COBBLER, CONVERT, COPT: THE INCONGRUOUS
VENETIAN ICONOGRAPHY OF SAINT ANIANAS

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To my men, Greg, Marshall and Alec, who never doubted.
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ABSTRACT

This research examines images of Saint Mark and Saint Anianas in both healing and baptismal scenes to better understand the iconographic treatment of the two saints. I will demonstrate that the saints' iconographic program, employed in Venetian art prior to the fifteenth century, was designed to propagandize Saint Mark’s strength in connection to images of Christ and apostolic saints. Further, the juxtaposition of these images with those created in the fifteenth century reveals a shift in the iconographic program that reflects Venetian political and religious anxiety after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and a desire to signify Venetian hegemony. When the Venetian images are examined chronologically, the iconography associated with Saint Anianas’ image clearly evolves to impose an exotic eastern persona as a negative foil for the protagonist Saint Mark. By contrast, the iconography of the two saints remains unaltered outside of the Veneto, thereby suggesting the absence of a similar underlying religious and political motivation.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the former home of the Scuola dei Calegheri in the San Polo district of Venice is a striking, anomalous image of a saint (figure 1). Contained within a fresco cycle that surrounds the upper floor of the scuola is a monumental image of a bearded man, standing in a flowing brown robe topped by a green collar. His downward gaze directs attention to the sharp point of the cobbler’s awl in his right hand and he raises his left hand to display the bloody, stigmata-like injury to the palm. While the fresco medium is rare in Venice that is not what strikes the viewer as atypical. What astonishes is the extraordinary combination of a halo and a turban. Who is this intriguing figure? What role did he play in Venetian Renaissance art? What did he mean for contemporary Venetians?

Upon further study of the saint’s attributes, the unusual figure can be identified as St. Anianas, the patron saint of shoemakers and the first bishop of the Coptic Church in Alexandria. Appropriately, the cobbler was the patron saint of the Scuola dei Calegheri, a confraternity of Venetian shoemakers founded in 1383 who met in this building. According to hagiographic accounts, including the thirteenth-century Golden Legend, St. Mark traveled to Alexandria on an evangelical mission. Upon the evangelist’s arrival, St. Mark broke his sandal and sought out the cobbler Anianas to have it repaired. While repairing the shoe, Anianas injured his hand with his cobbler’s awl and cried out, “One God!”: a monotheistic outcry which St. Mark interpreted as a desire to learn about the gospel of Christ. Taking a little clay in his hand and combining it with his spittle, St. Mark worked this paste into Anianas’ wound and miraculously healed the cobbler.

The shoemaker was converted to the Christian faith and baptized along with his wife and all the members of his family.

To understand how Saint Anianas’ path crosses into Venetian myth it is necessary to know more about the origins of the Venetian cult of saints. Early Venetians had originally looked to the Greek warrior, Saint Theodore, as their patron saint, reflecting Venice’s position as a province of Byzantium.² This association benefitted Venice until 829 when an incident occurred that would change the direction of Venetian national identity forever. In Alexandria, two Venetian merchants, working with two Coptic priests conspired to steal the body of St. Mark. They smuggled him out of the city and onto their ship in a basket of raw pork that would avoid the inspection of the Muslim authorities. Once St. Mark’s body was in Venice, it was decided to construct a small precursor to the Basilica di San Marco near the Ducal Palace to house the relic. St. Mark became central to all future stories of Venetian national identity and while St. Theodore was retained as a patron, the mystique of St. Mark was enhanced and expanded upon with each successive telling of the story of his *translatio*, or transfer, to Venice.

The *translatio* of St. Mark occurred at a propitious time. Venice was becoming a wealthy center of maritime trade and the Venetians desired an equally important, even apostolic patron saint. In the eleventh century, the Basilica di San Marco was radically rebuilt, modeled after other apostolic churches including the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople and St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.³ Several factors contributed to St. Mark’s importance and linked him to St. Peter: he was personally baptized by St. Peter, he accompanied St. Peter to Rome, and he

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³ Ennio Concina, “St. Mark’s Triumphant: Piety and Magnificence,” in *St. Mark’s: The Art and Architecture of Church and State in Venice*, ed. Ettore Vio (New York: Riverside Book Company, 2001), 91. Concina argues that the decision to emulate the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople, rejecting the design plan of Aquileia, was a deliberate decision to adopt the architectural language of the East as opposed to that of the West.
was chosen by Saint Peter for an evangelical mission to northeastern Italy. While studying the images of Saint Anianas, it became apparent that they represented an additional, critical element in the Venetian campaign to further enhance and elevate the importance of Saint Mark.

In the numerous images of Saint Anianas throughout Venice, created in almost every artistic medium from mosaic to marble to marquetry, there is almost always a scene of Saint Mark’s healing Saint Anianas accompanied by a second scene of Anianas’ baptism. In Venetian images created prior to the fifteenth century, the strength of Saint Mark is elevated by an iconographic program that associates the evangelist’s healing power with that of Christ and His apostles.

The metaphysical act of healing endows a divine power to the healer: a necessary quality in a patron saint. One challenge existed for Venetians who desired to promote the power of their chosen patron: there are no recorded instances of Saint Mark performing healing in the Bible. In later retellings of Saint Mark’s story, however, the healing of Saint Anianas became an important device to establish the validity of the saint’s miraculous power. A strict following of the hagiology of Saint Anianas suggests that Saint Mark should apply mud and spittle to the cobbler’s wound, so the observation that Venetian art deviated from this narrative is revealing. Early Venetian healing scenes instead choose to more closely emulate the compositional elements used for more central biblical figures. In healing scenes, Saint Mark is often shown delivering a Christ-inspired gesture of blessing. This gesture, conveyed with the first two fingers and thumb extended while the third and fourth fingers are closed, is one of the earliest to appear in Christian art. As a sign of benediction or blessing, it was often an element included in icons of Christ Pantocrator in Byzantine art (figure 2). This connection not only associated Saint
Mark with Christ, it also moved Saint Mark’s image stylistically closer to Byzantine art, an oeuvre embraced by Venetians well into the Renaissance.

Similar to the power of healing, Christian conversion in baptism is an important sacrament often associated with Christ’s apostles. Venetian images of Saint Mark baptizing incorporate iconography similar to that used for Saint Peter and Saint John the Baptist. For instance, when comparing the image of *Saint Peter Baptizing the Neophytes* from the Brancacci Chapel to *The Baptism of Anianas* from the Monument to Doge Giovanni Mocenigo, both saints are reverently baptizing using a round vessel of water to convert a kneeling figure into the Christian faith (figures 3 and 4). In an associative play on iconography, Saint Mark’s *persona* was united with Saint Peter through the application of similar iconography; therefore, by association Saint Mark is advanced in hierarchical order from evangelist to apostle.

While the iconography prior to the fifteenth century associated with Christ and his apostles served to elevate Saint Mark to apostolic stature, a second phase of the Venetian iconographic program served to elevate Saint Mark by denigrating the status of Saint Anianas. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the iconography associated with Saint Mark progresses to further propagandize Saint Mark’s strength relative to Saint Anianas and to signify Venetian hegemony. My research demonstrates that this iconographic shift reflects the tension existent in Venice after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and during the first and second Ottoman wars ending in 1503 which resulted in a disruption of Venetian trade with the East.

**Literature Review**

To explore the complexities surrounding the iconographic appropriation of Saints Mark and Anianas, it is necessary to review current scholarship related to: the development of myths

4 The fundamental missionary work of the Christian church includes preaching and baptizing, *potestates predicandi et baptizandi*, a role given to the apostles by Christ as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20.
within Venetian society, the Venetian system of confraternities, known as scuole, and the history of cultural exchange between Venice and their neighboring eastern societies during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The many myths surrounding Venice were built up and molded over time to convey an evolving image of the Republic. A recurrent participant in Venetian myth is Saint Mark the Evangelist. Scenes from the life of the patron saint appear throughout Venice and invariably Saint Anianas joins Saint Mark in these narrative cycles making him an integral part of Venetian myth. The combined story of Saints Mark and Anianas originates in hagiographic literature. In the earliest, fourth-century account, only Saint Anianas’ role as the first bishop of the Church of Alexandria is reported.⁵ Later, in the thirteenth century, The Golden Legend by Jacobus de Voragine relates a more elaborate narrative in which the Evangelist encounters the cobbler Anianas upon arriving in Alexandria.⁶ Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, the Acta Sanctorum was compiled by Heribert Rosweyde, a Jesuit professor of philosophy in the Jesuit College of Douai. The Acta Sanctorum combined the hagiographic accounts of Christian saints in 68 volumes organized by the saint’s traditional feast day. Saint Mark’s account, in the Aprilis volume, contains a brief narrative of Saint Anianas’ life.⁷ These three sources of hagiographic literature became the basis of my exploration into the imagery related to Saint Anianas.

In modern scholarship, David Rosand has explored how the various myths of Venice were articulated in art and developed into powerful realities for its citizens. Rosand makes use of the concept “iconographic slippage” which demonstrates the manner in which iconographic

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⁵ Eusebius, Eusebius: The Church History, trans. and commentary Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 92.

⁶ Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend, 121-122.

attributes for one object can be appropriated to convey another meaning. While my research will demonstrate a different path of iconographic subsumption, Rosand’s research introduces the concept of Venetian appropriation of symbols to shape a sought after truth. This scholarship further demonstrates the desire of Venetians to augment in scope and veracity their origin myths through artistic expression across all media.

*Scuole*, confraternities of lay people drawn together by either religious or trade association, were a central component of Venetian society. In a republic with limited participation in governance, these confraternities provided an avenue for non-patrician citizens’ contribution to public life. Although confraternities often played a significant role in the religious devotion of urban Florentines and Venetians, for many years the scholarship related to religious practices was primarily examined through the lens of church institutions. The emergence of social historical analysis positioned the confraternity system more centrally in Renaissance society, transforming how art historians viewed the role of confraternities, and expanding the number of studies devoted to the subject. Brian Pullan’s detailed scholarly research explained the origins and development of Venetian *scuole grandi*, as well as the nature of their philanthropy. Pullan incorporated information about the detailed revenues and expenditures of the *scuole grandi* and investigated how *scuole* funded charitable works. In the early 1980s, Richard MacKenney and Peter Humfrey wrote individually and jointly about the formation and organization of confraternities of Venice providing valuable insights into the motivating factors behind Venetian trade guilds’ art commissions promoting their devotional and

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10 Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice*, 173-176. In particular, Pullan’s chapter on “Wealth and its uses” provided useful information about the magnitude of *scuole* revenue and how the *scuole grandi* applied the funds in service to the state.
philanthropic activities. Humfrey and MacKenney drew important distinctions between the Florentine and Venetian guilds. For instance, they found the Florentine guilds tended to encompass larger groups of related trades and initially wielded more political power than the Venetian guilds. By contrast, the Venetian guilds were formed around the close kinship of specific trades and neighborhoods and were intricately involved in the spiritual consolation of their members often offering material support to the sick and poor, widows and orphans.

Humfrey specifically examined altarpieces and was able to attribute many surviving Renaissance works to the contracting *scuole* including a commission by the Scuola dei Calegheri for the Church of San Tomà. Humfrey’s focus on art commissioned by the *scuole piccolo* is of particular relevance to my investigation of the frescos adorning the *albergo*, or meeting hall, of the Scuola dei Calegheri.

Patricia Fortini Brown applied her knowledge of Venetian confraternity patronage to the resulting commissions by *scuole* for narrative cycles that served to demonstrate their members’ religious devotion. Fortini Brown is particularly critical to my investigation into the communication of the evolving iconography associated with Saints Mark and Anianas. Her research demonstrated the Venetian mode of narrative painting, which she called the “eyewitness style,” served as a pictorial source of testimony, complementing written chronicles and attesting to the veracity of a sometimes constructed narrative.

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12 Peter Humfrey, “Competitive Devotions: The Venetian *Scuole Piccole* as Donors of Altarpieces in the Years around 1500,” *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 3 (Sep., 1988), 421-422.

13 Although Patricia Fortini Brown was written many books in the subject Renaissance painting in Venice, my research was particularly aided by her book, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), and her earlier article delving into the nature of commissions by Venetian *scuole*, “Honor and Necessity: The Dynamics of Patronage in the Confraternities of Renaissance Venice,” *Studi Veneziani* 14 (1987): 179-212.
In current research, many scholars investigate the interconnectedness of Mediterranean cultures during the Renaissance. These studies venture away from the prior “orientalist” perspectives and instead draw a broader, more global view of the Renaissance. Many of these explorations seek to account for the complex relationship between the Islamic and Christian societies in the region. These more nuanced perspectives of the relationship between the east and west begin around 1982 with Julian Raby’s analysis of Quattrocento Venetian paintings of the East, including paintings representing both Ottoman and Mamluk cultures. Raby found many instances in which artists provided a more accurate representation of the eastern cultures than previously ascribed. Raby postulated that accurate depictions reflected the close trade relationships between Venice and their eastern Mediterranean trading associates. Expanding on this notion of cultural transmission, Deborah Howard clarified the nuances related to the first and second-hand perceptions of the Islamic world and their impact on Venetian architecture while concurrently revealing valuable insights into the origins of cross cultural transmission via both trade and travel between eastern and western Mediterranean states. Rosamond E. Mack provided new insights into artistic transfer as reflected in the objects produced for the luxury goods trade. The multitude of evidence she finds in patterned silks, carpets, ceramics, glass and inlaid brass objects has led to deeper art historical study of textiles and objects in paintings to ascertain the connections between Mediterranean cultures. Of particular relevance to my


research was Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton’s examination of cultural exchange which resulted from the circulation of portrait medals, tapestries and equestrian art. In particular, they revealed the manipulation of iconography associated with Saint George in the cycle painted by Vittore Carpaccio for the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavone that served to dramatize the adversarial relations between the East and West during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.  

This course of investigation became the starting point for my examination of the Venetian imagery related to Saint Anianas.

Moving beyond cultural transmission, Stephen Campbell and Stephen Milner demonstrated how cultural relations between the trading centers led to a continuing dialogue of artistic exchange marked by both imitation and differentiation.  

Campbell and Milner specifically investigate the idea of translation as a process through which identity is formed through the appropriation of cultural practices joined with the application of differentiation to form a new, original cultural persona. In this course of nuanced research, the viewpoints expressed by both Claire Norton and Stefano Carboni demonstrate that cultural information was freely exchanged between the East and the West and sometimes claimed by both cultures.  

This body of prior research into myth construction, patronage commission and cultural transmission served as the foundation for my investigation into the intricacies of changing iconography associated with Saint Anianas.


CHAPTER 2
VENETIAN IMAGES OF SAINTS MARK AND ANIANAS
PRIOR TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

When analyzing the Venetian images of Saints Mark and Anianas in chronological order, a two-stage development in the treatment of Anianas’ iconography becomes apparent. The five pre-fifteenth-century extant images of the two saints I have found in the course of my research strive to elevate the status of Saint Mark by incorporating iconography that is similar to Christ and the apostolic saints as they are portrayed performing acts of healing and baptism. These early images of Saints Mark and Anianas are differentiated from later images which serve to further elevate Saint Mark through the introduction of eastern signifiers and the hegemonic marginalization of the cobbler-saint.

To understand the early iconographic treatment of these two saints, it is not necessary to look outside of the Basilica di San Marco. All of the pre-fifteenth-century Venetian images of these two saints occur within the church most central to the development of Saint Mark’s identity as a powerful patron of Venice. The first appearance of Saint Anianas in Venetian art occurs in the lower portion, or antependium, of the high altarpiece from the Basilica di San Marco, The Pala d’Oro. This section of the high altarpiece was commissioned by the Doge Ordelaffo Falier, completed in 1105, and features panels depicting both the Doge Falier and the Byzantine Empress Irene. While the upper portion of the altarpiece is known to originate from Constantinople and later joined to the lower portion around 1204, the provenance of the antependium is not as certain. Technical factors now lead experts to conclude the lower portion was also created by Byzantine artists, possibly with the final assembly brought to completion in

Venice. Both a healing and a baptism scene can be found in ten square panels devoted to the life of Saint Mark that today are incorporated in two borders running vertically along the left- and right-hand side of the altarpiece. Along the top border of the Pala d’Oro is a series of eleven scenes from the life of Christ. The public scholarship on this altarpiece generally disagrees about the proper sequence of Saint Mark’s narrative. While the life of Christ is arranged in chronological order, the scenes from the life of Saint Mark do not follow a similar sequential pattern. To explain this anomaly, scholars speculate that Saint Mark’s sequence originally ran in order across the bottom of the altarpiece and were moved to their present location in one of the two programs of expansion and reassembly of the altarpiece in 1209 and 1345. While the life of Christ is arranged in chronological order, the scenes from the life of Saint Mark do not follow a similar sequential pattern. To explain this anomaly, scholars speculate that Saint Mark’s sequence originally ran in order across the bottom of the altarpiece and were moved to their present location in one of the two programs of expansion and reassembly of the altarpiece in 1209 and 1345. During the reconstruction, the panels might have returned to the altarpiece in the present sequence, which has on the left from top to bottom:

1. Baptism of Saint Anianas
2. Destruction of an Idol
3. Healing of Saint Anianas
4. Saint Mark Presents Saint Hermagoras to Saint Peter and
5. Saint Peter Consecrates Saint Mark.

On the right are the panels that narrate the capture, imprisonment, martyrdom, translation and reception of Saint Mark’s relics in Venice but, like the panels in the left, these too are not in chronological sequence.

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The healing and baptism scenes are separated by another scene that narrates Saint Mark’s destruction of an idol. In the healing scene, Anianas is at his cobbler’s workbench which supports the tools of his trade including two knives, an awl, a shoe, and some shoe leather (figure 5). Crucially, in this early Venetian image of the cobbler saint, Anianas is shown without a turban. Indeed, his likeness, including a close cropped beard and flowing robe, is virtually indistinguishable from that of Saint Mark who stands facing the cobbler. St Mark is identifiable by the scroll in his left hand and the green halo around his head. Other than the crenelated architectural elements in the background, there is little attempt to incorporate iconography that evokes the east, or more specifically Alexandria. The architectural motifs used by the artist are generally intended to be read as indicating a nonspecific urban site. This is evident when the architecture of the Alexandrian scene is compared to that used to denote Rome in the subsequent scene, *Saint Mark Presents Saint Hermagoras to Saint Peter* (figure 6). Similar tower-like houses and the crenelated arch of a wall are used to define both cities.

In the panel containing the scene *Saint Mark Baptizing Saint Anianas*, the evangelist stands on a pedestal and baptizes the catechumen (figure 7). Appropriately in this altarpiece inspired by the Byzantine style, the baptism is in the manner of the Eastern Church, requiring Ananias’ immersion in a baptismal font decorated with a blue cross. As baptism is the sacrament that recognizes the conversion of Anianas, the moment in which he is transformed by water into a Christian, it is appropriate that both Saints Mark and Anianas are crowned with halos. Saint Mark holds a book in his left hand while placing his right hand on the head of Saint Anianas. To the right are eleven men serving as witnesses to the sacrament, four of whom appear to possess an elevated church affiliation indicated by the crosses on their pallia. The three men in the front

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22 This figure is generally ascribed to Anianas but is also identified as St. Hermagoras by Dale, “Inventing a Sacred Past,” 65, an attribution supported by the straight hair of the figure in contrast to the curly hair of St. Anianas in the healing scene.
row each hold ornately decorated cloths to cover Saint Anianas after his baptism. As in the healing scene, Saint Mark and Saint Anianas have similar visages suggesting that there is little to differentiate the status of the evangelist and the man who will become the first bishop of the Coptic Church.

At this early stage in the development of the Saint Mark/Saint Anianas iconographic treatment, the marginalization of Anianas was not an essential element. Instead, it was imperative to associate the image of Saint Mark with other important apostolic figures. This intent is evident when the baptism of Anianas is compared to another panel in the Pala d’Oro, The Baptism of Christ (figure 8). While Anianas does not appear in this panel, there are significant similarities between the figure of Saint Mark and Saint John the Baptist. For instance, both baptizing saints are wearing correspondingly similar blue grey tunics covered by blue mantles trimmed in gold. Both have green halos, dark beards and are barefoot. In these two instances, being barefoot suggests a respect for the sanctity of the baptismal sacrament. Each holds a signifier of their biblical authorship in their left hands, in Saint John’s case a scroll and in Saint Mark’s a yellow book, while both touch the head of the person being baptized with their right hand. These iconographic similarities between the depiction of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Mark signify the desire to place Saint Mark in a hierarchical status of biblical equivalence to Saint John.

Approximately fifty years later, Saint Mark and Anianas are featured in a mosaic program of the life of Saint Mark created in the two chapels flanking the choir of San Marco. The Cappella San Pietro mosaics relate the pre-Venetian life of Saint Mark and the Cappella di San Clemente the translatio of Saint Mark to Venice in 828. An inscription in the Cappella San Clemente assigns the work to the artist Petrus in 1159 and scholars concur that the chapel
mosaics were begun in the mid twelfth century. Among the eighteen scenes is one of Saint Mark traveling to Alexandria followed by a scene in which the evangelist subsequently heals Anianas, under the title “NVNCIAT HIC PERGIT SVTORIS VVLNERA TERGIT,” “Now he travels to wipe the cobbler’s wounds” (figure 9). In the healing scene, the two figures stand facing one another with the cobbler’s bench between them. There are no markers to suggest the eastern location but the arcade behind Anianas bears the inscription ALESAN-DRIA to firmly place the scene in Alexandria. Otto Demus describes the figure of Anianas as a “seminude aborigine” and notes that the cobbler is not seated at his workbench as in the Pala d’Oro. A robed Saint Mark carries a book in his left hand while reaching out with his right to heal the injured hand of Anianas who holds the evangelist’s shoe and awl in his uninjured right hand. Demus suggests that the scene is not unlike iconography employed to portray Christ healing a man with a withered hand. Accepting this analysis further reinforces the argument that early iconography of Saint Mark strives to develop a typological comparison to Christ and other important apostles by emphasizing his healing power and his authorship of the gospels. While Anianas’ unkempt attire slightly diminishes the cobbler’s status, he does stand face to face with Saint Mark as a biblical counterpart.

Next in chronological order is a healing scene found in a mosaic in the thirteenth-century Cappella Zen. Adorning the barrel vault are six scenes from the life of Mark in which the saint is shown on his journey to Alexandria. This mosaic features the famed lighthouse of Alexandria which would have enabled the Venetian audience to locate the scene in Egypt. After

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25 Demus, The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice, 64. Demus refers to a Pala d’oro panel in the Life of Christ series; however in this healing scene, Christ stands in a more commanding position over the seated man with a withered hand.
disembarking from his ship, Saint Mark is shown seated in the cobbler’s shop at the moment he heals Anianas (figure 10). This depiction of Anianas is intriguing because like the mosaic in Cappella San Pietro the cobbler saint wears a head covering. In this case, the headdress is not large or exaggerated. It is worn close to his head and, with the exception of long sideburns, Anianas is almost completely clean-shaven unlike other bearded depictions. The architecture in the background is similar to the mosaic in the Cappella San Pietro and, while lending perspectival depth to the work, it is not particularly exoticized and is more reminiscent of the arcades of Venice than of the East.

The fifth and final pre-fifteenth-century extant image of Saint Anianas comes from the fourteen-panel altarpiece cover for the Pala d’Oro (figure 11). The oil on poplar wood cover is known as the Pala Feriale, or weekday altarpiece, as it was intended to be displayed during weekday services. Painted by Paolo Veneziano, the Pala Feriale contains both Byzantine and western stylistic elements. The upper register has seven panels in the style of Byzantine icons and the lower register contains seven scenes from the life of Saint Mark in a more western narrative style.26 The healing scene contains many finely worked details that Rona Goffen suggests were intended to lend veracity to the miracle in the manner of “eyewitness” style Venetian narrative paintings (figure 12).27 A tapered column in the background is intended to represent the Pharos Lighthouse at Alexandria. Saint Mark’s ship is anchored at the shoreline to the left and the evangelist, accompanied by an assistant, is seated on a bench slightly above the seated figure of Anianas to his right. The wound in Anianas’ hand is bleeding and Saint Mark delivers a gesture of blessing while healing the injury. Anianas’ small turban and slightly


unkempt full beard foreshadow his later iconographic treatment; however, he is seated at almost the same level of Saint Mark indicating a measure of deference to the cobbler saint. The overall iconographic message is that of a powerful healer who performs a Christ-like miracle in the presence of a witness. The witness has a small red book tucked in his cloak that could hold an account of the evangelistic mission in the manner of contemporary *viaggiatori*, an eyewitness account by a Venetian travelling abroad.\textsuperscript{28}

In all five of the pre-fifteenth-century healing scenes in the Basilica di San Marco, the iconography associated with Saint Mark strives to associate the patron saint of Venice with other powerful biblical figures including Christ and His Apostles. The introduction of any eastern elements is solely designed to locate the scene in Alexandria. Although in many scenes Saint Anianas must wait until baptism to receive his halo, he is typically revered and placed in a position of parity with Saint Mark.

\textsuperscript{28} Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*, 125.
CHAPTER 3

SAINTS MARK AND ANIANAS OUTSIDE VENICE

The Venetian images of Saint Anianas stand in stark contrast to comparable art created outside Venice. These images incorporate traditional iconography that employs specific attributes intended to assist in the identification of the saints. Unlike the Venetian images, the art does not manipulate the composition to elevate the status of Saint Mark above other biblical figures by casting him as a Christological type or by devaluing Saint Anianas as an eastern “other.”

In the seventh to eighth-century ivories from the so-called Grado Chair, there are five scenes narrating the life of Saint Mark, three of which include Saint Anianas: a healing scene, a baptism scene and an additional scene in which Saint Mark consecrates Saint Anianas as the first Bishop of the Coptic Church. The five Saint Mark ivories are thought to be part of a larger group of fourteen ivory panels. Collectively these panels are the focus of continual scholarly speculation, beginning in 1899, when Hans Graeven suggested they were originally part of a throne known as the Grado Chair, which he believed was created in Alexandria and sent as a gift to the Emperor Heraclius in Constantinople. Current research suggests they were made in either Alexandria or Constantinople and, while it is clear they are prepared to adorn an object, there is still no definitive resolution to the question of the intended object or recipient. Setting the debate over provenance aside, these three panels are the earliest extant images of Saints Mark and Anianas together.

The ivory panel with the healing scene displays Saint Mark with traditional iconography including a halo and book under his left arm (figure 13). Shown at the moment of healing, Saint Mark holds the injured hand of the cobbler with no reference to a gesture of blessing. In the ivory there are the usual attributes including a sandal, knife, and awl but the cobbler’s curly hair is bare. The overall treatment is truer to the *Golden Legend* version of Anianas’ healing. This depiction is significant because it suggests the earliest expression of the Marcian narrative was not subject to the later mutability of hagiographic invention explored after Saint Mark becomes the patron saint of Venice. In the baptism ivory, Saint Mark is again shown with a halo and book in his left hand while he baptizes Anianas by laying on his right hand (figure 14). Anianas and two other figures are submerged to their shoulders in an *immersio* baptism in keeping with the practice of the early and Eastern churches. These two additional figures are presumably other members of Anianas’ household mentioned in hagiographic accounts of Anianas’ baptism. The last ivory of this group shows Saint Mark’s consecration of Anianas as a bishop of the Coptic Church (figure 15). In the baptism and consecration scenes, there is no iconography applied to identify Anianas; his identification is made through a comparison to the physical attributes, including curly hair, of the figure present in the healing scene. Although never given a halo and shown in a scale smaller than Saint Mark, Anianas’ image is not unduly orientalized through the inclusion of a head covering.

Consistently, in the architectural backgrounds of five Saint Mark ivories, there are few eastern cues; indeed the rendering of the background varies greatly which suggests the panels were carved by different hands in the same workshop.\textsuperscript{31} For instance, in the cityscape of the healing and baptism scenes, there are some classical elements as well as buildings with either

domed or peaked rooftops. The architecture of the consecration scene is overwhelmingly classical incorporating a framing backdrop of two columns, with stylized capitals, supporting an arch over a fluted niche. None of the architectural elements in the three Anianas ivories can be interpreted as particularly eastern.

Moving considerably forward in time by six centuries, another image of Saints Mark and Anianas appears in a 1346 altarpiece by Arnau Bassa, commissioned by a shoemakers’ guild in Barcelona for their chapel in the Barcelona Cathedral (figure 16).32 The central scene of this triptych contains Saint Mark consecrating Anianas as a bishop of the Coptic Church. Although the mitre and crosier Anianas receives are not particularly remarkable, he wears a distinctive blue robe covered in a pattern of many gold shoes, a less than subtle reference to Anianas’ status as the patron saint of shoemakers. Surrounding this central scene are smaller ones narrating the life of Saint Mark. In the leftmost panel are four scenes which relate the injury and healing of Anianas (figure 17), followed by the subsequent education and baptism of Anianas and his wife. There is little attempt to establish the setting as Alexandria; instead, the location is more reminiscent of fourteenth-century Barcelona. In lieu of a turban, Saint Anianas wears a contemporary hat. He has a neatly trimmed beard, and the attire of a fourteenth-century craftsman. In the consecration scene, Anianas is given a halo which serves to elevate him to the status of Saint Mark. Overall, Anianas’ iconography in this altarpiece does not orientalize the saint, as in the Venetian art of the fifteenth century. Instead, he is cast in the role of serendipitous tradesman who receives a miraculous healing by Saint Mark, applies himself

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32 Josep M. Gasol, La Seu de Manresa (Manresa: Collegiate Basilica Sta. Maria de la Seu, 1978), 266-267. Gasol relates that in 1437, when the Barcelona shoemakers’ guild moved their patronage to another chapel, they commissioned another altarpiece more in keeping with the new space. The former altarpiece was given to the artist working on the new commission, Bernat Martorell, who Gasol believes, brokered the move to its present location at Santa Maria de la Seu in Manresa.
through religious education, participates in the sacrament of baptism, and rises to prominence as the Bishop of the Coptic Church.

The last non-Venetian image we will examine is contained within a fifteenth-century fresco in the church of San Lorenzo in Vittorio Veneto (figure 18). There is evidence to suggest that the construction of the church and the associated frescos occurred around 1434. The frescos are damaged but restoration has revealed cycles commemorating the enthroned Virgin and four saints San Liberale and San Vittore who are the patrons of the two neighboring diocese, Treviso and Feltre, and Saints Mark and Lorenzo. Michelangelo Murano speculated that the master who produced the frescos was a follower of Jacobello del Fiore. In the gothic niche devoted to the life of Saint Mark is a lunette containing healing and baptism scenes. In this fresco, with narration reading from right to left, Saint Mark delivers a gesture of blessing but at the same time reaches to take hold of Anianas’ injured hand. The most remarkable aspect of the fresco is that the attire of Anianas is entirely in keeping with contemporary fashion. He wears the rich clothing of a fifteenth-century nobleman including ornate cap, cape and hose. The next scene depicts a baptism inside a small classical temple, which Murano suggests is Saint Peter baptizing Saint Mark. Conversely, the scene could be Saint Mark baptizing Saint Anianas, as there is little attempt to connect the classical temple in which the baptism takes place to either Egypt or Rome. If the narration is indeed read right to left, the Mark/Anianas assignment fits in a chronology in which the next scene is Saint Mark’s martyrdom in Alexandria.

In both the Barcelona altarpiece and the Vittorio Veneto fresco, the artistic intent is to present Anianas as a relatable convert, a reflection of the church membership. For instance, in the Barcelona altarpiece, Anianas is an ordinary tradesman, a faithful believer who rose from

33 Michelangelo Muraro, La Chiesa di S. Lorenzo a Serravalle e i Suoi Affreschi (Udine: Del Bianco, 1975), 7.
34 Muraro, La Chiesa di S. Lorenzo a Serravalle e i Suoi Affreschi, 23.
humble cobbler to high bishop. In the Vittorio Veneto fresco, Anianas is an upper-class tradesman, fortunate to encounter Saint Mark in his role as a prosperous shopkeeper. Certainly Barcelona and the *terra firma* region had their own eastern political concerns; however, these issues did not participate in transforming the iconography associated with Saints Mark and Anianas.

As these contrasting iconographies display, it is clear that images of Saint Anianas had a quite specific meaning in Venice, increasing the prestige of the city’s main patron saint, Saint Mark, by depicting him as a Christ-like healer and, in the fifteenth century, endeavoring to further elevate Saint Mark by lowering the societal position of Saint Anianas.
CHAPTER 4

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY IMAGES OF SAINTS MARK AND ANIANAS IN VENICE

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the iconography associated with Saint Anianas in Venice was manipulated to present a very different image of the saint from Alexandria. While the fundamental devices continue in fifteenth-century images of Saint Anianas, the traditional program is supplemented with additional iconography motivated by the political and religious tension of this period. Artists begin to emphasize the eastern origins of Saint Anianas by endowing him with an increasingly larger turban and placing him in a more obvious position of reverence to Saint Mark.

The underlying religious and political motivations behind the shift in iconography are best understood in the context of the changing relationship between Venice and its eastern counterparts. As John Julius Norwich succinctly stated, “for Venice glory meant trade.” Strategic decisions were invariably motivated by the financial interests of their trading empire. For centuries, Venice carefully managed their relationship with the East with the intent to expand trade in the lucrative eastern Mediterranean region. This economic strategy was to a degree successful. Nevertheless, the Venetians were at the mercy of decrees, issued from both church and state, which could benefit or hinder their trade. In 1082, the “Golden Bull” issued by Byzantine Emperor Alexius I, freed Venice from trade tariffs in many Byzantine cities. Subsequent Byzantine Emperors either renewed or refuse this privilege based on political circumstances. Frustrated by their inability to control their economic destiny, in the early

36 Seth Parry, “Fifty Years of Failed Plans: Venice, Humanism, and the Turks (1453-1503)” (PhD diss., ProQuest Order No. 3325457, City University of New York, 2008), xi.
thirteenth century, Venice’s leadership moved to exploit the weakness of the Byzantine Empire and the crusading zeal of western Europeans. Intent on securing a position of political prominence, Venice manipulated the Fourth Crusade to become the Sack of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{37}

Even in the face of western censure after the Sack, the fourteenth century was generally a time of trade expansion for the Serene Republic of Venice, but the growing power of the Ottoman Empire was a concern that led to Venice’s participation in the papal-sponsored anti-Turkish naval league from 1332-1345.\textsuperscript{38} Participants in this league included forces from the papacy, the Hospitallers of Rhodes, Cyprus and the Byzantine Empire. While couched in western crusade rhetoric, the alliance primarily succeeded in thwarting piracy in the Aegean and ensuring the Dardanelles and Bosporus straits were open to shipping traffic.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was increasingly in direct conflict with the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Emperor turned to the Venetians for assistance protecting valuable trade ports: an alliance which did not always succeed as shown by the fall of Venetian-protected Salonica in 1430 after a financially detrimental two-year siege.\textsuperscript{39} The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottomans further threatened the Venetian mercantile empire and the advantageous trade pacts they previously held with the Byzantine Empire. In the fifty-year period after the Fall of Constantinople, a contingent of Venetian humanists advocated for an aggressive response against the growing power of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{40} As a direct result of this amplified enmity, and at the brink of war over an attack on the Venetian fortress of Lepanto, the Venetian Council under the leadership of Doge Moro voted in 1463 to join in a

\textsuperscript{37} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 127-134.
\textsuperscript{38} Parry, “Fifty Years of Failed Plans: Venice, Humanism, and the Turks (1453--1503),” 66.
\textsuperscript{39} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 343.
\textsuperscript{40} Parry, “Fifty Years of Failed Plans: Venice, Humanism, and the Turks (1453--1503),” 3.
papal-led crusade against the Ottoman Empire. The Pope and the King of Naples raised a small fleet to aid the Venetians; however, Venice was largely on its own in a protracted war that is variously known as The Long War or the First Venetian-Ottoman War.\textsuperscript{41} While there were minor successes, Venice lost strategic holdings including the islands of Negroponte and Lemnos, all holdings on the Greek mainland, and virtually all of Albania.\textsuperscript{42}

After the 1479 peace treaty that ended the Long War, Venetian trade resumed but always in the shadow of potential Ottoman aggression and with far less favorable financial terms than during the rule of the Byzantine Empire.\textsuperscript{43} In that same year, Gentile Bellini was sent to Constantinople by the Venetian Senate as a cultural ambassador. There Bellini painted the well-known portrait of Mehmet II, the first western painting of an eastern Sultan (figure 19). This painting serves as a useful reference point for subsequent western depictions of the Ottoman East.\textsuperscript{44} The peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire was renewed under Mehmet II’s successor Bajazet II but only after further Venetian trade concessions.\textsuperscript{45} This uneasy peace lasted two decades, until 1499, when once again Venice and the Ottoman Empire were at war over contested land in the Aegean and Adriatic.\textsuperscript{46} This second Ottoman War (1499-1503) was to prove disastrous for the Venetians and afterwards Venice opted for a return to their previous position of appeasement with their eastern neighbors.

\textsuperscript{41} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 349-357.
\textsuperscript{42} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 357.
\textsuperscript{43} Parry, “Fifty Years of Failed Plans: Venice, Humanism, and the Turks (1453--1503),” 409.
\textsuperscript{44} The frequent quotation from Bellini’s painting of Mehmet is noted by several sources including: Raby, \textit{Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode}, 25 who noted that Dürer followed the Bellini prototype in many drawings including his \textit{Three Standing Orientals} in the British Museum and the research of Jardine and Brotton, \textit{Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West}, 32, recognized the likeness in a later portrait medal by Constanzo da Ferrara now in the National Gallery, Washington DC.
\textsuperscript{45} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 358.
\textsuperscript{46} Norwich, \textit{A History of Venice}, 384.
During this period of tension, after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and through the second Ottoman War, Venice briefly adopted the religious rhetoric of the Western Christian world which included an eschatologically-based sense of urgency to bring as many people as possible to Christian salvation prior to the End of Days, believed to be fast approaching with the half-millennium of 1500. Societal fears associated with the coming of the End of Days provided a rationalization for the demonization of Muslims, pejoratively referred to as Turks and Saracens. In western manuscript illumination, created as early as the eleventh century, Turks were cast in the role of Christian adversary in response to broadly circulated communications from the Christian church.\(^{47}\) For instance, in his 1095 speech to the Council of Clarmont, Pope Urban II called for a crusade to defend the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Lands from Ottoman invasion:

> From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion.

Robert the Monk’s Version of Pope Urban II Speech\(^{48}\)

The progressive encroachment of the Ottoman Empire on previously Christian-held territory provoked anxieties about Christianity’s supremacy relative to Islam. As a reaction to the tension created by the Fall and subsequent Venetian-Ottoman Wars, in Venetian image-

\(^{47}\) Debra Higgs Stickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 180. Strickland provides many examples of demonized Saracens in manuscript illumination; however, many images do not strive for accurate eastern attire. A notable exception is contained in “Battle of Roncevaux”, *Grandes Chroniques de France*, late fourteenth century, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, MS 2, fol. 118, in which the eastern forces are presented in accurate horizontally folded turbans.

\(^{48}\) Dana C. Munro, "Urban and the Crusaders", *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, Vol 1:2, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1895), 5-8.
making, Saint Anianas is placed in an increasingly inferior position relative to Saint Mark, often with Anianas seated directly on the ground and Saint Mark towering over him. It is curious that Venetian artists would choose to employ Saint Anianas to represent the domination of Christianity over the Islamic faiths since by the fifteenth century, Anianas was hardly a success story for long-lasting Christian evangelism. After Saints Mark and Anianas established the Coptic Church in Alexandria, membership grew and Christianity quickly became the majority faith in the region. However, beginning with the Muslim conquest of Egypt in the mid-seventh century and continuing through to the establishment of the Mamluk Empire, Christianity’s membership dwindled.\textsuperscript{49} Many Egyptian Christians converted to the state-promoted faith of Islam sometimes motivated by a desire to avoid punitive taxes or to qualify for positions in government.\textsuperscript{50} By the fifteenth century, the Christian population of Egypt was only a fraction of its prior size.\textsuperscript{51} While Anianas would seem to be another reminder of Christian loss to Islam, his marginalization in art was a projection of Venetian desire to restore a Christian-dominated East.

Eastern motifs were however present in Venetian art and architecture before the Fall of Constantinople. These stylistic influences came from many sources including trade and diplomatic interactions between the East and the West. The treasury of Saint Mark’s Basilica held luxury objects from Muslin courts in Egypt and Syria from the tenth century and the acquisition of such works continued through the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{52} Even in light of the already


\textsuperscript{50} Gabra and Eaton-Krauss, \textit{The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo}, xv. Initially Christian monasteries were exempt from the tax levy, however beginning in 705 the monks were also obliged to pay the tax.

\textsuperscript{51} Gabra and Eaton-Krauss, \textit{The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo}, xvi. After the fall of the Mamluk Empire to the Ottoman Turks in 1517, both Christians and Mamluk Muslims were subject to persecution.

present strong eastern influence, there was a decided stylistic change in the fifteenth century that reflected the political and religious tensions of the time. This art was first dubbed the “Oriental Mode” by Julian Raby.53

This term describes how, between the 1490s and the 1520s, Venetian art experienced a marked increase in the representation of Islamic settings, attire, and other objects with eastern motifs. These motifs had their early origins in sketchbooks of Jacopo Bellini who, in his sketchbook now in the Musée du Louvre, incorporated turbaned bystanders in *The Flagellation of Christ in a Palatial Building*.54 Jacopo’s sons, Gentile and Giovanni, also represented Oriental motifs in their paintings commissioned by the *scuole* of Venice. And following in their path, Cima da Conegliano, Giovanni Mansueti, and Vittore Carpaccio painted in the Oriental Mode during this period. While previously scenes of Saints Mark and Aniandas had incorporated eastern elements, most prominently the inclusion of the Pharos lighthouse of Alexandria, this was the period in which the iconography of the two saints began to transform in response to the complex Venetian religious anxieties of the period.

In addition to the turbulent religious and political situation of the fifteenth century, two significant events occurred which solidified the cobbler’s presence in Venetian imagery. The first is a little known piece of hagiography. Although the story of the Saint Mark’s move from Alexandria to Venice is fairly well known, the *translatio* story of Saint Anianas is not. According to church tradition, the body of Saint Anianas was transported from Alexandria to the church on the island of San Clemente in 1288.55 In 1432, San Clemente was acquired by the
Santa Maria della Carità monastery and it was decided to move the increasingly important relic of Saint Anianas to their more centrally-located monastery. There it was given a position of prominence in their main altar dedicated to the Virgin Annunciate, the Cross, Saint Augustine and Saint Anianas. The second pivotal event was the construction of a permanent confraternity building dedicated to the cobbler saint. While the Scuola dei Calegheri was founded in the fourteenth century, their confraternity building on Campo San Tomà was constructed in the mid-fifteenth century. These two events further established the importance of Saint Anianas in Venetian culture.

A survey of fifteenth-century images will further illustrate the fifteenth-century iconographic program. The first extant image from this period is a 1478 polychrome marble relief attributed to Pietro Lombardo.56 The relief is framed by an ogee arch, appropriately located over the door of the Scuola dei Calegheri (figure 20). The architecture in the background is stylistically eastern and it is significant that for the first time, Saint Anianas is no longer on a workbench but instead seated on the decidedly more lowly ground with Saint Mark commanding the attention of the cobbler as he towers over him. In an increasingly orientalizing manner, the artist has chosen to make Saint Ananias’ turban larger than the earlier healing images and his beard is now in a pointy Assyrian or Persian style. This portal decoration provided a vital exterior image of the scuola’s patron, Anianas, to passersby in the Campo San Tomà.

On the interior of their new confraternity hall, the Scuola dei Calegheri decorated the piano nobile albergo with a fresco cycle covering all four walls. Neither the author nor the date of the frescos is known and they are badly damaged with large losses throughout the cycle. In the rectangular room, one long wall features six monumental saints, including Saints Mark and Anianas (figures 1 and 21). On the opposing wall is a narrative cycle which could be interpreted as the Alexandrian life of Saints Mark and Anianas. Frescos on the two shorter walls, depict a large Saint Christopher crossing a river with another figure seated on a horse, and an Annunciation on the opposing wall. On the long wall with six saints, the figures of Saints Mark and Anianas are centrally placed and, of all the frescos, Saint Anianas’ image is the least damaged. He wears a turban and, like the other saints depicted in the cycle, has a halo. Anianas carries an awl in his right hand and displays his injured left hand in an orant-like position. Unlike the portal scene, Anianas beard is not particularly orientalized and the landscape behind him is does not read as eastern in origin. To the right of Anianas is Saint Mark; they are separated by a portion of the cycle that is completely obliterated but perhaps previously contained a narrative of healing or baptism. The bearded Saint Mark’s attributes include an open book in his right hand and a domed church in his left. The church might be interpreted as symbolic of Saint Mark’s establishment of the Coptic Church but there is no interpretive ambiguity to the symbol of a seated lion at his feet. As behind Anianas, the small landscape behind Saint Mark provides a measure of three-dimensionality but is not stylistically eastern.

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57 Touring Club Italiano, Venezia e provincia: Chioggia, la Laguna i Lidi, le ville del Brenta, Milano: Touring Editore, 2004, 57. This touring guide is one of the few that mention the existence of the frescos in a building now employed as a public children’s library.

58 The narration is broken into four divisions. The first contains a scene of cobblers at work, the second represents a castle with a religious procession, the third contains a shipwreck with figures who later disembark, and the fourth scene is dark and, as a result, illegible.

59 In the portion of the cycle between Saints Anianas and Mark, a decorative base remains. As a result, the section could not have contained another monumental saint.
Within the same time frame of the construction of the small confraternity hall by the Scuola dei Calegheri, two large marble reliefs attributed to Pietro Lombardo’s son, Tullio Lombardo, were attached to the new façade of the Scuola Grandi di San Marco (figures 22 and 23). Unlike the Scuola dei Calegheri, this confraternity could afford splendid ornamentation and as a result, they commissioned an opulent Renaissance style confraternity hall in 1485 to replace the previous Gothic style building destroyed by a fire.\(^{60}\) Like other *scuole grandi*, the adornment of their confraternity hall was an expression of both civic honor and religious devotion.\(^{61}\) A marble relief of the *Healing of Saint Anianas* appears on the left of the *albergo* door, the entrance leading to the *scuola* meeting room, and a *Baptism of Saint Anianas* to the right. In the healing scene, the shoemaker is again shown seated on the ground with Saint Mark and other participants standing over him. The cobbler wears his largest turban to date and has a flowing beard. He looks away from Saint Mark at the moment of healing as if fearful of the mere sight of blood. Significantly an eastern figure is central to the grouping. He wears the Ottoman style of turban wrapped around a ribbed cap called a *tâj* and another figure in the leftmost background wears a tall, fur-covered *zamt* indicative of the Mamluk military.\(^{62}\) While these two figures introduce both Turkish and Mamluk elements to the scene, the central figure is critical to the composition. He serves as a Turkish witness to the healing miracle and his inclusion, central to the scene, is an example of visual rhetoric designed to convince the eastern viewer of the power of Christianity. In the pendant baptismal relief, the same eastern witness appears a second time, this time as a witness to the power of Christian conversion through baptism.

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\(^{61}\) Brown, Patricia Fortini, “Honor and Necessity: The Dynamics of Patronage in the Confraternities of Renaissance Venice,” *Studi Veneziani* 14 (1987): 182,189. Fortini Brown’s research argues that the elaborate ornamentation was not driven by scuole competition, but instead a collective effort to produce magnificence to incur divine favor.

A drawing of *Saint Mark Healing the Cobbler Anianas* attributed to Giovanni Bellini, now in the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, is thought to be part of a series of drawings that constituted the design inspiration for the Scuola Grandi di San Marco façade (figure 24).63 Dated around the time of the two marble reliefs, there are similarities between the two healing compositions. In both works, a monumental and highly classicized Saint Mark towers over the seated Anianas, and a central figure with a large turban and flowing beard acts as the eastern witness to the miracle. In addition, similar eastern bystanders in the background are not drawn into the central action but serve as signifiers for the East based on their attire. If this drawing is indeed evidence of Bellini’s participation in the design of the Scuola Grandi di San Marco reliefs, it also suggests that Giovanni Bellini invented the central eastern witness. This prominent eastern participant is incorporated into almost every subsequent fifteenth-century scene of Saints Mark and Anianas.

In addition to the two large marble reliefs on the façade of the Scuola di San Marco, Tullio Lombardo also designed a tomb for Doge Giovanni Mocenigo located in the Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. This work is believed to be one of the last commissions from Tullio Lombardo and is described by Peter Humfrey as a new type of chapel adornment which he called an “architectural altarpiece.”64 While the tomb was completed many years after the death of the doge in 1485, it reflects the political and religious tensions of the fifteenth century. In the stylobate are two scenes of baptism, carved in marble using a low relief technique. On the left is the *Baptism of Christ* and on the right is the *Baptism of Anianas* (figures 25 and 4). It is unusual

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63 Peter Humfrey, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 242-243. Humfrey mentions a partial architectural sketch on the drawing’s verso which lends further credence to the supposition that Giovanni Bellini had a design role in the Scuole Grandi di San Marco reliefs.

64 Peter Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 291. Humfrey credits Tullio Lombardo with creating this tectonic type of design, which served as both a tomb and altarpiece.
to find two baptism scenes on the monument. However, the theme is in keeping with the name saint of the doge, John the Baptist, and also reflects fifteenth-century eschatological concerns.

On close examination, these two scenes react to the political and religious climate that desired Christian conversion of the eastern “other” during the late fifteenth century. Reading from left to right, the scene of Christ’s baptism provides the model for Christian conversion. Christ, standing in the river Jordan, is central to the composition with John the Baptist on the extreme right riverbank at the moment he baptizes Christ. In the background are palm trees and architecture that serve to place the scene in the region of present-day Jordan, standing on the leftmost riverbank are three angelic witnesses, and in the sky is the dove of the Holy Spirit. If this scene represents the model of Christian conversion, the scene to the right represents the desire of Venetians to effect the conversion of non-Christians. Saint Mark baptizes Anianas at a large square baptismal font with a ram’s head on each corner, a reference to Abraham’s sacrifice of a ram in place of Isaac and a typological reference to the later sacrifice of Christ. Central to this composition is the eastern witness to the baptism who, as in the previous Tullio Lombardo relief for the Scuola Grandi di San Marco, also wears a large turban wrapped around a tāj. This time the eastern witness gazes and points heavenward as if to proactively acknowledge the power of Christianity. In the rightmost side of the scene a trunk of a fig tree sprouts new leaves and a woman and child representing Anianas’ wife and child also come forward for baptism. The child holds a serpent which might be a dual reference to original sin and the passage from the gospel of Mark 16:18, which states that Christians are immune to serpent venom.\footnote{Anne Markham Schulz, “Scultura Del Secondo Quattrocento e Del Primo Cinquecento Il Rinascimento,” in La Basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo: Pantheon della Serenissima, ed. Giuseppe Pavanello (Venice: Marcianum Press, 2012), 188. Schulz finds broad stylistic differences in the two baptismal panels and infers both Tullio Lombardo and other workshop members participated in the process.} By contrast, Christ wears a cloth to cover his nakedness, while the figures of Anianas and his family are not granted...
the same measure of decorum. As they are being baptized via affusion versus immersion, their
nakedness suggests either an inferior position relative to the other figures or the artist’s desire to
more faithfully follow classical composition by incorporating nude, idealized figures. If the
latter is the case, the unusual, square shape of the baptismal font might signify further
recognition of classically inspired perfect geometric shapes. The baptismal font was more
characteristically round or octagonal in shape, or reflected the less prevalent Venetian font
altar. Overall the effect is a stylized relief with an Orientalizing figure, serving as a witness to
the power of Christianity, inserted in the middle.

Returning to the Basilica di San Marco, in 1493 a new sacristy was consecrated, an
architectural commission of Doge Agostino Barbarigo. The new space was lined with inlaid
cabinets executed by the brothers Antonio and Paolo Mola. The marquetry cabinet doors
display various scenes from the life, martyrdom, translatio, and later posthumous miracles of
Saint Mark. The narrative panels include the Healing of Anianas and the Baptism of Anianas
(figures 26 and 27). The healing panel encompasses a central tower that could be a loose
interpretation of the Alexandrian lighthouse but the architecture is more representative of the
Piazza San Marco. In the background to the left, figures in the attire of fifteenth-century
Venetian gentlemen stroll through an open colonnade. These side figures do not participate in
the miracle vignette and are included to serve as testimony to the veracity of the scene in keeping
with the “eyewitness style” of Venetian narrative painting as analyzed by Patricia Fortini

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Renaissance Society of America, New York, NY, March 28, 2014). Worthen’s research revealed the hybrid font
altar emerged in Venice around 1500 at a time when the sacrament of baptism and the Eucharist received parallel
distinction in church architectural commissions. In 1581, the font altars were deemed unacceptable by the Church
and most were replaced with the more traditional round format. Worthen found only two surviving examples of the
font altar in Venice.

Brown. In the center foreground, Anianas, wearing a large turban and a beard that comes to a point in the Assyrian style, kneels before Saint Mark. Saint Mark delivers a gesture of blessing as he heals the injured left hand of the cobbler. The kneeling position of Saint Anianas suggests a knight swearing an oath of fealty to his lord.

In the subsequent baptism scene, a near naked and bareheaded Anianas kneels before Saint Mark as the evangelist pours water from a round vessel. Again the architecture is more akin to Venice than Alexandria including a carving of a winged lion affixed to a building on the left and a clock tower in the background to the right. Unlike the Lombardo bas-reliefs, there are no central eastern witnesses in these scenes. However, the skilled intarsia artists have included sufficient elements of iconography to portray Anianas as a turban wearing eastern figure who kneels in a subservient manner before Saint Mark.

The previously mentioned opulent building built by the Scuola Grandi di San Marco in 1485 necessitated the pictorial decoration of the interior of their new building. The scuola commissioned Giovanni di Niccolò Mansueti to provide two paintings as part of a larger cycle narrating the life of Saint Mark to decorate their albergo (figures 28 and 29). Although completed in the early part of the sixteenth century, two paintings by Mansueti comply with the fifteenth-century Venetian iconography that marginalized Saint Anianas. The painting containing the healing scene is the larger of the two and the composition is layered in architectural complexity. As in other paintings for this cycle, there are three architectural levels to the scene. The top level consists of a balcony that rests above the second level that contains seven barrel vaulted arched arcades. In the largest, central arcade, a Mamluk sultan wearing a

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large waterwheel turban, or *al-nacura*, holds court seated on a throne with the Mamluk emblem at its peak.69 The lowest level is an Alexandrian street scene and at the center, almost lost in the crowd, is Saint Mark healing Anianas. The composition for the healing is similar to Cima da Conegliano’s painting for the silk weavers in Santa Maria dei Crociferi which will be presented as a case study in Chapter 5. The similarity is not surprising as Cima and Mansueti both contributed paintings to the earlier cycle for the silk weavers’ guild. There was a commissioning connection as well because a prominent Venetian, Alvise Dardani, was both a protector of the Crociferi church and Guardian Grande at the Scuole di San Marco.70 Scattered throughout the first and second levels of Mansueti’s painting are portraits of individuals in contemporary Venetian attire who gaze out at the viewer, presumably representing members of the Scuola Grande di San Marco who commissioned the cycle. Most of the Venetians are in black attire; however the member closest to Saint Mark wears red robes signifying his important Procurator role in Venetian government. Anianas is seated on the ground, albeit on a red cushion, with Saint Mark’s sandal in his lap. He extends his left hand to Saint Mark who delivers a gesture of blessing. Unlike previous compositions that inserted a single eastern witness to the miracle, Mansueti’s painting incorporates four eastern witnesses. This inner group of Mamluk witnesses wear tall, vertically folded turbans and gesture in acknowledgement of the miraculous healing. Focusing on the iconographic treatment of Saint Anianas, we see the fifteenth-century imposition of a large grey turban to denote the eastern “other.” He is also seated in a position which places him lower than any other figure in the larger scene.

69 Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode*, 35 and 43.

70 Allison M. Sherman, "The Lost Venetian Church of Santa Maria Assunta Dei Crociferi : Form, Decoration, and Patronage" (PhD diss., Order No. U577501, University of St. Andrews, 2010), 178.
Similarly, the healing scene in Mansueti’s cycle for the Scuola Grandi di San Marco, contains three architectural levels. The painting has an unusually tall vertical format that was necessary to conform to its placement next to a window in the meeting room of the Scuola. There are the same complicated architectural elements and the inclusion of the Mamluk coat of arms in the roundels of the arched arcades. The baptism occurs on the second level and unlike the healing scene with a scant four eastern witnesses, this narrative displays many of the Mamluk participants intently observing the baptism from all three levels. This is unusual for the Venetian narrative style of painting in which typically a miraculous event can be largely unnoticed by individuals going about their daily activities. The deviation suggests a desire to express the conversion rhetoric of the period by purposefully depicting the eastern participants’ acknowledgement of the baptism. Anianas wears only a red cloth about his waist and kneels in prayer as Saint Mark baptizes him with a small bowl of water. Almost lost among the many thought-provoking elements of the narrative is a small, seated child on the lowest flight of stairs. The child reaches out to a goldfinch, an iconographic reference to the passion of Christ; an allusion to Christian salvation that is appropriate for a scene of baptism.

Like the scene of healing, the predominant style of turban is Mamluk which, while appropriate to the contemporary rule of the region, is a significant anachronism suggesting a conscious decision to mingle historical and contemporary references to present a constant course of Christian history. Anianas lived in Alexandria during the first-century Roman rule of the region, and the Mamluk rule of the region did not occur until the thirteenth century. The

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inclusion of contemporary Mamluk attire in the painting suggests the desire of Venetians to incorporate a scene of Christian conversion in a largely Muslim empire.

Renaissance art has frequently demonstrated that the iconography associated with a subject can shift under the weight of changing religious or political circumstances. For instance, in his study of Venetian iconography associated with state sponsored myth making, David Rosand demonstrated that the leonine imagery associated with Venice’s patron saint, Saint Mark, was variously shown as the militant lion of war or a pacific lion, representing the Peace of the Saint Mark. The militant lion referred to the territorial expansion of the Venetian empire as it laid claim to both mainland domains in northeast Italy, the stato da terra, and maritime possessions, the stato da màr. The pacific lion referred to the comforting promise of peace offered from Christ to Mark while he was in prison: “Peace be with you, Mark, my evangelist.” In what Rosand called “slippage,” the iconography changed based on political circumstances and the resulting message the Venetian state wished to convey at the time.73

The shift in interpretive treatment is unmistakably evident in the evolution the iconography related to Saint Anianas. Over the late Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, Saint Anianas evolved from representing Saint Mark’s near saintly equal to marginalized easterner. In the context of religious and political pressures in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the previous iconographically neutral image of Saint Anianas is transformed into an eastern figure in need of Christian salvation via baptism by Saint Mark the Evangelist. Saint Anianas is placed in a marginalized position, low to or directly on the ground. He typically wears a large, bulbous turban in either the Ottoman or Mamluk style. Even when Anianas is turban-less, as in the case of baptism scenes, he is often surrounded by other eastern figures in large turbans who

73 Rosand, Myths of Venice: the figuration of a state, 49.
acknowledge the Christian conversion. During this period of religious and political anxiety, the marginalization of Anianas provided a demonstration of hegemonic power which was reassuring to the Venetian audience.
CHAPTER 5

VENETIAN ICONOGRAPHY OF SAINTS MARK AND ANIANAS
IN CIMA DA CONEGLIANO’S A MIRACLE OF SAINT MARK

Cima da Conegliano’s painting, *A Miracle of Saint Mark*, provides a valuable case study exemplifying many of the features of the late fifteenth-century shift in the iconographic treatment of Saint Anianas (figure 30). This chapter will examine Cima’s painting in its original setting and in comparison to two similar orientalist style paintings by Vittore Carpaccio. This analysis will show that iconography associated with Saints Mark and Anianas reflected the changing Venetian perception of eastern cultures after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in 1453 and during the subsequent protracted Ottoman-Venetian Wars.

Cima da Conegliano’s origins are representative of the expanded territorial reach of the Venetian empire in the late fifteenth century. As his name suggests, Cima was born in the *terra firma* town of Conegliano in the Northern Veneto region. Although there is no documentary evidence which refers to his artistic training, it is believed that Cima apprenticed with a provincial instructor and progressed to a Venetian master before establishing his own workshop in Venice. His more notable works are altarpieces; however, Cima painted both an altarpiece and a narrative style painting for the Venetian silk weavers’ guild, the Arte dei Setaioli.

Although the Arte dei Setaioli was grouped in the lesser *scuole piccolo* category of professional and devotional confraternities, their membership ranks were integral to the important silk industry in Venice. Silk manufacturing constituted one of the most lucrative economic activities in Renaissance Venice and was a dominant driver of trade with both the...
European and Leventine markets. Arte dei Setaioli members were actively engaged in the import of raw silk from Egypt, Syria and Persia and the export of silk thread and cloth to the luxury market in many Islamic territories and on the European continent. The center of the confraternity’s devotional activity was the church of Santa Maria Assunta dei Crociferi in the Cannaregio sestiere where the guild, joined by as many as six other scuole, lavishly decorated the altars and chapels of this church initiated around 1490.

The Arte dei Setaioli’s apsidal chapel was located to the left of the high altar in Santa Maria Assunta dei Crociferi (the church was later acquired by the Jesuits and rebuilt in the eighteenth century). This scuola chapel was dedicated to two important Venetian patron saints: the Virgin Annunciate and Saint Mark. It is notable that the Arte dei Setaioli chose to venerate Saint Mark. The scuola’s official patron saint was Saint Christopher who, as the designated protector of travelers, must have provided a measure of reassurance to confraternity members who traveled extensively in the course of their silk trade. The dedication to Saint Mark must have served another role outside the typical veneration of the scuola’s patron saint. By commemorating Saint Mark, the members of the Arte dei Setaioli, many of whom were immigrants from an area around Lucca in Tuscany, were choosing to align themselves with a major symbol of the state of Venice, building their societal prestige by association.

In 1495, Cima da Conegliano painted an Annunciation altarpiece for the chapel and, in 1497, the artist was once again commissioned to paint a scene from the life of Saint Mark.

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77 Sherman, "The Lost Venetian Church of Santa Maria Assunta dei Crociferi," 171-174.
Cima’s painting was part of a cycle comprising four scenes. The cycle included Cima’s *A Miracle of Saint Mark, Saint Mark Preaching* by Lattanzio da Rimini (now lost), Giovanni Mansueti’s *Arrest and Trial of Saint Mark*, and a fourth painting from an unknown author believed to be a scene of Saint Mark’s martyrdom (also now lost). If the two surviving works in this cycle are representative of the overall program, the narrative consistently referred to Mamluk iconography. The paintings’ eastern theme would have resonated with the guild patrons, who enjoyed close commercial relationships with the Mamluk Empire.

Several contemporary accounts aid our understanding of how the Saint Mark paintings were displayed in the chapel. In a 1604 account by Giovanni Stringa, the author noted that the four paintings originally hung on the left wall of the chapel in consecutive order of their appearance in the *Golden Legend* account with Cima’s painting appearing first in the narrative sequence. This positioning received the best light from the main church and ensured that Cima’s painting was the first painting the viewer would encounter upon entering the chapel. This placement also operates well with Cima’s composition which arranges the paintings’ principal participants on a diagonal line. The line originates from Anianas’ position at the lowest point and continues upwards at a forty five degree angle culminating at the striking red hat of a man on horseback. While the color of this particular hat is typically red, Cima used the color to his advantage to further attract the eye of the viewer along this line. The angle of the composition would have drawn the eye of the viewer entering the chapel into the painting.

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79 Humfrey notes the influences conveyed in Cima’s *Annunciation* include those of Netherlandish art as well as Giovanni Bellini’s *San Giobbe Altarpiece* created in 1487. Cima’s *Annunciation* is now located in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Peter Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 32.


81 Francesco Sansovino and Giovanni Stringa, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare descritta in XIII libri* (1604), 147.
moving from the low point where the gaze of Anianas followed along the line to Saint Mark and culminated at the highpoint of the composition where the gaze of the horseman directed the attention back towards Anianas. In addition to these compositional choices, *A Miracle of Saint Mark* is nearly six feet tall by four and a half feet wide which provided a large, commanding image for viewers entering the chapel.

A technical examination of Cima’s *A Miracle of Saint Mark* reveals the painting is completed in oil paint on poplar panel. Due to condition issues only a fragment of the artist’s signature remains in the lower left hand corner and the panel is inscribed with the date 1499. In keeping with the hagiographic account from the *Golden Legend*, the setting of *A Miracle of Saint Mark* is first-century Alexandria. The background comprises two sides of a public plaza with an open loggia on one side and a large domed temple in the background. Overall the architecture is stylistically classical suggesting the Roman rule during this period in Alexandria; however, Cima has chosen to incorporate many contemporary ornamental features in his fictive architectural setting including ornate façades and the extensive use of heavily veined marble. Both the loggia and the marble on the temple’s façade echo the architecture of the Piazza San Marco including the integration of precious materials such as rare porphyry. The building in the background incorporates a frieze evocative of the fifteenth-century sculpture of Pietro Lombardo, and the temple pediment features a marine goddess more in keeping with Venetian than Alexandrian mythos. The façade of the temple also exhibits Middle Eastern elements including a distinctive grouping of circles that harkens to the Mamluk palace of Bashtak, one of

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82 Peter Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 83. On the Mansueti painting there is the same date inscription along with the names of ten guidezi, or Arte dei Setaioli committee members appointed by the guild to supervise the commission.

the most magnificent palaces in Cairo. This motif also appears on the ornate façade of Ca’ Dario, a residence built on the Grand Canal in the 1480s for Giovanni Dario, a diplomatic envoy to Egypt, Persia, and the Turkish court in Constantinople (figure 31). Beside the loggia is a brick building with a cobbler’s shop where the healing miracle occurs.

At the same time Cima was working on A Miracle of Saint Mark, Vittore Carpaccio was creating the Life of Saint Ursula cycle for the Scuola di Sant’ Orsola. The Saint Ursula cycle contains nine paintings with architectural elements analogous to Cima’s A Miracle of Saint Mark. For instance in Carpaccio’s The Arrival of the English Ambassadors to the King of Brittany, the setting should be the court of the King of Brittany, yet the artist chose included a six-sided tempietto in the background that is predominantly classical but with decorative surface treatments reminiscent of Venice (figure 32). The temple dome rests on a drum and an open loggia with polychrome marble columns appears on the left. Many of these architectural elements also appear in Cima’s composition suggesting he sought inspiration from Carpaccio’s Saint Ursula cycle.

Moving from the architecture to the figural grouping, Cima has placed in the foreground a gathering of eastern men who actively connect to the healing scene. Central to this group, Cima has positioned the barelegged cobbler Anianas low to the ground on a stool in front of the shop window. Another cobbler, holding a leather cutting knife, leans out of the window. Anianas has injured his left hand with the awl that he holds in his right hand, and he extends the

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84 Deborah Howard, *Venice & the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000): 153-154. Howard suggests that the motif was the conception of Giovanni Dario who had most likely saw the design during a diplomatic mission to Cairo but that Venetian masons added the Byzantine style borders that refer to cosmatesque pavements in Venice including those in the Basilica di San Marco.


injured hand to Saint Mark for blessing and healing. A crowd, consisting of eleven eastern men possessing Middle Eastern and African physiognomies, has gathered to witness the miracle. It is not difficult to identify the two westerners; Saint Mark and his travel companion are the only two individuals in the painting without a head covering.

Similarly to the architectural setting, the costumes of the participants in A Miracle of Saint Mark locate the scene in Alexandria. Julian Raby found that Venetian paintings with themes from the Levant of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries tended to reflect the influence of two contemporary Islamic powers, the Mamluks and the Ottomans. He grouped the two styles of eastern attire shown in orientalist paintings into categories which he called the “Ottomon Mode” and the “Mamluk Mode.” Raby drew from paintings of the Venetian Renaissance to illustrate his conclusions regarding the two modes with paintings. For instance, he employed the now famous painting The Sultan Mehmet II by Gentile Bellini as an example of an accurate representation of the style of turban attributed to Ottomans of the period (figure 18). This most prevalent turban in the Ottoman Mode consists of a smaller turban wrapped around a red cap with vertical ribbing, or tâj. Taller turbans with vertical folds are also representative of the Mamluk Mode.87

The mode of the turbans in A Miracle of Saint Mark can be identified as predominantly and anachronistically Mamluk in keeping with the contemporary fifteenth-century rule of Egypt.88 According to Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, the intermingling of past and present in Renaissance art reflects the conscious choice of artists to make legible two epochs

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87 Ruby, Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode, 21 with illustrations on 23 and 35.
concurrently, the earlier of which leaves traces in the contemporary work. In Cima’s painting, a single figure in the distant, far right background is wearing a tāj in the Ottoman style. Anianas’ turban is smaller than the surrounding similarly garbed eastern figures. This might not suggest a lessening of the fifteenth-century orientalizing effect as much as the intention of further marginalizing the cobbler by placing Anianas in a humbler societal position relative to the other eastern figures in the painting. The presence of a single Ottoman figure may simply convey the multicultural society of Alexandria or, in a more complex reading, his inability to recognize the miraculous healing in the manner of the many Mamluk participants may suggest an Ottoman repudiation of Christianity. To the far right of the miracle, a man astride a beautiful, chestnut colored Arabian horse wears a striking tall red hat identified as a zamt, typically worn by Mamluk military officers.

The emphasis on the Mamluk Mode in *A Miracle of Saint Mark* extends to the garments which are also in contemporary Mamluk style with the exception of Saint Mark and his companion who are in the tunics of apostles. The leftmost participant in the miracle group is a man wearing a robe of honor, or *khil’a*, consisting of bright, red, green, and blue vertical stripes and around his neck is a white shawl. Robes of honor such as these were often given as gifts, sometimes by a Sultan, to commemorate an important occasion such as the assumption of a high governmental position.

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89 Nagel and Wood, “Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism,” 403. Nagel and Wood further argue that in the absence of definite dating of artifacts, many objects during the Renaissance were understood to have a double historicity that encompassed both the past and the present.


91 Arcangeli, “‘Orientalist’ Painting,” 131.

Among the eastern participants grouped around Anianas, another figure stands out as notable. The intricate patterning on the robe of the man directly behind Anianas serves a two-fold purpose; the stark white and black hues draw the viewer’s attention to the miracle, but the robe also designates the individual as a member of the mufti who are considered the juris-consul of Muslims. In this role, the mufti would administer and manage all spiritual matters. His presence is perhaps an illustration of the power of the miracle to persuade Muslim officials of Christianity’s authority. One deviation, which would conflict with the mufti identification, is that the color of the mufti’s robe is not the typical green mohair but instead an elaborate brocade pattern featuring Italian quatrefoil enclosures around feathery Ottoman szaz leaves. This ornate fabric was perhaps included in deference to the silk confraternity patrons. The inclusion of members from various ranks of Mamluk society, including both religious and military leaders, suggests the desire to provide a variety of eastern witnesses to a scene of convincing Christian miraculous power. Fortini Brown noted the presence of contemporary witnesses in Venetian narrative paintings served a variety of purposes including bestowing honor on important members of Venetian society and scuola patrons or serving in a testimonial role as a reliable and impartial witnesses to a supernatural event. The eastern witnesses in Cima’s painting fall in the testimonial category; however, they are not removed from the narrative, instead they are actively involved in acknowledging the miracle.

A Miracle of Saint Mark painted by Cima da Conegliano for the Arte dei Setaioli in 1497-1499 serves as an illustration of the shift in iconography associated with Saint Mark and Saint Anianas reflecting the changing perceptions of Venetians towards eastern cultures after the fall of Constantinople and during the subsequent Ottoman-Venetian Wars. This impact is similarly

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93 Mack, Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600, 168-170.
94 Fortini Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio, 222-223.
reflected in a subsequent cycle painted by Vittorio Carpaccio commissioned by the Scuola de San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. Like Cima da Conegliano’s *A Miracle of Saint Mark*, these narrative scenes reflect the iconographic shift which placed eastern figures in the role of subservient pawns ultimately won over in the battle for Christian supremacy. Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton have suggested that the first two paintings in the series, *Saint George and the Dragon* and *The Triumph of Saint George* place Saint George in the role of talismanic hero who triumphantly announces the power of Christianity by slaying a dragon and, in doing so, compels the infidel to convert to Christianity. In the final painting of the series, *The Baptism of the Selenites*, the message of Christian supremacy over Islam is forceful (figure 33). The citizens of Selene are shown in the authentic Mamluk attire reflecting the religion and culture of the North African region. In this version of the Mamluk Mode, Carpaccio has given even more variety to the turbans including the great horned turban, or *al-nacura*, sometimes called a water wheel that is typically worn by the sultan or amir, and the tall *tartür* worn by the women. A procession of Selenites climbs four steps to the stylobate of a temple where Saint George waits to baptize the entire population of Selene. Significantly, the men remove their turbans as they come to be baptized. While as a practical matter one would remove a turban prior to baptism, the gesture is also evocative of followers of Islam setting aside a symbol of their eastern existence to join with the western world.

The Arte dei Setaioli’s chapel held a prominent position within Santa Maria Assunta dei Crociferi, to the left of the *cappella maggiore*. This location provided the *scuola* with a public opportunity assert their political, economic and religious importance in Venetian society through carefully selected decorative themes. Their political goal was easily met: by choosing to

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venerate two Venetian patron saints – Saint Mark and the Virgin Annunciata – the *scuola* closely aligned themselves with the Venetian Republic. Their decision to deliberately highlight Saint Mark’s evangelical mission in the Levant reveals the *scuola’s* intent to emphasize both their important role in the Venetian economy and religious superiority over their Islamic trading partners.

There were other pivotal moments in the life of Saint Mark the *scuola* could have selected: Saint Mark’s connection to Saint Peter, his mission to Aquileia, or even his *translatio* to Venice. By rejecting these moments that emphasized the western and eastern Churches, or even another *scuola*, the Scuola Grandi di San Marco, the Arte dei Setaioli played to their strengths. The Alexandrian imagery is multivalent, providing a didactic religious message but also emphasizing the silk merchants’ critical role in the Venetian economy as well as their evangelic role. Like Saint Mark they too traveled to the Levant where they desired to assert their religious superiority in the world of their Islamic trading partners. In a sense, the Arte dei Setaioli operated as a microcosm of Venetian concerns of the period. They represented the rather contradictory desire of Venetians to reclaim their former unfettered prominence in maritime trade while also responding to the need to proclaim religious hegemony over their Islamic trading partners. Reflecting this cultural tension, Cima’s *A Miracle of Saint Mark* celebrates the *scuola’s* connection to the lucrative, mercantile East while at the same time denigrating the eastern figure of Anianas as a lowly, turban-wearing “other”.

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CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

The fifteenth-century images I have introduced in this research - which create a subordinate role of St Anianas and over-emphasize his eastern culture - may have a broader meaning within the political and economic context of the period. Whereas the earlier Middle Ages was a fruitful time for Venetian-Islamic trade, the second half of the fifteenth century was a crisis point. The increasingly dominant Ottoman Empire, which conquered Constantinople in 1453, threatened Venetian possessions in the Adriatic and Peloponnese. The two powers went to war several times and each time Venice lost territorial possessions important to their eastern trading presence. It was precisely during this period of increasing tension that Venetian images portrayed Saint Anianas as an eastern figure low on the ground. Contradictions in the portrayal of Saint Anianas arguably convey the doctrinal and territorial crisis of the fifteenth century and the shift in reception among Venetians towards their trading partners in the East who not only gained ground territorially but also gained converts to the Islamic faith. In the Saint Mark/Saint Anianas iconography of the fifteenth-century healing scenes, Saint Mark appears to embody the Christian church and Saint Anianas is his Muslim convert. The deferential figure of Saint Anianas therefore represents an implied position of Christian hegemony over Islam. The baptism scenes which accompany each of these healing episodes represent Venetian and Christian ideology in an ongoing campaign of conversion. One wonders if the contemporary audience understood the anachronistic sequence of events involved in transforming Anianas, who lived more than five hundred years prior to the Prophet Mohammed, into an iconographic symbol for Islam. Still the importance of employing Saint Anianas as an iconographic symbol
for the theological and political crisis is evident in the increasing number of Saint Anianas images produced in fifteenth-century Venice and his more prominent ‘eastern’ elements.

Returning to the frescos in the upper room of the Scuola dei Calegheri we are presented with an iconographic program that combines elements of other Venetian fifteenth-century images (figure 1). Given his unique status as patron of the scuola, a certain conflict can be detected in this image, which seeks to both to revere Saint Anianas as a fellow shoe-maker but at the same time indicate his role as orientalized subordinate. To put this conflict in perspective, additional information about Saint Anianas’ post fifteenth-century life is valuable.

There are two surviving Venetian accounts of the life of Saint Anianas, one printed in 1627 and another in 1793. Both were written in the Italian vernacular designed to appeal to a broad audience. It is unclear who commissioned the books but the life story deviates in a way that suggests the intervention of the Scuola dei Calegheri. In both accounts, Saint Anianas is described as a man from a noble and wealthy African family who unfortunately wrecked his ship off the coast of Alexandria. Having lost all his worldly possessions in the shipwreck, Anianas was given shelter by a cobbler who taught him the trade and ultimately left his business to the saint. While this addition of wealth and nobility to the early life of Anianas’ is somewhat ancillary to the traditional hagiographic account, it does demonstrate two important points: firstly, Venetians desired to continually embellish myth, and secondly, the scuola wished to defend their saint from the defamation he incurred as a result of the fifteenth-century iconographic program. As their patron saint, the scuola chose to elevate Anianas through the creation of their own origin story that encompassed both nobility and wealth.

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The fifteenth-century frescos within the Scuola dei Calegheri also reflect this conflict by adhering to the popular eastern iconographic program of the period while also revering their patron saint. This sense of conflict is symbolized by the striking juxtaposition of halo and turban: an iconographic motif reflective of Venice itself: a city on the cusp between East and West.
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ILLUSTRATIONS

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