nothing is known about the southern part of the lagoon), this data cannot be generalised but, above all, it should not be extended, in terms of timing, to the entire insular complex.

However, these are precisely the reasons that lead communities of individuals to permanently occupy these lands, and which remain *sub iudice*. In fact, certain (although interesting) data of an archaeobotanical nature that would indicate the presence of “gardens and orchards” on the Palazzo Papadopoli site, is not sufficient to establish that “this settlement was rural in nature”.<sup>48</sup> In fact, those who chose to live in these locations, regardless of the reasons that had driven them to do so, had, in any case, to guarantee themselves the possibility to stock up on water and foodstuffs directly on site.

The research discussed more extensively in this circumstance proves to be useful in finding a solution

<sup>43</sup> In contrast to some of the works written by S. Gasparri: *Venezia tra i secoli VIII e IX. Una riflessione sulle fonti*, in: Studi offerti a Gaetano Cozzi, a cura di G. Ortalli, G. Scarabello, Venezia 1992, 3–38; Idem, *Venezia fra l'Italia bizantina e il regno italico: la civitas e l'assemblea*, in: Venezia. Itinerari per la Storia della città, a cura di S. Gasparri, G. Levi, P. Moro, Bologna 1997, 61–82; Idem, *The formation of an early medieval community. Venice between provincial and urban identity*, in: Three Empires, three cities: identity, material culture and legitimacy in Venice, Ravenna and Rome, 750–1000, ed. V. West-Harling, Turnhout 2015, 35–50.

<sup>44</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1647.

<sup>45</sup> Reclamation works are expressly referred to in *Istoria Veneticorum* relating to Duke Ursus Particiaco: W. Diacono, *Istoria III*, 19: “*Temporibus cuius in Rivoalto etiam paludes cultandi homines licenciam habuerunt et domos edificandi contra orientem*”.

<sup>46</sup> As in S. Gelichi, M. Ferri, C. Moine, *Venezia e la laguna*, 91–96 and 126–128.

<sup>47</sup> L. Fozzati, R. Cester, *L'archeologia d'emergenza nelle operazioni di restauro: la cronaca del cantiere di Ca' Foscari*, in: Ca' Foscari. Storia e restauro del palazzo dell'Università di Venezia, a cura di G. M. Pilo, L. De Rossi, D. Alessandri, F. Zuanier, Venezia 2005, 188–199.

<sup>48</sup> J. Meadows, N. Martinelli, L. Fozzati, *Archaeological evidence*, 1647.

to the *where* and *when*, yet is less effective in explaining *how* and, above all, *why*. Thus, also in this circumstance, modern and scientifically impeccable analytical procedures are not (and, perhaps, cannot be) used to explain the reasons that led to the colonisation of the emerged lands of Rialto, or, when this does occur, they are employed to provide traditional explanations that have been simply tarred with a touch of modernity.<sup>49</sup>

Geo-archaeological research is still a little-used tool, although it is indispensable in archaeology, from many points of view. It is, together with coring, which cannot substitute excavation, a quicker and more economic means that can explain some problems and, above all, help to better plan future scientific research, with the caveat, however, that “an acorn is not an oak” and a “peach stone is not a peach tree”.

<sup>49</sup> This is the case of A. J. Ammerman, C. L. Pearson, P. I. Kuniholm, B. Selleck, E. Vio, *Beneath the Basilica of San Marco*, 1626–1628.

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**Скакање по динама: Венеција и мит о њеном пореклу**

У чланку се износи критичка анализа истраживачке стратегије и праксе венецијанске археологије током последњих деценија. Прилику за осврт пружиле су скорашње публикације, које су донеле нове податке о историји и пореклу града. У тим чланцима се објављују резултати испитивања историјског центра Венеције, нарочито у области Ријалта (Св. Марко), изведених бушењем низова геосонди ради утврђивања почетка сталног насељавања на том простору. Иако ти подаци пружају тек истачкану просторну слику, па је на основу њих тешко тумачити некадашњу функцију испитаних делова града, они дају ваљана хронолошка упоришта. Временски распон од 7. до 8. века упућује на позније насељавање овог дела залива у односу на поселање његовог северног краја. Важност остварених сазнања, међутим, не може да надомести мањак стратегије архео-

лошких истраживања центра Венеције и јасно одређених циљева, што се најјасније огледа у непланираним ископавањима, непостојању кохерентног општег пројекта, насумичним резултатима и, пре свега, њиховој публикацији.

Иако нам подаци из геосонди омогућавају да прецизније утврдимо време насељавања архипелага, они не пружају одговоре на питања зашто и како се то догодило. Исходи испитивања геосондама су пак у споменутих чланцима повезани са „традиционалним објашњењима” која су, као што је познато, настала у специфичној политичкој и културној клими Венеције с краја 10. века, када је ваљало реконструисати кредитилну прошлост града.

*Превео Иван Бујарски*

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## Saltando sulle dune: Venezia e il Mito delle Origini

L'articolo intende analizzare criticamente i modi e le strategie utilizzate nell'archeologia veneziana negli ultimi decenni. L'opportunità viene offerta da un paio di contributi recenti, che ritornano con nuovi dati sulla storia delle origini di questa città. Questi articoli analizzano una serie di carote, prelevate nel centro storico di Venezia, con la finalità di circoscrivere meglio le date di inizio di una occupazione stabile, in particolare nella zona di Rialto (San Marco). A parte che si tratta di dati puntiformi e difficili da interpretare sul piano della funzionalità degli spazi a cui si riferiscono, le cronologie che forniscono sono utili. Tali cronologie si collocano tra il VII e l'VIII secolo, dimostrando dunque un più tardo processo di colonizzazione di questa parte della laguna, rispetto a quanto avvenuto nella zona nord della medesima. La bontà di questi

risultati, però, non supplisce ad una mancanza di strategia complessiva nell'approccio archeologico al centro storico di Venezia, che resta fortemente carente sul piano delle finalità (scavi non programmati, assenza di un progetto complessivo coerente, casualità dei ritrovamenti) e, soprattutto, della divulgazione dei risultati. I dati provenienti dall'analisi di queste carote ci aiutano meglio a circoscrivere il momento in cui questo arcipelago venne colonizzato, ma non ci dicono assolutamente nulla sul perché e sul come avvenne. Infatti, negli studi sopra descritti, tali risultati vengono associati a quelle che possiamo definire 'spiegazioni storiche tradizionali', come noto maturate all'interno di uno specifico clima politico e culturale (fine X secolo), in un momento cioè in cui Venezia aveva bisogno di ricostruire un suo plausibile pedigree.





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