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On the Death of Great Men: 
A Note on Doge Andrea Gritti

by Tracy E. Cooper

1. Introduction

Nicolò Barbarigo, the early biographer of doge Andrea Gritti (1455-1538), reported on the enjoyment that the bed-ridden Doge took in reading his own eulogy in advance of that final event as it was to be delivered by the most talented orator in Venice, Bernardo Navagero, “il più valente oratore di Venezia”, and how pleased he was to hear his praises celebrated by such an eloquent man: “di udir le sue lodi da quell’uomo eloquentissimo celebrate”. It seems entirely in character that a Doge who was known for his autocratic behavior would display a proactive concern for his posthumous image. Indeed,

* This is part of a larger study of the cultural landscape in the period of doge Andrea Gritti, a subject that loomed large in the 1980s when Tim Wardell and I were fortunate to first meet Ben and Judy Kohl in Venice, a city that we will always identify with their warm and generous presence. I would like to thank Alison Smith and Michael Knapton for their encouragement with this article, and Patricia Fortini Brown, Pallina Pavanini, Reinhold Mueller, and Piero Lucchi for their critical contributions to the study of the document appended here; any errors remain mine.

1 Barbarigo, 96-97; on the biography, see Cacciavillani. Literature on Gritti in Benzoni, 733-34. Translations and paraphrases are mine unless otherwise indicated.
the literal *imago* of any deceased Doge was an important state matter as ritual practice demonstrated. Edward Muir described the Venetian approach to the problem of the preservation of continuity of state in a republic upon the death of an elected prince, what he termed a “ceremonial dilemma, the most troublesome part of which involved the transfer of symbolic authority from one doge to another"². By the sixteenth century, Venice had long evolved elaborate ceremonial procedures to symbolically traverse this transition, such rituals included preparation and display of the body of the defunct for three days, and if it was not possible to adequately preserve it for this function (or if a private burial was desired) a simulacrum could be substituted³. The attached edition of the account (see Appendix) describes the rites for the death of Andrea Gritti from a manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr di Venezia⁴.

2. *Death of a Doge*

The advanced age of many Venetian Doges was often accompanied by aggravated complaints of health, and Andrea Gritti was no exception. He was elected Doge at the age of sixty-eight in 1523 and reigned for fifteen and one-half years, dying at age eighty-three. Gritti suffered from old age and infirmities from his active role in the campaigns of the Italian wars where he spent days in the saddle and nights camped in the field, as noted for example by Francesco Sansovino: “Ora il Principe fatto vecchio, & aggravato dale molestie della guerra”⁵. Also typical of the period, Gritti was a victim of gout, his feet described as being deformed by the severity of the disease, and his ill health had led him to contemplate abdication, although hostilities with the Turks had renewed his determination to remain in office⁶. It was as a war hero that Gritti would be positively remembered, for which he had earned “eternal fame”⁷.

Yet Gritti’s reputation on his death was ambiguous: if on the heels of a successful campaign in 1513 Marin Sanudo would proclaim him as the most prominent man of our country and the most worthy (“il primo homo della nostra patria e il più degno”), enemies at his election, such as Alvise Priuli, referred to him as a tyrant doge, “doxe tyran”⁸. Such ambiguity was frequently

² Muir, 262-63.
³ Few have surpassed Da Mosto, LV; for an influential overview, ibid., L-LVI; Muir, 263-89, on the implications of various dogal funeral procedures and rites.
⁴ Hereafter as BMCV, Ms. P.D. 398, no. 3.
⁵ Sansovino, 256.
⁶ Da Mosto, 242; Benzonì, 732, confirms the type of gout as *podagra*. Hopkins, 187, on its effects.
⁷ Sansovino, 256. See Finlay, 988-1031, for analysis of his military and political reputation.
mirrored in reports of the cause of death and/or condition of the body, attaching a moral weight to medical observations. Negative associations could be read into the physical state of two prior Doges, doge Agostino Barbarigo (1485-1501) and doge Leonardo Loredan (1501-1521), for opposing reasons. Barbarigo had been reviled for his cultivation of personal splendor, whereas Loredan was criticized for his dogal frugality. A report of the post-mortem examination of Loredan’s body alluded to such attitudes in the connotations of what was found in the process of eviscerating the internal organs preparatory to embalming:

June 23, 1521 An important item should be made known: the day before yesterday in the evening, the doge was cut open so that his intestines could be removed and he could be embalmed. Although he is extremely thin, his intestines were found to be full of fat because he ate only refined foods. Item: they found a black stone in his liver. Similarly, a white stone was found in ser Augustin Barbarigo, the previous doge. Item: they found a stone in his bladder, even though this doge never had kidney stones, or pain from stones.

The frugality associated with Loredan is indicated by his thinness; the attribution of fatty deposits to refined foods constitutes a critique of what otherwise might be considered an ascetic virtue. Moral contrast between the doges Loredan and Barbarigo is reinforced by the polarity in the color of stones found. Rehabilitation of the physical corpse for the tense period of interregnum was a crucial phase in the ceremonial process. It also constituted initial coalescence around what would become the official historical memory of the defunct Doge: recognition of the individual merged with the office for purposes of associating personal virtù with the state, while asserting the terminal humanity of the officeholder versus the enduring sovereignty of dogeship.

Reports of Gritti’s end were ambivalent as to the exact cause, but centered on his appetite. Gout, of course, carries with it implications of excess. Even his admiring biographer commented on the quantity and quality of his table. On the one hand, Gritti’s death was attributed to an excessive quantity of fish eaten for Christmas eve – eel prepared on a spit, according to the research of Andrea Da Mosto, who, however also cites Paolo Giovio as having stated the cause instead to be distress caused by a simple dish of bean soup, an explanation that has been given less credit than the former, more dramatic, reason for his demise. The appended document, however, is more neutral in its account,

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9 Muir, 227, compares the findings of the inquisitors of the Doge for each.
11 Compare the earlier report by Sanudo, 1969, 4:113, 20 September 1501, on the death of doge Agostino Barbarigo, “Or el corpo fu aperto, de more, e trovato nel figado una piera, ch’ è stata caxon di la infermità soa longa”.
12 Barbarigo, 115-16; translation in Hopkins, 194 and 197n64.
13 Da Mosto, 242. Hopkins, 197n65, terms Giovio’s version a “cover-up”, but also notes the paucity of official testimony to actual cause of death.
stating that the Doge had eaten fish on Christmas eve, and felt too unwell by the day of St. Stephen (26 December) to attend mass or undertake the customary *andata* to San Giorgio Maggiore, still taking his usual meal, but suffering from a fever the following night and next day when he died on the Feast of the Innocents (28 December).\(^\text{14}\)

### 3. Preservation of State

As Muir described, following the death of a Doge, “ducal authority was neither invested in an effigy nor immediately transferred to a successor”; during an interregnum the Signoria was designated to rule through a series of prescribed ritual and legal actions.\(^\text{15}\) In this assignment of power Venice differed from states with hereditary rulers, and it affected the attitude toward what the body of the deceased represented: the body functioned as a liminal vessel from which authority of the eternal state had passed yet retained vestigial presence that was due the ritual deference owing to the former holder of the supreme office of the republic. As Sansovino put it, “And because he was conceded the principate in life, so it corresponds to the honor at the time of his death, with no less pomp and grandeur than the past.”\(^\text{16}\) Venetian protocol therefore had to contend with what Giovanni Ricci has identified as the “inescapable challenge of biology,” as, by rejecting the use of the effigy in place of the mortal body of the prince, common in England and France as well as hereditary principalities in Italy, the corpse — “a threatening and unstable presence” — presented functional issues avoided by double burials.\(^\text{17}\)

Sansovino described the changes in custom that had taken place since earlier times when the Doge was buried the day following his death, so as to provide a more honorable format by extending the period during which the body was displayed: the deceased was dressed in formal robes and placed on a bier in his own room with the ducal *corno*, sword, and spurs; the next evening the body was moved to the Sala del Piovego and placed on a catafalque with four great torches for three days attended by members of the Signoria elected for that purpose and attired in scarlet rather than mourning.\(^\text{18}\) The extension of the vigil over three days allowed for the physical transition of the dogal household, as this was the limit of time allowed to move their possessions from the apartments of the Doge which would be occupied by the interregnum government (as often

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\(^{14}\) Appendix, fol. 2r.

\(^{15}\) Muir, 274-75. The Signoria was normally composed of the Doge, six ducal councilors, and three heads of the Quarantia Criminal; a vice-Doge was elected in place of the deceased, generally the eldest councillor.

\(^{16}\) “Et perché il principato gli fu conceduto in vita, si corrisponde allo honore che gli si fece vivendo, con non minor pompa e grandezza delle passate, nel tempo della sua morte”. Sansovino, 191r.

\(^{17}\) Ricci, 63. For comparative purposes, see essays in Chrościcki et al.

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recounted, Loredan’s death was not immediately announced so that his heirs could remove their effects)19. But this length of vigil probably strained the limits for display of bodies not prepared for long-term preservation but only subject to limited embalming, the “challenge of biology” referred to by Ricci.

In his manuscript on the origins and customs of the government of Venice, Sanudo discusses the funeral rituals of the defunct Doge in relation to the pending election of a new Doge, in “Dell’essequie del Dose”. With his customary candor he identifies the practical problem that accompanied these rites in which the corpse was dressed and displayed on the bier, stating that there was a great stench if the guts were not removed, and it was impossible to stand such fetidness, to stay above ground for three days20. Even these measures, such as the extraction of the intestines, were often not enough, as the case of Loredan may have demonstrated:

June 24, 1521. The funeral ceremony has been ordered for tomorrow, after nones; a message has been sent to all the senators to come at nones. The body of the doge has begun to stink, and the face has become distorted, to the point that it was fearsome to behold, even though just yesterday he looked as if he were sleeping. And so at five hours after sundown, his sons had him put in a coffin sealed with pitch upon his own catafalque. On top of the coffin were placed the gold cloth, the robe, cushion, sword, spurs paired with the scarlet stockings, and the corno on the cushion21.

A problem inherent to ritual is managing factors unique to each situation, albeit such exceptions are often revealing as to priorities. Loredan’s death took place in June, so weather could have aggravated the physical decomposition of his body (nor is mention made of excerebration having been performed during embalming). For this situation, dogal accoutrements took the place of the display of the actual body on the bier. Therefore simply the presence of the deceased was sufficient rather than requiring display of likeness, without too much disruption to ritual process. Identity was exhibited through other means, for example, the escutcheon carried in the final funeral procession22. Nor was a simulacrum chosen to replace Loredan’s body for the period of the vigil, avoiding the implications of a double funeral, one of the body and one of the effigy, as employed in rituals of hereditary monarchies where immediate succession was at stake. The use of a simulacrum in Venetian ritual was only recorded once before the seventeenth century, with the death during plague of doge Giovanni Mocenigo in 1485, but it should be stressed that there is no record of such use in sixteenth-century Venice23.

20 Sanudo, 2011, 86, “poi il cadiletto con il corpo dentro discoserto – licet vi sia gran puzza – et se non li fusse cavate le budelle non sia potria star da tanto fettor, per star sora terra 3 zorni”.
21 Sanudo, 2008, 58 (30:395); “none” has been changed here to nones.
22 Sansovino, 191v, “Dietro a costoro segue lo Scudo con l’arme del Principe”. See Muir, 274, on the shield being reversed during the vigil; ibid., 276, the obverse was carried in the procession.
23 Most follow da Mosto, LV. Ricci, 65-66, elides the timeframe for this practice. Knezevich, 199,
Gritti’s death taking place in late December no doubt facilitated the preservation of his body for the funeral rites. As the account tells us, on the morning following his death, embalming was performed that included the removal of both brain and intestines. It could be expected that other aspects of the embalming process included washing the corpse with water and possibly some form of mild preservative, such as vinegar, might be applied, as documented in other cases. One such description from the later sixteenth-century official record of state ceremonial described this being done for the funeral rites of dogaressa Zilia Dandolo Priuli in 1566: her body was bathed with well water then doused with vinegar and stuffed with soaked sponges.

Recent interdisciplinary scientific investigations into embalming techniques in Renaissance Italy allow some tentative comparisons to be made: generally, the more extensive the procedures, the higher-ranking the individual, with the most “complex” processes applied to the bodies of saints. Preservation through more specialized practices was desired for the purposes of long-term mummification, whereas generally speaking corpses of rulers or aristocrats were prepared so as to improve the state of the corpse during funeral ceremonies, to make them more sweet-smelling while conserving remaining skin, bones and tissues. The procedures associated with rulers generally included craniotomy (for excerebration), evisceration (removal of material from body cavities through incision), rinsing and packing the cavities with various preservative and aromatic herbs and substances. Some laypersons aspired to preservation of the body, but in general lay burial was more immediate and required less (and less costly) attention. A desire for prolonging the material corpse and putting off the big sleep may have been a pervasive sentiment but only rarely acted on outside the theatre of state ritual. One such case of a layperson in Venice in 1515 suggests that knowledge about the potential of embalming was generally shared, but the costs of putting it into practice may have been baulked by heirs.
Contemporary knowledge of embalming as a medical practice was disseminated through such works as the Practica in Chirurgia. Copiosa in arte chirurgica by Giovanni da Vigo (1450/1460-1517/1525), first published in Pavia in 1514, of which there were many subsequent editions, including a translation into Italian (Venice, 1540). This treatise would influence later authors such as Ambroise Paré (c. 1510-1590), credited with elevating the practice of surgery as a humanist science. There was also study of embalming as historically practiced by different cultures such as the illustrated 1574 publication in Venice by Thomaso Porcacchi on Funerali antichi di diversi popoli, et nationi; forma, ordine, et pompa di sepolture, e di essequie di consecrationi antiche et d’altro. In this dialogue the author makes reference to scholars who had recently lectured on the subject in Venice.

After embalming on 29 December, Gritti was attired in his dogal robes and lay in state in his apartment with the usual ritual until the following day when he was ceremoniously transferred to the Sala del Piavego for the three-day vigil. During this period dogal vestments were renewed each day: on 30 December one of Gritti’s attributes was a cap from his Scuola della Misericordia; on 31 December an unusual gesture shows that the covering under the bier was changed to a crimson velvet embroidered in gold with the arms of the Cornaro once belonging to Caterina, Queen of Cyprus, sister of Marco Cornaro. The next day was 1 January and so required some adjustment but mainly followed previous routine, with crowds growing each day. Finally, on the second of the new month an impressive funeral cortege was assembled and processed through the palace and out into the Piazza San Marco, the enormous ceremonial progress terminating at Santi Giovanni e Paolo for last rites and the funeral eulogy of Bernardo Navagero. Muir has described this geographical shift as paralleling a ritual shift of governance of the body: “the political character of the ceremonies gave way to the funerary rites of the Church.”

4. “Et così finite le ceremonie”

In the description of the conclusion of the funeral the account appended below provides some new information about the mortal remains of the Doge, clarifying where Gritti was immediately interred. In the description of the

29 Giuffra et al., 2011a, 84. On da Vigo, see Muccillo, 160-63. Siraisi, 26, on medical science and humanism. Ruggiero, 183-84, on the status of doctors earlier in Venice.
30 Lastaioli, 357-88.
31 Porcacchi, 107-08.
32 Appendix, fols. 3r-v. Note that Gritti once had considered San Salvador as a potential burial site, aware of the Cornaro sepulchral presence there. Sanudo, 1969, 49:333, 7 January 1529; Morrogh, 208-09 and 229n11.
33 Muir, 275.
34 Appendix, fol. 7r.
initial embalming process the brain and intestines had been put into a jar (pitaro) and sent to be buried in a sepulcher, the location of which was not specified. Now, once the funeral ceremonies that had illuminated the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo with the splendor of a multitude of expensive candles and torches were concluded, most dignitaries departed in their boats. The bier with the defunct Doge was taken to the chapel of San Domenico for the final disposition of the body. Here the dogal accoutrements and grand vestments were replaced, prayers were said over the body as it was laid into a casket already prepared with the cap of the Scuola della Misericordia that had formed part of Gritti’s vigil in the palace to be laid under his head, and the casket was sealed. The account then states that it was transported to the church of San Francesco della Vigna, just across from the family palace, where he (Gritti) had ordered la capella grande della chiesia et la sua sepultura, and so the ceremonies were completed. Prior to the discovery of this account, the immediate disposition of the Doge’s body was in question\textsuperscript{35}. The status of this account requires further study in order to tie down the chronology, for confirmation that the vault ordered by the Doge and conceded by the Franciscans in front of the high altar in an agreement of 1536 was ready to receive his body by the time of his death in the newly built church of San Francesco della Vigna\textsuperscript{36}. The Gritti tomb monuments on the walls to either side belong to a later phase, but may have been anticipated by a more humble unmarked burial in the pavement in front of the altar as requested by the Doge in his last wishes (fig. 2)\textsuperscript{37}.

Gritti’s death and burial represent a singularly Venetian manifestation of a dilemma faced by great men in the Renaissance, between public and private magnificence. Expectations often clashed, between upholding the honor and dignity due the civic persona versus perception of personal aggrandizement\textsuperscript{38}. Accusations of the latter were present already at the time of Gritti’s election, when he had a silver medal struck, with his profile portrait on the obverse, and himself kneeling before St. Mark on the reverse, resulting in a ban by the heads of the Council of Ten on future portraits and suspension of the coining\textsuperscript{39}. His funeral procession and disposition of his body would have satisfied both public and private requirements. As a servant of the republic he received appropriate recognition with ritual participation of all estates – from patricians to Arsenale workers, lay scuole to clerics — so Venetian grandeur and wealth was paraded before citizens and dignitaries of foreign states alike. The city was traversed by

\textsuperscript{35} Da Mosto, 242, believed Gritti probably to have been given interim burial at Santi Giovanni e Paolo following the funeral, noting the separate burial of the urn without naming a location. Boholm, 113, citing limited evidence for rites, postulated the symbolism of a double burial of the “moist flesh corpse” and “embalmed corpse or effigy”.

\textsuperscript{36} Morrogh, 227-28, Appendix, 25 July 1536, concordance of two versions: BMCV, Ms. P.D./C 2581/4(b) and ASVe, San Francesco della Vigna, b. 4, fols. 236-43.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 211. Tiepolo et al., 23 no. 32, ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, Antonio Marsilio, b. 1208, 365.

\textsuperscript{38} Cooper, 89; Hopkins, 194 and 197n64, from Barbarigo, 115-16.

\textsuperscript{39} Sanudo, 2008, 66-67 (35:269), 9 December 1523.
the body on its bier, from its public core to a major religious center, then its final transition was made to the private, spiritual man in a family sepulchral context. There is a level of humility and self-effacement in the anonymity of Gritti’s uninscribed tomb slab, rarely visible to the visitor as it is usually covered by the luxurious rug surrounding the altar, but compensated for by the symbolic charge of the location, as anticipated by the Doge in his will. As the following account of Gritti’s esequies ends, “And so finish the ceremonies, to which I have nothing to add, the death of this prince being of universal grief for the fortunate memories that he left, such that one can say of his regime of fifteen years, seven months, and eight days, it is not possible to desire more goodness, wisdom, and discernment”.

Fig. 2. View of left side of chancel with monument to Andrea Gritti, San Francesco della Vigna, Venice. Monument attributed to Andrea Palladio, designed ca. 1569-ca. 1575.

40 “Volemo et ordinemo che il corpo nostro, servato il solito modo de le esequie ne li Principi di Venetia, sia sepulto in la giesia de li frati de San Francesco de la Vigna, in una archa da esser facta in el pavimento de quella in la capella granda avanti lo altar grando, la qual da novo è fundata”. Tiepolo et al., 23 no. 32. Morrogh, 208, fig. 2, shows the exposed tomb slab, 215; Da Mosto, 245, the tomb was opened in 1749.

41 Appendix, fol. 7r.
Appendix
Detailed Account of Death and Esequies of Doge Andrea Gritti,
28 December 1538-2 January 1539

Earlier shelf markings and format: C 181 (upper right corner); IX (at left, one line down);
title: “Morte del doge Andrea Gritti” – crossed out. Seven folio sheets folded on long side and
sewn, forming a small vacchetta; on laid paper; written in brown ink.

Transcribed here are fols. 2v-7v, by the first hand. No indication of author or date, but italic
script consistent with mid-sixteenth century hands. All abbreviations extended, with the
exception of q. [quondam] and S./S.a [san/santa/santi]. Punctuation and use of capitals adapted
to modern usage.

On the lower part of fols. 7r-7v and the top part of 8r (with red ink line drawn below last line
above and along margin, with marginal note), by another hand or the same hand with different
ink, is a text concerning Andrea Gritti’s Promissione and the election of the new doge. On the
lower part of fols. 8r-8v, by a different hand, text on the correction of the Promissione Ducale, 1545
Dec 1. On fols. 9v-11r, by a different hand, text on the election of Antonio Grimani, 1521 June 28.

[1r] Morte del doge Andrea Gritti [struck through]
[1v] [blank]
[2r] Mancò di questa vitta el Serenissimo Principe messer Andrea Gritti alli 28 decembrio
1538 il qual era stato al officio in giesia di S. Marco nella sera della vigilia di Nadal, nel giorno alla
messa grande, et nel poi disnar alla predicatione et vesporo. Nel giorno veramente di S. Stephano
per haversi risentito alquanto la notte, del che fo incolpato lo haver mangiato nella Vigilia di Nadal
pesce, non fo in chiesa alla messa, né si andò a S. Zorzi secundo l’ordinario, ma ben fece il pasto
che è solito farsi in simil giorno. Nelle notte seguente, et in quella innanci il giorno dell’Innocenti,
hebbe un poco di febre, per la qual fatto venire a sé il suo confessor la mattina, si confessò et
communì. Nel dapo prano veramente redutti li medici insieme et consultando per la salute sua,
morse alle hore XXIII in circa et finite in dogado anni XV, mesi VII, giorni VIII. Nella notte fo
svodato tutto il palazzo, et la mattina, che fo a dì XXIX il corpo fu aperto et trati li interiori, et della
testa cavato il cervello, et tutto posto in un pitaro, et mandato alla sepulture. Fo vestito con gli
habiti ducal, et messo nel feretro in mezo la salla del palazzo sopra una tavola eminente fra duo
torci che ardevano, 1 a’ piedi et l’altro a capo.

La Signoria veramente in questa mattina dì XXIX venne a star in palazzo: et erano Conseggieri
gli infrascritti: messer Nicolò di Prioli q. ser Jacopo q. ser Nicolò; messer Marco Navagier q. ser
Antonio q. ser Michiel; messer Nicolò Bernardo q. ser Piero q. ser Piero; messer Nicolò Venier q.
ser Hieronimo q. ser Benetto procurator; messer Thomà Mocenigo q. ser Leonardo procurator q.
el serenissimo principe; messer Sebastian Foscarini il dottor q. ser Piero q. ser Zaccaria. Li Capi
de XXXX erano gli sottoscritti: ser Nicolò da Kanal q. s. Philippo; ser Zuanne Gradenigo q. s.r
Zaccaria q. ser Zuanne; ser Francesco Valier de ser Benedetto q. ser Antonio. Et lo anello ducal
tratto di detto, al principe morto fo spezzata la bolla di quello.

[2v] Vi è da sapere che nel tempo di tal vaccantia la sottoscritta delle littere che si espediscono
è in questa forma: “Datte in Ducali palatio sub sigillo sancti Marci, et insigni Nicolai de Priolis
maioris consiliarii, die et cetera, indittione XII, MDXXXVIII”. La soprascritta veramente si fa in
questo modo: «Consiliarii Rectores Venetiarum, Nobili et sapienti viro et cetera, de suo mandato
potestati et cetera, fidelì dileitio salutem et dilectionis affectum». Le letere veramente si scrivono
in carta bergamina rassada, in forma di breve apostolico, non come si costuma continuamente
vivendo il Dose, in carta bergamina non rassada, et in forma larga, ma in forma longa dalla banda
rassata senza bolla di piombo, ma con bolla di cera in mediata, la qual bolla si copre poi col ciolo
della littera lassato in libertà. La mansione si fa: “Nobili et sapienti viro et cetera, potestati”
etcetera, come nelle altri tempi. Le indricciate littere veramente che si scrivono alla Signoria nel
interregno del dogado hanno questa mansione: “Eccellentissimis D. Consiliariis Rectoribus
Venetiarum”. Le stampe veramente delle monette di cecha si suolono romper similmente, ma al
presente non si rupero, anci si continuò il stampar con quelle sino alla creation del principe per li bisogni continovi, che al presente ha essa cecha.

A mattina dunque di XXIX commenciorno sonar le campane di S. Marco secundo l'ordinario. Nel dapoi disnar fo chiamato il Conseglio de' pregadi, et dapoi lette le lettere forno electi gli Savii grandi et Savi di terra ferma luogo de quelli fornavano el magistrato per tutto questo mese. Et forno chiamati XXIII gentilhomi del ordine sotto pregadi, de' Dieci savii, Dieci offici, Cattaveri et altri simili, per dargli lo carico che hebbbero nel zorno sequente.

[3r] Alla XXXta ditto. Riduti li sopra scritti gentilhomeni in palazzo, et ivi venuto il capitolo dei preti grando et piccolo della chiesa di S. Marco, fo levato il corpo dalla sala et condotto nella sala degli Piovegi con questo ordine: precedevano li preti psalmizando con la croce et candeliere accesi; seguivano li gentilhomi vestiti di scarlato, a maniche ducal, et stolle di panno di scarlato, ma innanci era portato il cadelleto con el corpo accompagnato da xii scudieri con uno torzo per uno, grande, vi innanci et sei da poi. Il corpo era vestito di una vesta a ducaline di restagno d’oro, coperto di uno manto di sopra rizzo; in testa havea la schuffia di tella, et il corno d’oro riccamato bianco; sotto il capo havea il cussino di restagno d’oro, solito portarsi nelle maggior solennità; sotto il cussino vi era la cappa della schola della Misericordia. In piedi havea uno paro di calce di scarlato et, sopra di quelle, le scarpe che vivendo havea costumato portar; appresso vi erano li spironi d’oro con le ponte in su, et a’ ladi havea il stocco d’oro con el manego a’ piedi. Precedeva detto feretro il scudo suo portato da uno servitor, il qual fu attaccato ad una collona, a piedi del corpo. Gionto in salla, fu messo sopra una tavola eminente coperta di una coperta di raso cremesino fra quatro candeliere, sopra de’ quali ardevano quattro torza grossi, due dal capo, et due da piedi. A torno di questo tavola si divisero li gentilhomeni con altri li segretari et cancellier grando, capitanei et altri officiali accompagnati. La qual postasi a seder al muro del officio della Avogaria, fu cantato dalli preti con voce bassa una Miserere et dal sacerdote detto alcune prece et orationi, [3v] et infine fu incensato il feretro a torno a torno. Lo che fatto, la Signoria si partì et tornò in palazzo, con ordine che gli gentilhomeni soprascritti stessero lì fin tanto che da lei gli fosse mandata la licentia di partirsi, la qual gli venne poco dapoi, et fogli imposto che nel dapoi pranso si riducessero al luogo istesso, et stessero lì come a far le vigilie altratanto tempo stato nella matina; et così fu fatto.

Alli XXXI da mattina, essendo chiamato una altra mano de gentilhomi della qualita delli sopranominati, fogli commesso che andassero a far lo istesso officio che havevano fatto li chiamati nel giorno innanci, vestiti come loro, cioè nella matina circa le hore XVIII et dapoi pranso, circa le XXII, ridursi atorno lo apparechio in sala dei Piovegi et ivi sentati per alquanto spacio, et partirsi poi al comandamento della Segnoria. La qual non si può partir de palazzo sino alla creation del futuro principe, ma di giorno et notte stantare in quello, et fa tener tutte le porte de corte serrate, eccetto il portello della porte maggiore, per la quale lo adito è ad ogniuno aperto, et per lo quale continuamente vi andò gente innumera, a veder lo apparechio sopra scritto. In questo giorno fo aggiunto al corpo il bavaro di armelini, fogli mutato il corno, et postogli uno altro riccamatto rosso, et appresso mutata la coperta di raso, et posta sotto il feretro una veluto cremesin riccamatta d’oro, con le arme Cornare sopra li capi di quella, et fo detto esser quella che già fu della Regina de Cypri, sorella della bona memoria del clarissimo messer Zorzi Cornaro cavalier et procurator.

Il primo di genaro fu ragionato di far le esequie, ma per essere principio di anno fu differito al giorno sequente, et in questo secondo li due altri precedenti fo chiamata una altra muda di gentilhomi, quali et nella matina et nel’ poi pranso per uno pezzo andassero al feretro, secondo l’ordine che dalla Segnoria gli fu dato. In questi giorni non voglio lassar di dir che infinita et innumera brigata furono a veder questa ceremonia etian nella notte, a hore extraordinarie. Alli doi di detto mese, la mattina furono al feretro li gentilhomeni, come nelli altri giorni: il dapoi pranso alle XXth hore in circa, essendo sta accionato dalla testa per mezo l’officio della Avogaria, dove si reducono li Sindici di quarantia, una bancha con spaliere, et in mezo tirrato uno panno di scarlato, et per terra posti tapedi, luogo che era alli piedi del corpo, venero alle vigili li gentilhomi, che furono chiamati nel primo giorno, con alcuni altri de' giorni intermedi, vestiti di scarlato con gli becchi similmente di scarlato, et si conciorno sentadi divisi dalle bande del feretro. Et stati per uno pezzo sopravvenne il capitolo di S. Marco grande et piccolo con la croce grande, et dopieri di argento, che precedevano accesi, poi sopragionse le Segnoria con li
ambasciatori, gli corocciosi42, et quasi tutto il Senato con assai dei parenti infine. Et l’ordine era, che dapoi li commandadori vestiti con gli mantelli loro biavi et le berette rosse, gli scudieri circa vinti et il cavalier vestiti con mantelli senza coda, seguivano gli secrettarii, il Cancellier grandemente vestito di pavonazzo col becco, il ballotin del dose morto col mantello longo et capicio in testa, il vice dose, il legato, poi lo [4v] ambassciator de Francia, lo ambassciator di Ferrara, et alcuni prelati vescovi fra qui era il primocereo vescovo de Corfù Barbadico, et il vescovo de Baffo, et lo ambassciator di Mantoa. Seguivano poi gli Consegliere, gli Capi de quaranta, gli Procuratori secundo la età loro, gli Avogadori, gli Capi del conselgio de X’, gli Censori, gli cavalieri, gli dottori, et per età infine tutto il Conselgio de’ pregadi, et gli altri parenti del Dose. Ma alla dextra camminavano gli corocciosi sopra gli oratori, gli Consegliere, gli Capi de quaranta, et gli Procurator, et furono numero vinti doi, con mantelli longhi et cappuci overo bechi in capo, fra quali furono gli infra scritti: messer Michiel et messer Polo Malipieri fratelli già del principe morto, messer Polo Contareno fo de messer Zacharia kavalier fu genero del fiol del principe, messer Lorenzo Gritti fo del principe fiol natural, messer Piero Gritti q. messer Homobon, messer Marco Foschari q. messer Zuanne, messer Andrea Vendramin fo de messer Lunardo, et cossi sino al detto numero de XXII delli più congionti del defunto.

Gionti dunque nella sala de gli Piovegi la Segnoria si messe a seder nel luogo appareciato sopra scritto, lassando in mezo uno da quella parte dove era posto il panno di scarlatto, si che sedevansi con quello ordine, col quale si era venuto. Qui apparato era uno vescovo di una delle nostre cità de Dalmatia, con la mitria per far l’officio et il piovan di S. Simion grande dove, incensato il morto, forno decantate le vigilie de’ morti, cioè li tre noturni, et nove lettioni. In questo mezzo commenciò passar la processione, la qual veniva fuori della porta piccola [5r] dalla chiesa proxima alla Bolla, per dove passando, et per sotto il portico che va alla riva, ascendeva la scala coperta di piombo, che va al officio delle Aque, et per lo portico delle collonelle del palazzo, per mezo li Zudegadi, Auditori novi, Cataveri, Segnori de notte, la sala dei Piovegi dove era il corpo. Passava per mezo l’officio delle Biave, et per la via de la fabrica rovinata, dove già solleva esser la Bolla et il Pregadi vechio, veniva alla scala grande del palazzo, passando dinanci il luogo do[ve] si riducono li Capi de’ X. Et qui descendeva in corte, et di longo caminava in piazza dove indiricandosi alla banda de’ Procuratie arivava sin a S. Geminiano, et dal ditto voltando veniva, non alla banda della case nove della Procuratia, ma per mezo la piazza sino alli stendardi. Dalli quai partendo, passando sotto lo horrologio, per Marzaria, per S. Juliano, per cassellaria, per calle del paradiso, per S. Marina, terminava a S. Iovanni et Paulo, dove era il baldachino grande et eminente in mezo la chiesia grande, et dalle bande erano accontie telle nere in alto, sopra de’ quali erano ordinate candelle di cera, sì che a torno a torno la chiesia si vedevano oltra il gran numero che sopra il baldachino erano state messe.

L’ordine veramente della processione fu: primariamente passò tutti li penelli delle scholae et fraterne piccole, caduno di quelli accompagnato da dui dopieri, et poi le insegne de la schola del Corpus domini, che erano uno Christo nel calice, parimenti con dui dopieri. Seguivano poi le scholae grande, et prima la Schola di S. Marco, la Schola di S. Iovanni, quella della Charitét et quella di S. Rocco, ciascuna delle quali haveva circa trenta dopieri con torzza accesi et poi il suo penello [5v] con grande numero de’ battudi con le sue candelle in mano che ardevano. Drietto le quatro schole maggiori venivano secundo li gradi et precedentia loro tutti gli fratti delle religioni della terra, continovendo le nove congregations de’ preti della città nel modo solito servarsi nelle altre processione. Queste finite de passar, venne la Schola de la Misericordia nella qual era il principe morto: et precedevanno trecento batudi con candelle accese in mano, poi cento con li dopieri, sopra de quali vi erano cinquanta torzza bianchi pagati per li heredi dil morto, et sopra li altri cinquanta erano torzza verdi pagati per li fratelli della Schola preditta. Seguivano alli battuti

42 This term refers to close relatives of the deceased, distinguished by their apparel. Sansovino, 192r: “Et ogniuno de i Signori ha, in caminando, dalla sua destra, uno de i piu stretti parenti del morto, con lo strascico, & col capo incappucciato & coperto, & questi si chiamano dal volgo corocciosi”.

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trenta frati delli Jesuati con uno torzo per uno in mano, poi vinti marinari con vinti torza similmente in mano, drio de’ quali veniva il feretro con el corpo portato da marinari. Questo gionto alla scala per descendere in corte fo tolto sotto una umbrella verde dorata che li veniva drio, portato da quelli della Scula, overo similmente da marinari. Seguivano poi li gentilhomeni vestiti di scarlato circa trenta, et altri vinti marinari con altri trenta frati di S. Sebastiano con torce in mano, et altri cento battuti con dopieri et torzza sopra accesi come gli precedenti, sicché li battuti della Schola predetta della Misericordia, tutti erano cinquecento, et fo detto che a cadauno gli fu dato di elemosina soldi dodici. Veniva poi la Segnoria con quel ordine con il quale la era andata alla sala dei Piovegi, con gli corrociosi, gli ambasciatori et tutto el Pregadi. La qual Segnoria, gionta al principio della scala si fermò et qui lassò passar quasi tutta la compagnia, [6r] poi andò in palazzo, di dove non si puo partir, sinò la creatione del futuro principe. Precedevano donque il legato, li corrociosi, gli ambasciatori, et poi seguiva il resto, come è detto di sopra. Ma quando il feretro gionse alla porta della corte, le campane doppie cominciono sonar, et quelle continovorno sino che ’l andò per piazza et arrivò in chiesia di S. Zuanne et Paulo per la via detta della processione. Alli standardi veramente quelli che portavano la umbrella, si fermorono, et quelli che portavano il feretro si spinsero innanci verso la porta grande della chiesia di S. Marco. Per mezo la quale fermati, et posto giù il feretro, la alciorno da terra nove volte una drietto l’altra, le qual fornite tornorno sotto la umbrella et continovorno la processione.

Gionti in chiesia di S. Zuane et Paulo, trovorno tutta la luminaria accesa del baldachino, et del restante della chiesia, et sotto quello fo messo detto feretro circundato dalmarini, et frati delli Jesuati et di S. Sebastiano, li gentilhomeni purpurati, con gli corrociosi, ambasciatori, et il resto della compagnia inviati alla volta del choro. Quella parte maggior che poté, sedette nelle sedie di quello perciòché la gente si frequente haveva occupato li luogi, che pochi delli prenominati si potero luogar. Infra li quali si accompagnò messer Iovanni Pisani il procurator, genero che fo de messer Francesco Gritti, che fu figliolo del principe morto, il qual per esser impedito dalla gota non potendo caminar, si haveva condotto in chiesa per esser presente alla oration. Assetati donque meglio si poté, messer Bernardo Navagerio fo de messer Zuanalvise uscite in uno pulpito adornato di nero appresso la porta di choro la qual era sta serata, et qui sotto una tenda spiegà per tener la voce unita in questo luogo hebbe una oratione per spatio di una hora e meza, in laude delle operationi et gesti del principe morto, il qual per esser impedito dalla gata potendo caminar, si haveva condotto in chiesa per esser presente alla oration. Assetati donque meglio si poté, messer Bernardo Navagerio fo de messer Zuanalvise uscite in uno pulpito adornato di nero appresso la porta di choro la qual era sta serata, et qui sotto una tenda spiegà per tener la voce unita in questo luogo hebbe una oratione per spatio di una hora e meza, in laude
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Abstract
The funeral rituals accompanying the death of doge Andrea Gritti (1455-1538) epitomize the period of interregnum in the Venetian context. The presentation of dogal authority was symbolically associated with the continuity of the republic and carefully managed throughout the transition to a newly elected prince. And like the survival of the body of state the rehabilitation of the physical body of the defunct Doge was a crucial phase in the ceremonial process. This essay considers a previously unpublished contemporary account of the esequies of doge Gritti, in the light of what it reveals about his immediate physical burial, now confirmed as being at San Francesco della Vigna.

Keywords
Middle Ages; Early Modern Times; 15th-16th century; Venice; politics; ceremonial; funerals; Andrea Gritti; sources

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